



London Review of Books, 1979

At the end of his life, the distinguished biologist C.H. Waddington took part in a discussion about the nature of mind. The circumstances were unusual. Waddington lay flat on his back, and his words were read from a prepared text by a friend. The discussion between him and the other two participants was lively: until, that is, there came a point when Waddington, having momentarily silenced his colleagues, abruptly left the room. The platform on which he was resting sank beneath him and his body was committed to the flames.

Gregory Bateson, if he had been present at the Edinburgh crematorium, would no doubt have felt sad at the death of his old friend. Yet he would surely have relished an event which in so many ways illustrated his own philosophical obsessions ... Waddington was dead, and yet in both body and mind he was still present in the room. Waddington's life was at an end, and yet his 'karma' (Bateson's word) would continue to rain down like ash on the mourners as they left the crematorium and is raining on this page right now.

KENNY

It seems to me that on the view that Waddington has put forward there would be nothing nonsensical about the supposition that this mug should be conscious.

WADDINGTON

I want to make a reply to some of the points just made by Kenny. Now, I am not a bit certain that the mug is not a little conscious. I said that I think you have to add to the definition of atoms something to do with consciousness, but I added that this consciousness is not going to be as highly evolved as ours . . I am definitely not ruling out that there is some sort of thing allied to consciousness all through the world.

behind appearance

A study of
the relations
between
painting
and the
natural
sciences
in this
century

C.H.WADDINGTON



CONSCIOUSNESS AS ART

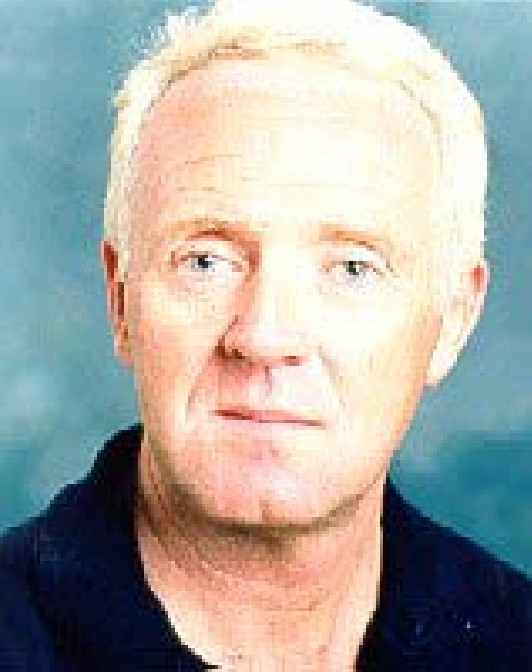
Our subjective experience of the
world may be like
a visit to a gallery where the artist
is our brain

By Nicholas Humphrey



H. Allen Orr:

I share the sense of mystery here. Brains and neurons obviously have everything to do with consciousness but how such mere objects can give rise to the eerily different phenomenon of subjective experience seems utterly incomprehensible.

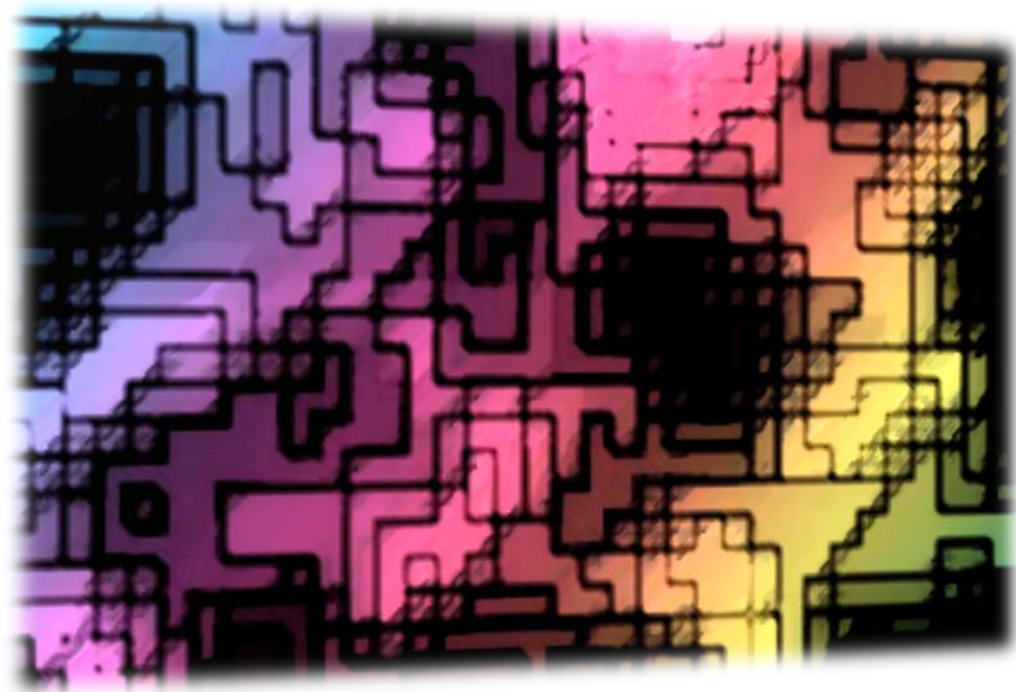


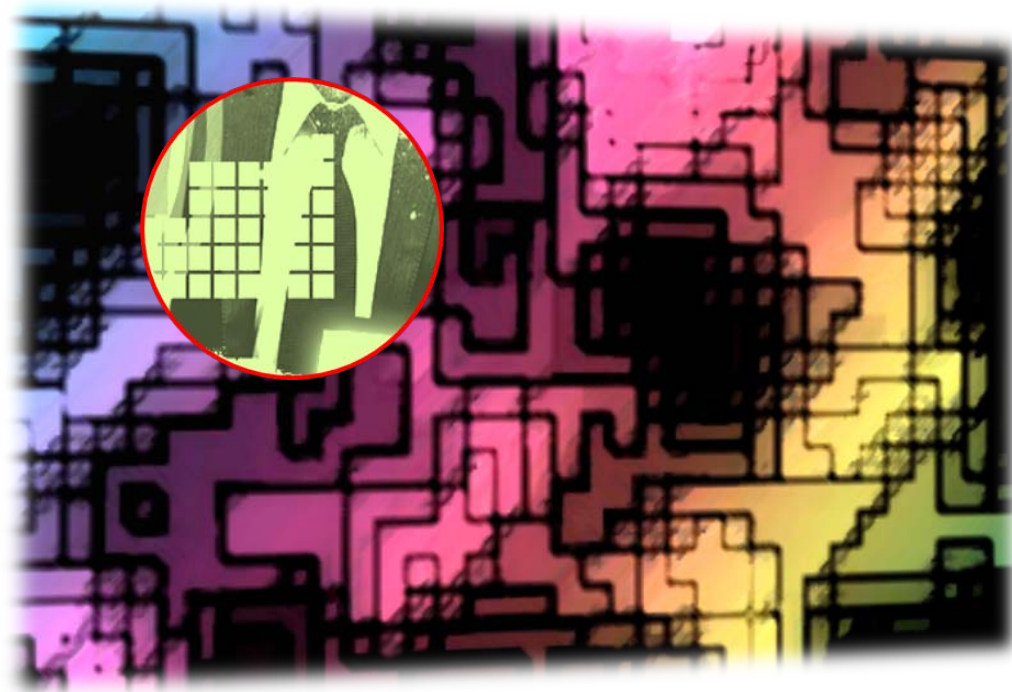
Colin McGinn, 1996:

