

24.09 Minds and Machines

spring 2007

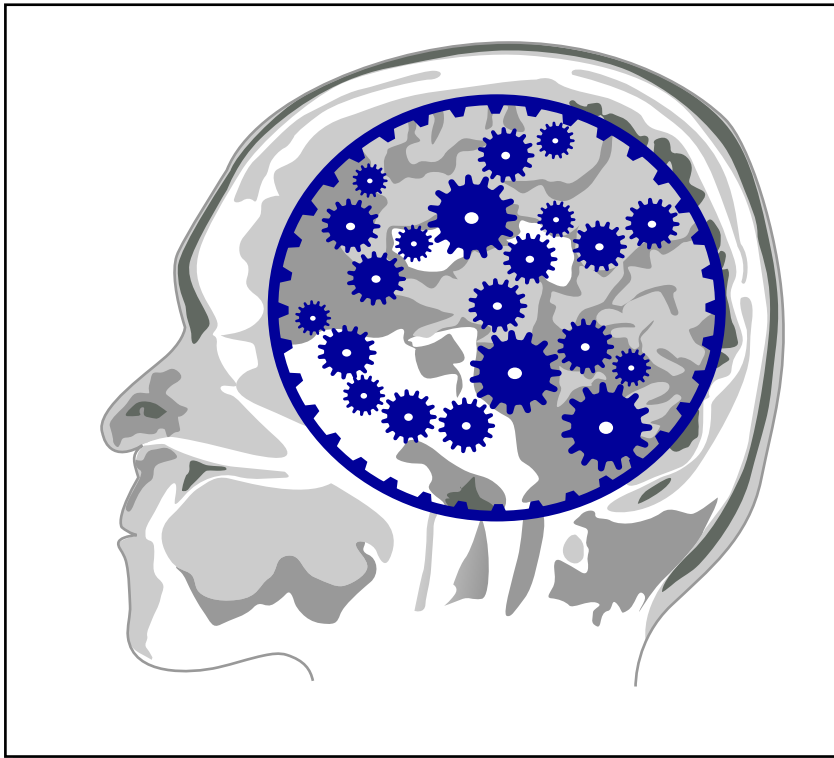


Figure by MIT OCW.

- after class salon today
- handouts in study material section

argument A

1. I cannot doubt that my mind exists
2. I can doubt that my brain exists
[or that anything physical exists, come to that]

Therefore:

3. my mind is not my brain

an argument like this is suggested in the passage on p. 11 that begins “I am not that structure of limbs...” and ends “for all that I am still something”

but the next few sentences seem to take it back

- example 1: ‘Lois believes Superman will save the world’ is an intensional context, because replacing ‘Superman’ with ‘the bespectacled Daily Planet reporter’ takes a truth to a falsehood
- example 2: ‘It is necessary that eight is eight’ is an intensional context, because replacing the first occurrence of ‘eight’ with ‘the number of planets’ takes a truth to a falsehood (the number of planets might have been seven)

Image removed due to copyright restrictions.
Superman from Marvel Comics.

argument C

1. I cannot truly think: I am not thinking therefore
2. I cannot exist without thinking, i.e. the property of thinking is one of my essential properties (see the handout on properties and particulars)
3. the property of thinking is not an essential property of any physical thing

Therefore:

4. I am not a physical thing (a brain, for example)

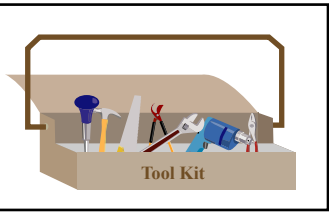


Figure by MIT OCW.

from the philosophical toolkit:

- necessity and possibility
- see handout

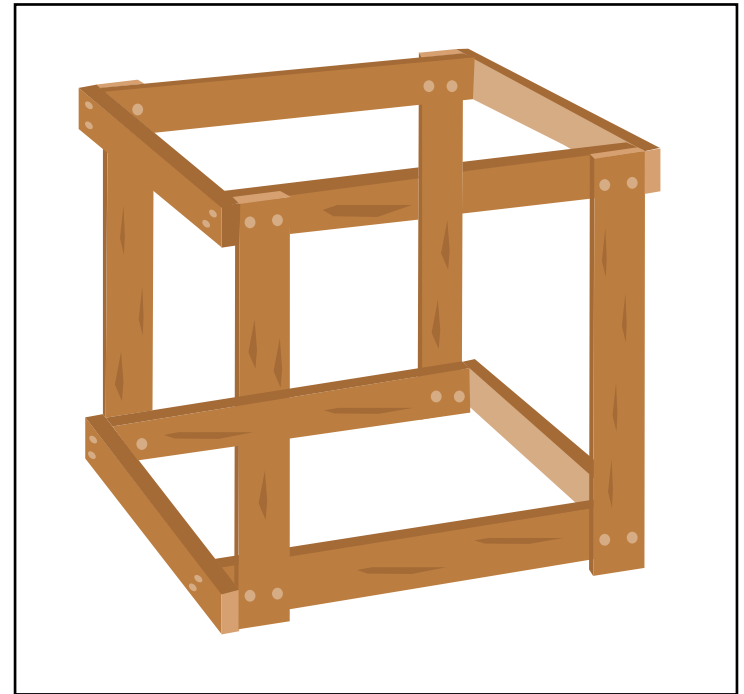


Figure by MIT OCW.

necessity and possibility

- epistemological possibility/necessity ('Fred might be in the library', etc.)
- nomological possibility/necessity vs. metaphysical possibility/necessity
 - we will focus on the metaphysical kind
- a proposition is necessary iff ('if and only if') it could not have been false
- a proposition is possible iff it could have been true

there might have been a talking donkey

the proposition that there
is a talking donkey is
possible

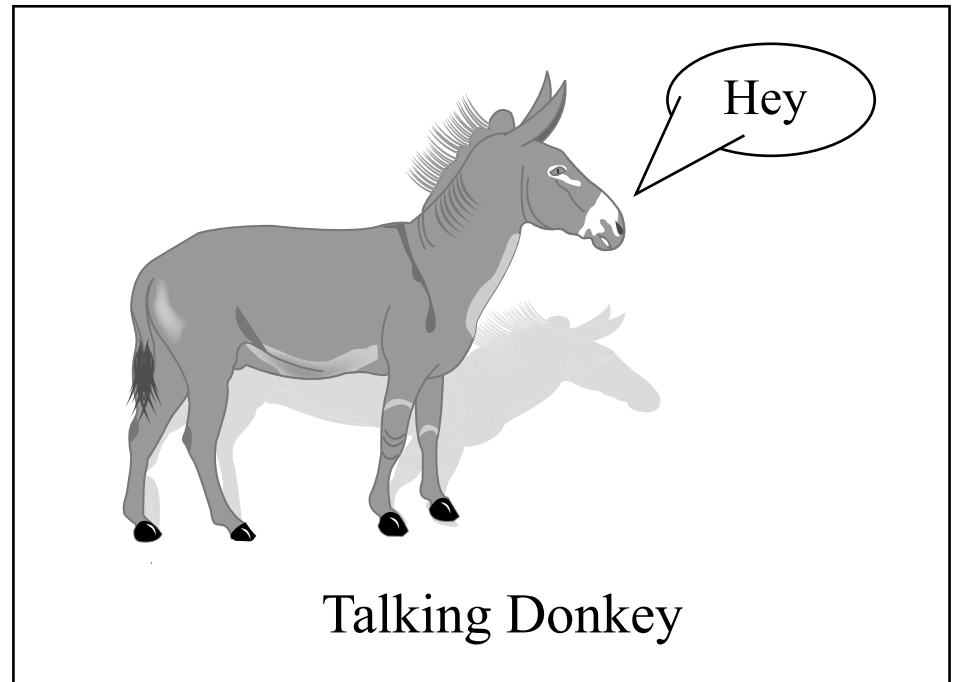


Figure by MIT OCW.