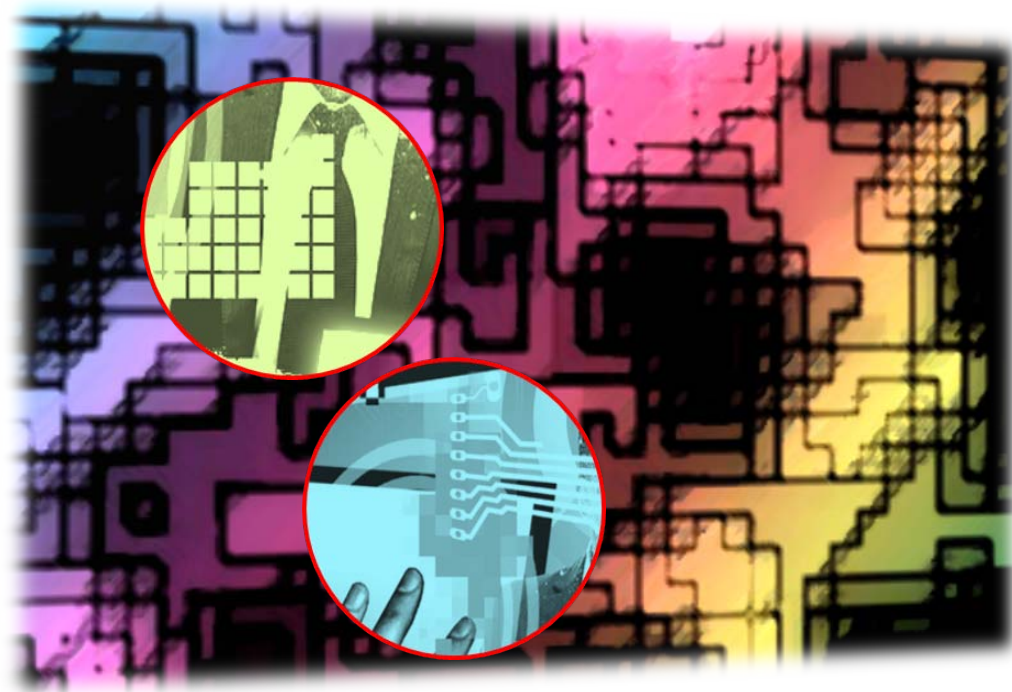
The brain is just the wrong kind of thing to give birth to consciousness. You might as well assert that numbers emerge from biscuits or ethics from rhubarb.

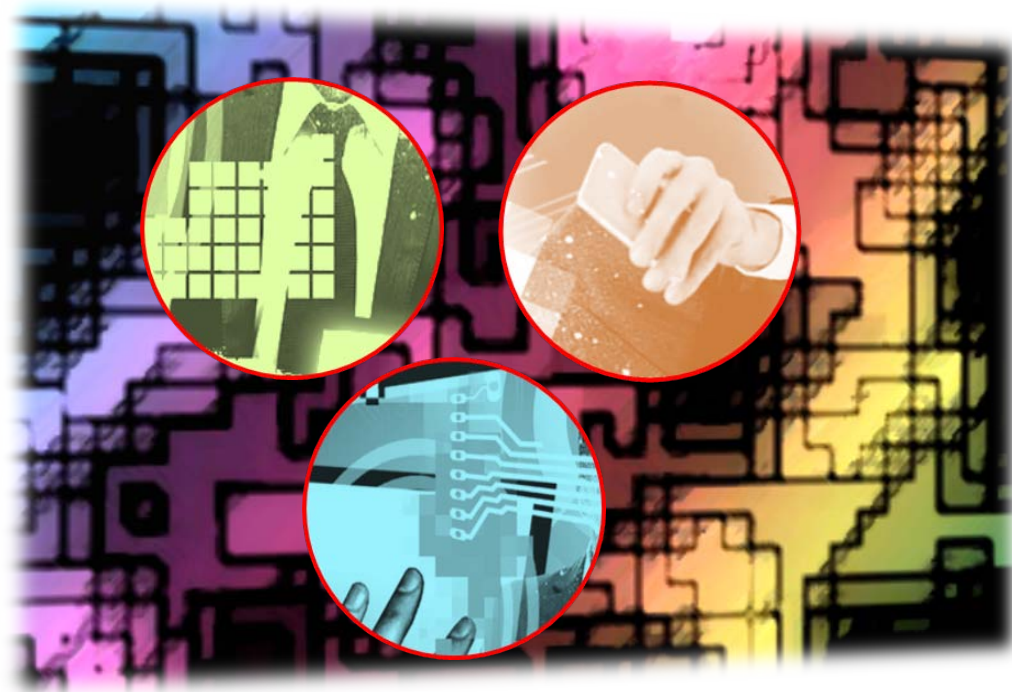
The states of mind of which *you are the subject*,
and which are *accessible by introspection*.

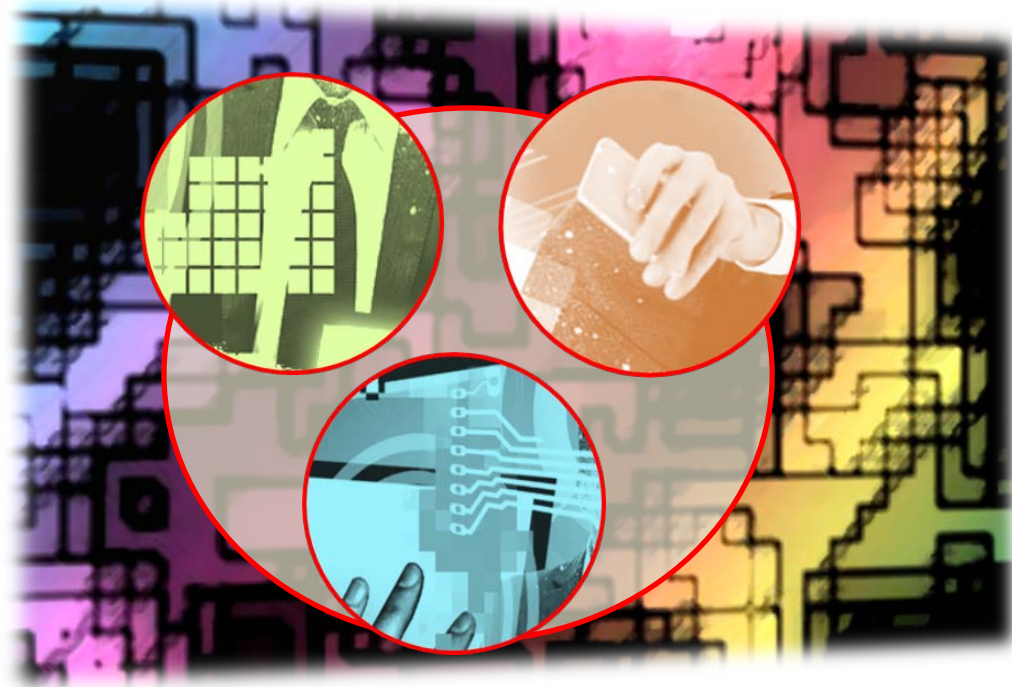








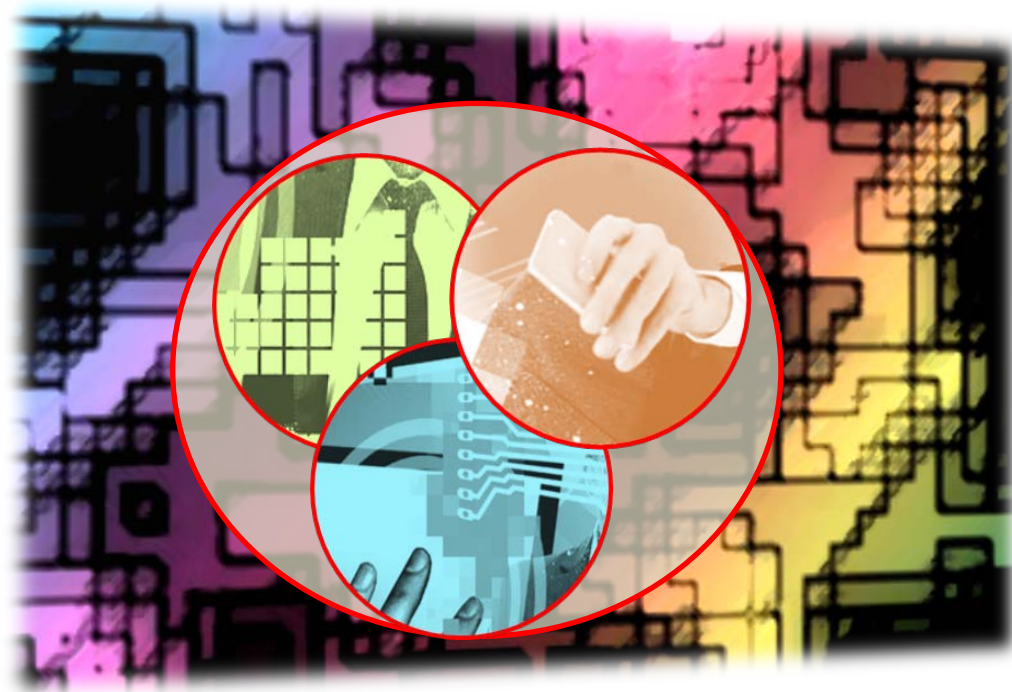






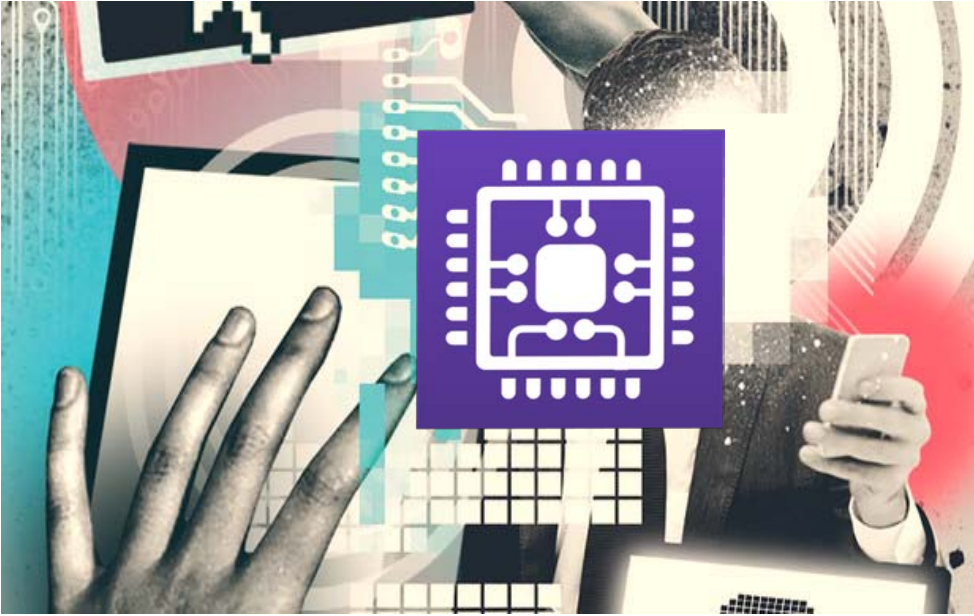
















desires

beliefs

intentions

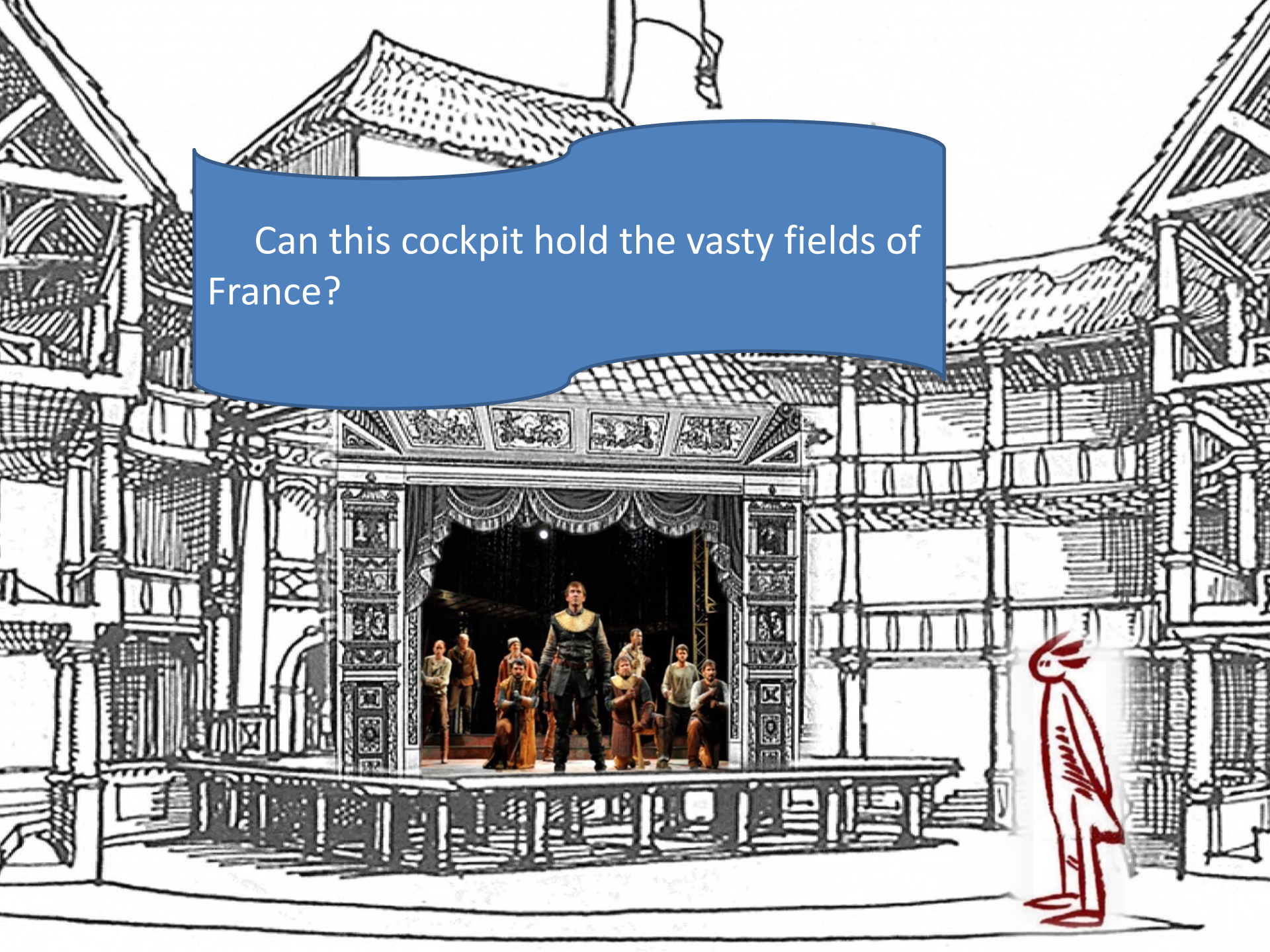




Pardon
the flat unraised spirits that have dared