there might have been blue swans

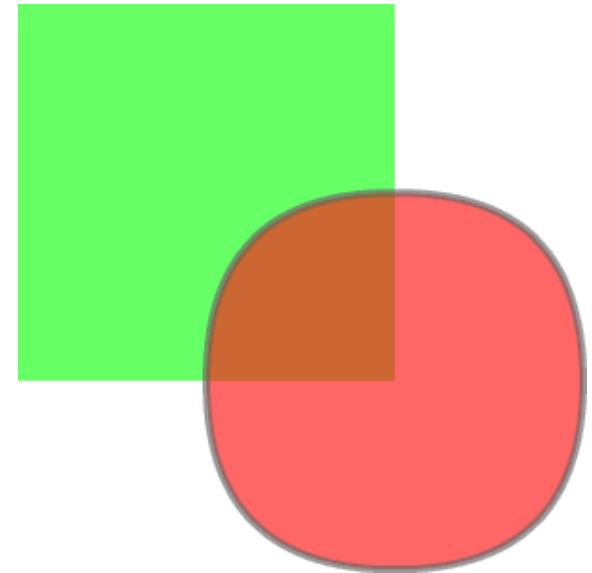
the proposition that there
are blue swans is
possible



there could not be a square circle

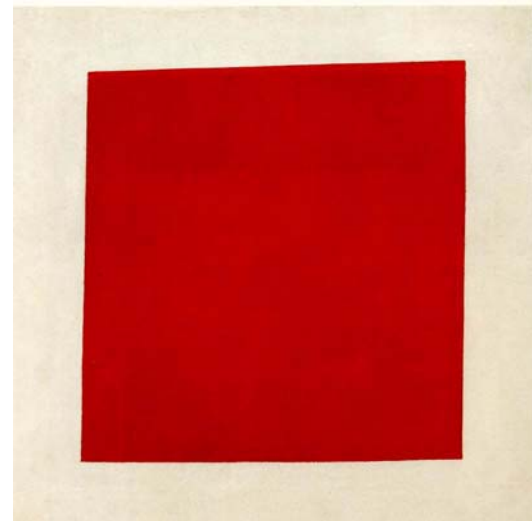
the proposition that there
is a square circle is not
possible (impossible)