On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
So great an object.



Can this cockpit hold the vasty fields of France?



Since a crooked figure may
Attest in little place a million

1,000,000

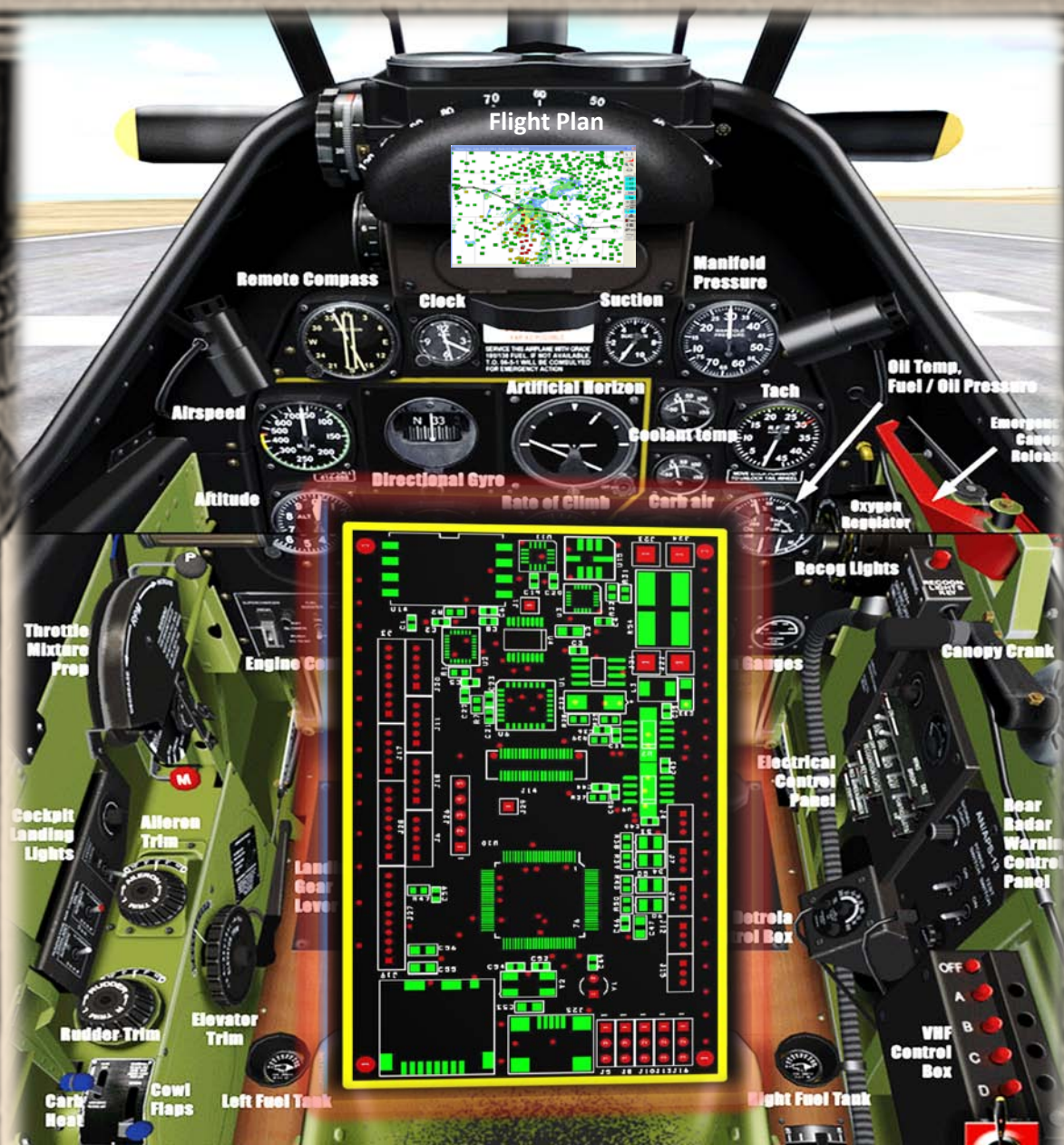


So, let us, ciphers to this great account,
On your imaginary forces work.

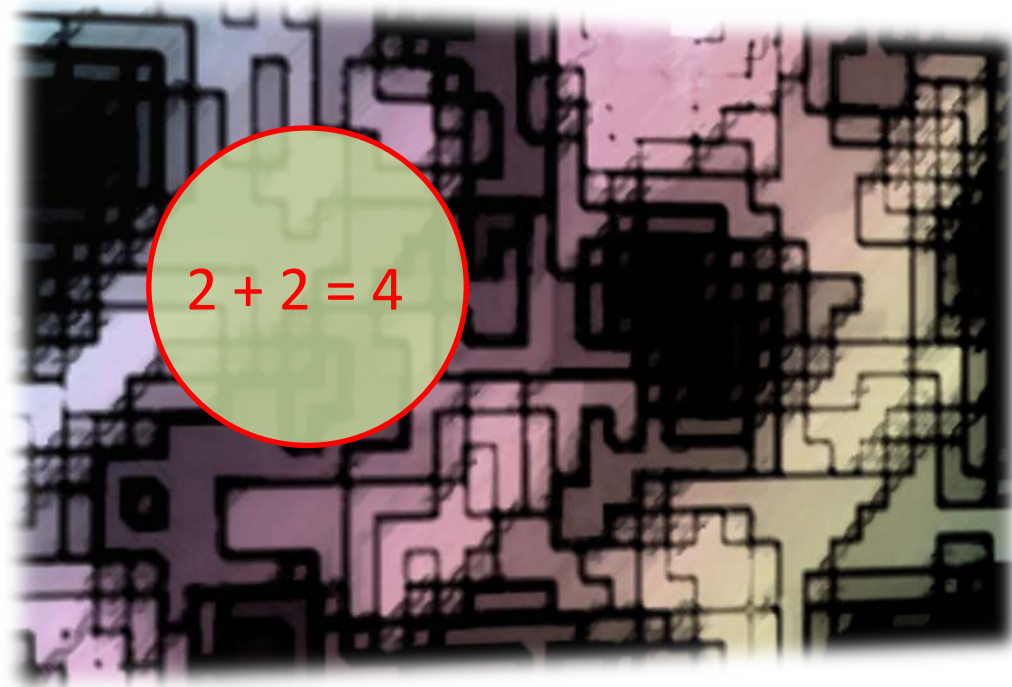


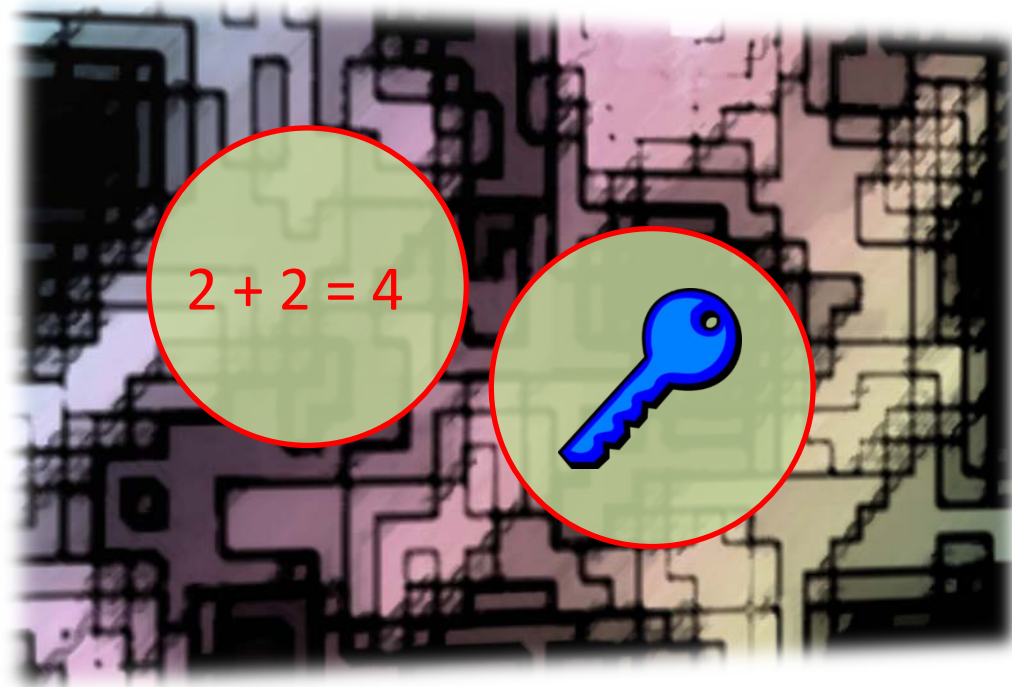


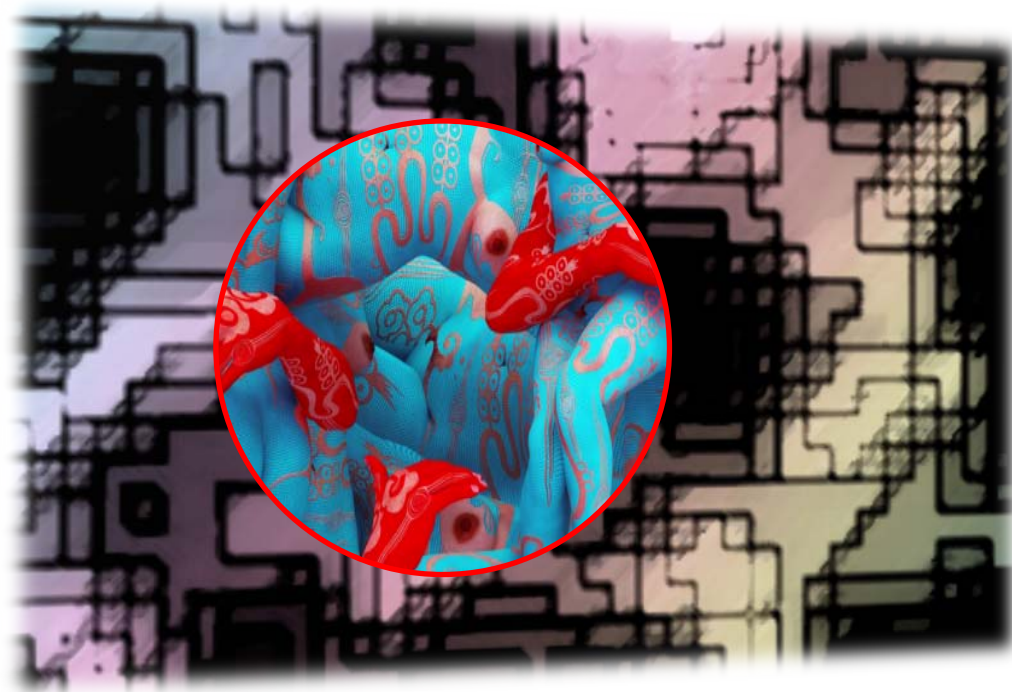
















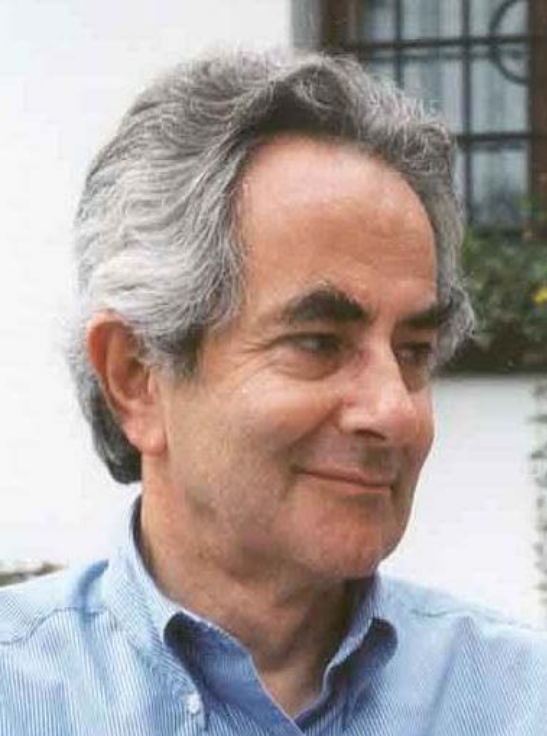
Christof Koch:

It is bizarre that brain matter should exude phenomenal feelings [qualia]. Consciousness is so vivid, and its properties appear so otherworldly, that it seems to call for God.

REALITY?



ILLUSION?



Tom Nagel, 2012:

The existence of consciousness seems to imply that the physical description of the universe, in spite of its richness and explanatory power, is only part of the truth, and that the natural order is far less austere than it would be if physics and chemistry accounted for everything.







Daniel Dennett, 2011:

Consciousness is an illusion of the brain, for the brain, by the brain.

Purple “qualia” are like a beautiful *discussion* of purple, just *about* a colour, without themselves being coloured.