the proposition that there is
not a square circle is necessary



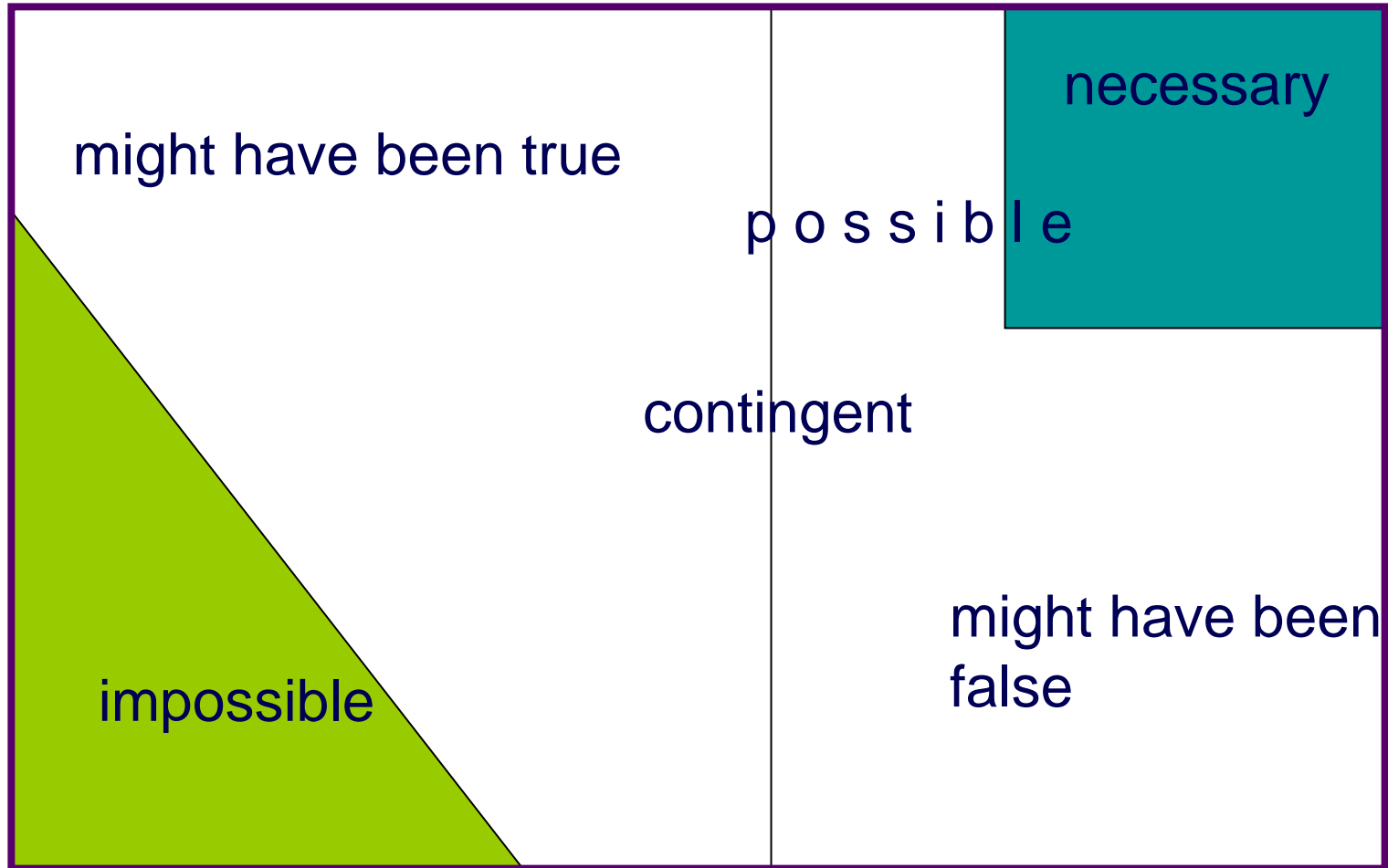
(not implausible) examples of necessary truths

- mathematical truths: there is no highest prime, there are uncomputable functions, e is irrational,...
- logical truths: either it's snowing or it isn't, if Fred is rich and unhappy then he's unhappy,...
- "analytic" truths: bachelors are unmarried, vixens are foxes, if something is red it's colored,...



propositions

false : true



argument D

1. if I can clearly and distinctly conceive a proposition **p** to be true, then **p** is possible. (“[E]verything which I clearly and distinctly understand is capable of being created by God so as to correspond exactly with my understanding of it” (p. 16))
2. I can clearly and distinctly conceive that the proposition that my mind is not identical to my brain is true

Therefore:

3. it is possible that my mind is not my brain (there is a “possible world” in which my mind is not my brain)

Therefore:

4. my mind is not my brain

from the philosophical toolkit:

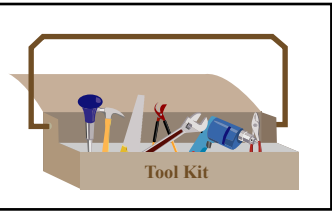
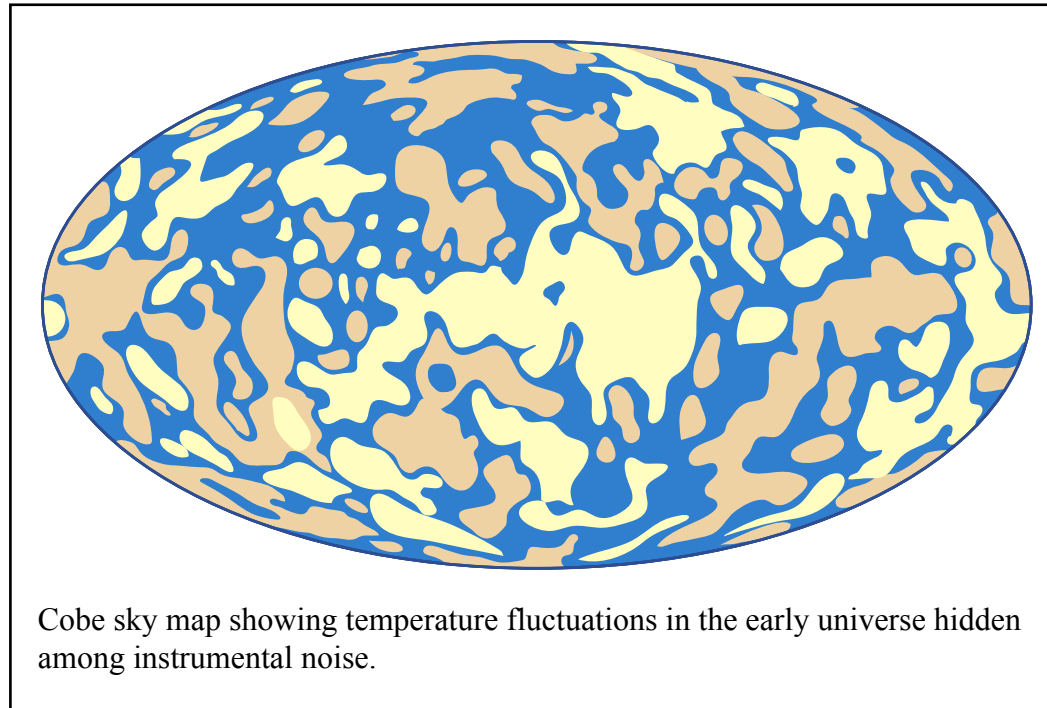


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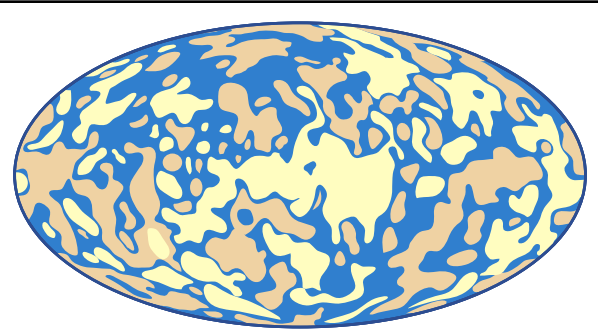
possible worlds (universes)



Cobe sky map showing temperature fluctuations in the early universe hidden among instrumental noise.

Figure by MIT OCW.

possible worlds



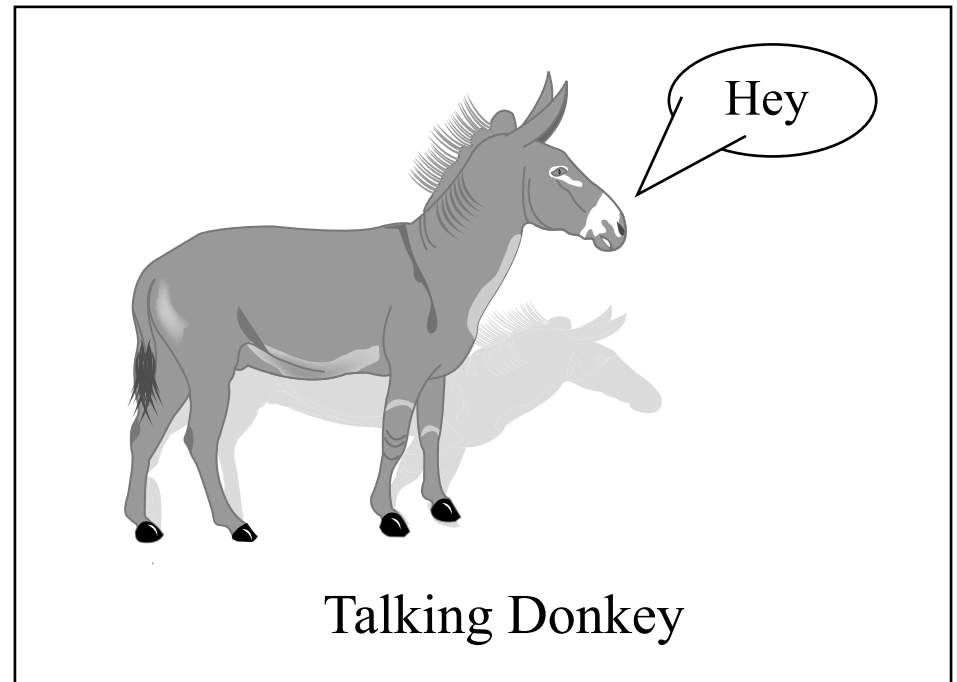
Cobe sky map showing temperature fluctuations in the early universe hidden among instrumental noise.