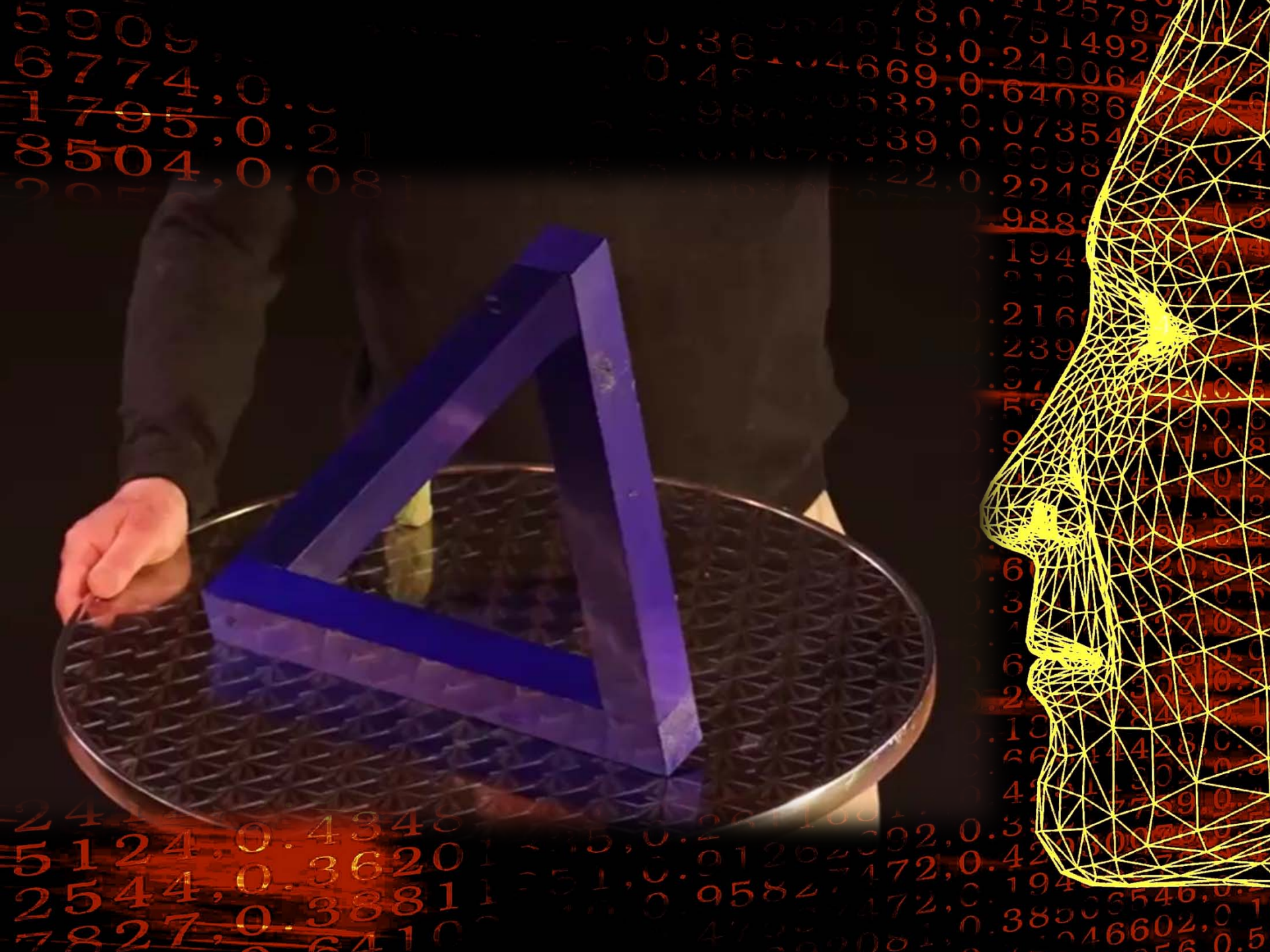


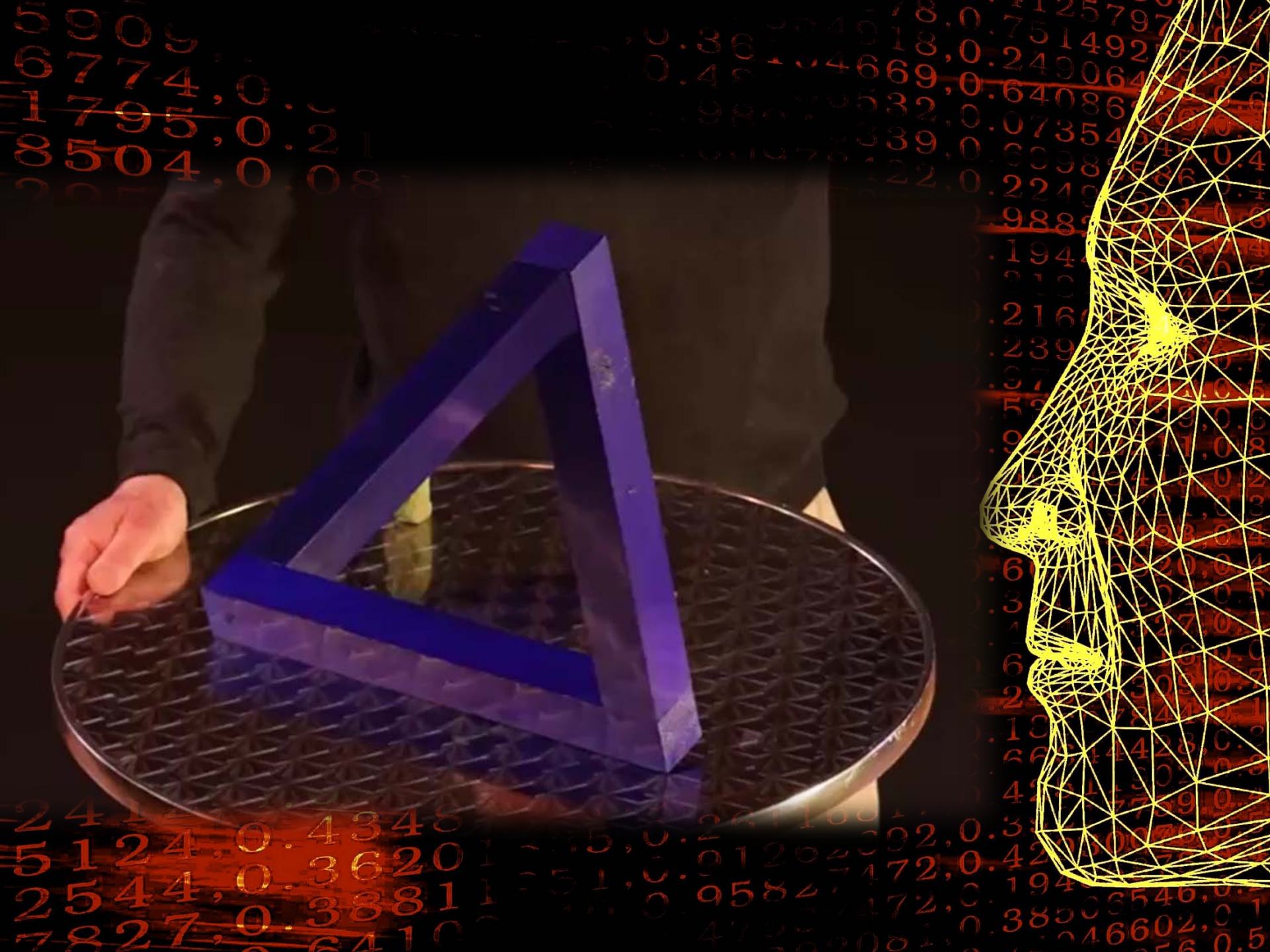


? REALITY



? ILLUSION





















The image is a composite. In the background, a pilot is visible in a cockpit, looking out a window. Overlaid on the cockpit view is a large, semi-transparent circular area containing a digital data stream of numbers and symbols, resembling a computer screen or a data visualization. The cockpit itself is filled with various controls, many of which are labeled with text. The overall theme is the intersection of technology and human experience.

The great object of life is
sensation

Labels visible in the image include:

- Throttle Mixture Prop
- Engine Control Panel
- Oxygen Gauges
- Canopy Crank
- Emergency Canopy Release
- Warning Control Panel
- VHF Control Box
- Retractable Landing Lights
- Rudder Trim
- Elevator Trim
- Cowl Flaps
- Left Fuel Tank
- Carb Heat