Figure by MIT OCW.

- “complete stories”—maximal ways the world might have been
- a proposition is necessary iff it is true at every possible world
- a proposition is possible iff it is true at some possible world

there might have been a talking donkey

there is a possible world in which
there is a talking donkey



Talking Donkey

Figure by MIT OCW.

argument D

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roadmap

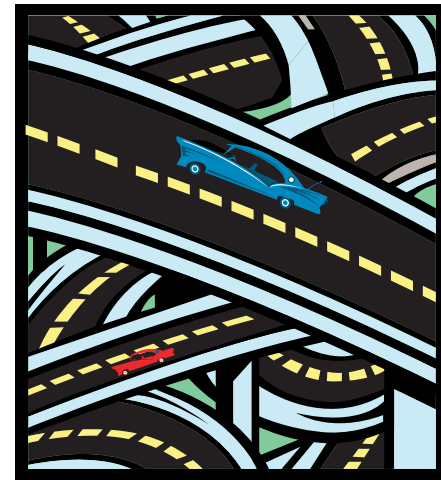
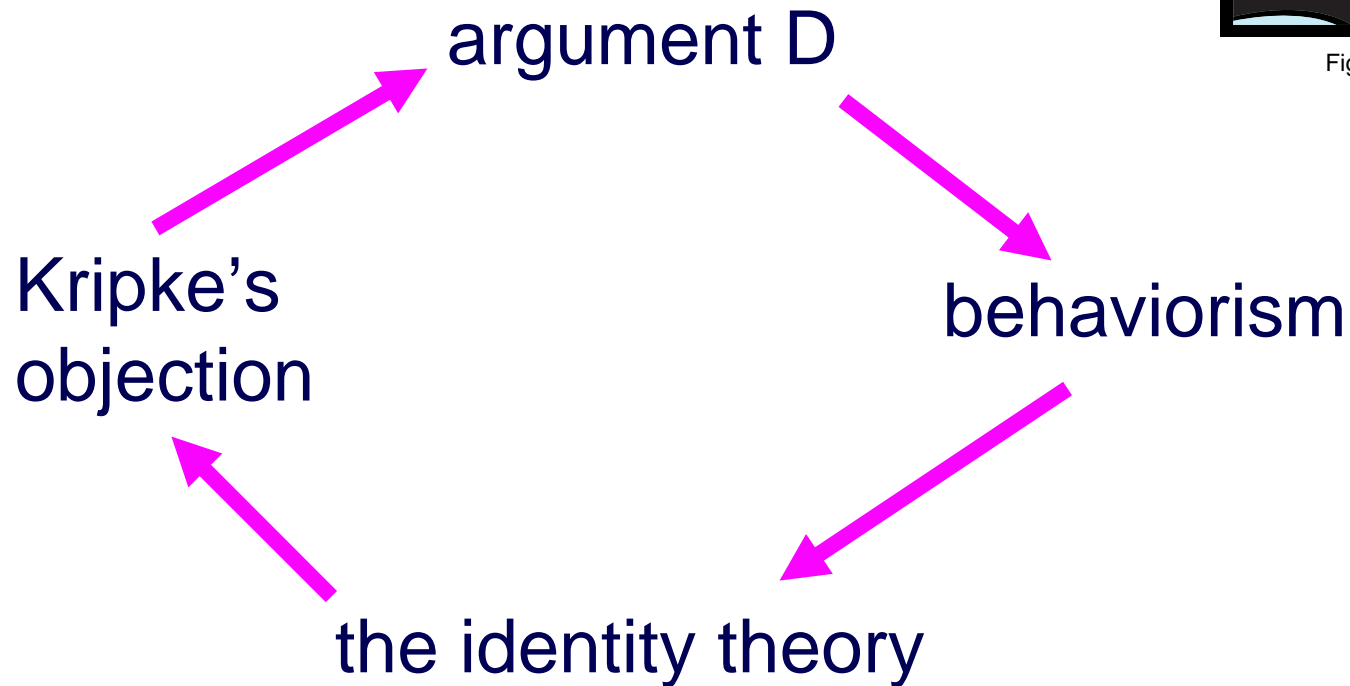


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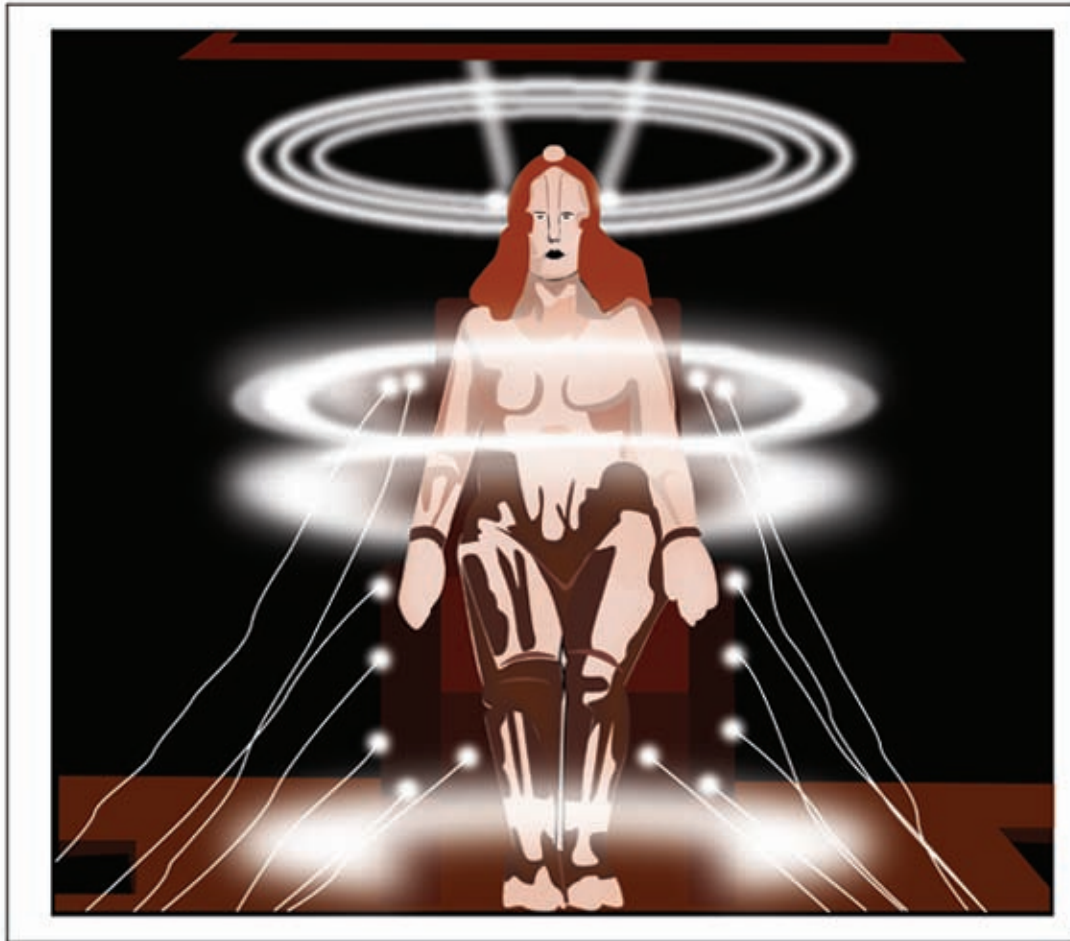


Figure by MIT OCW.