Holographic Principle

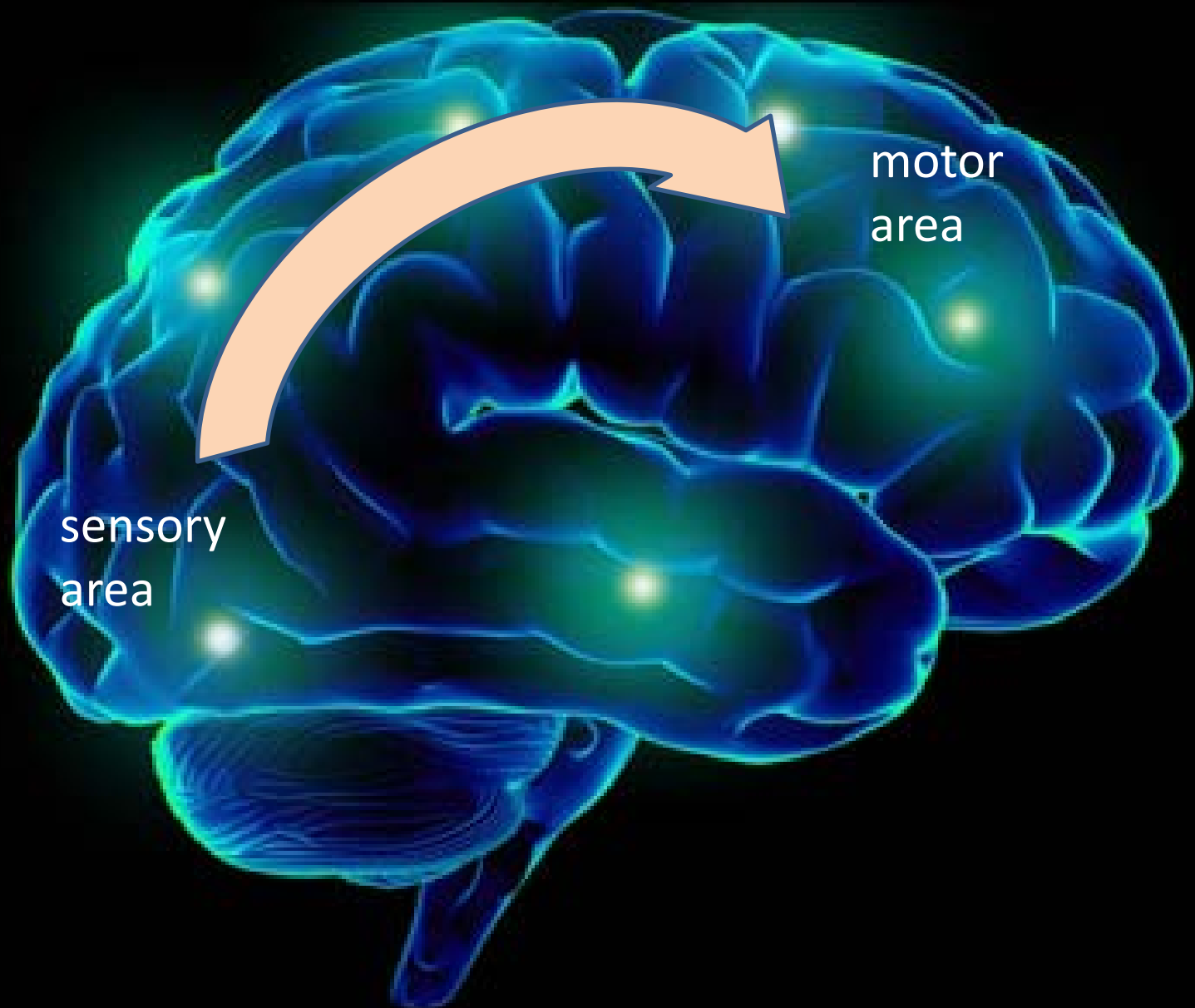
Just as a 2-dimensional surface can contain all the information required to construct a 3-d world, so an n -dimensional surface can contain all the information required to construct an $n+1$ -dimensional world.



“This idea is so odd, it's comparable to finding that the instruction manual for a dishwasher holds the recipe to making a good chocolate soufflé.”

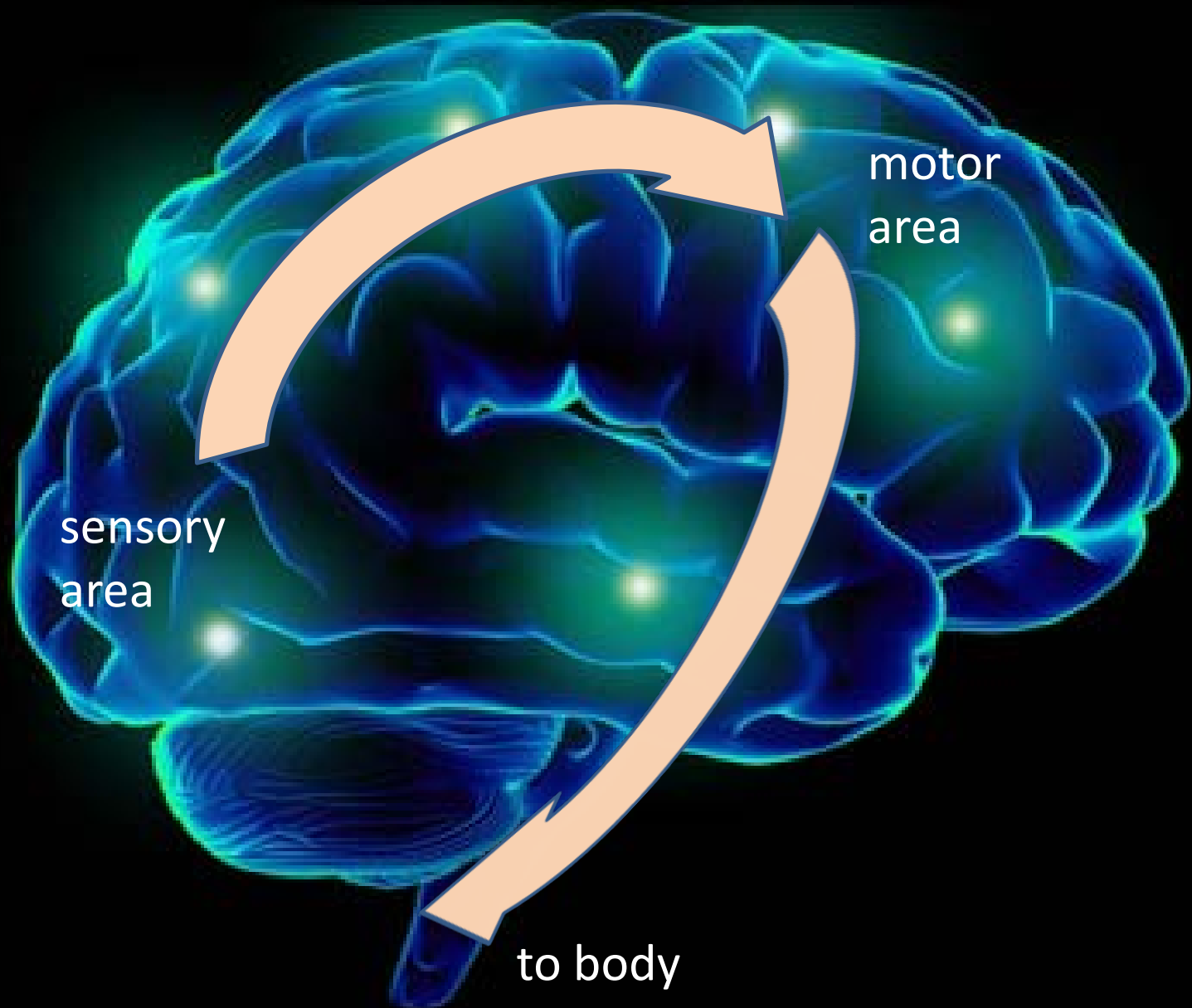
McGinn: “You might as well assert that numbers emerge from biscuits or ethics from rhubarb.”

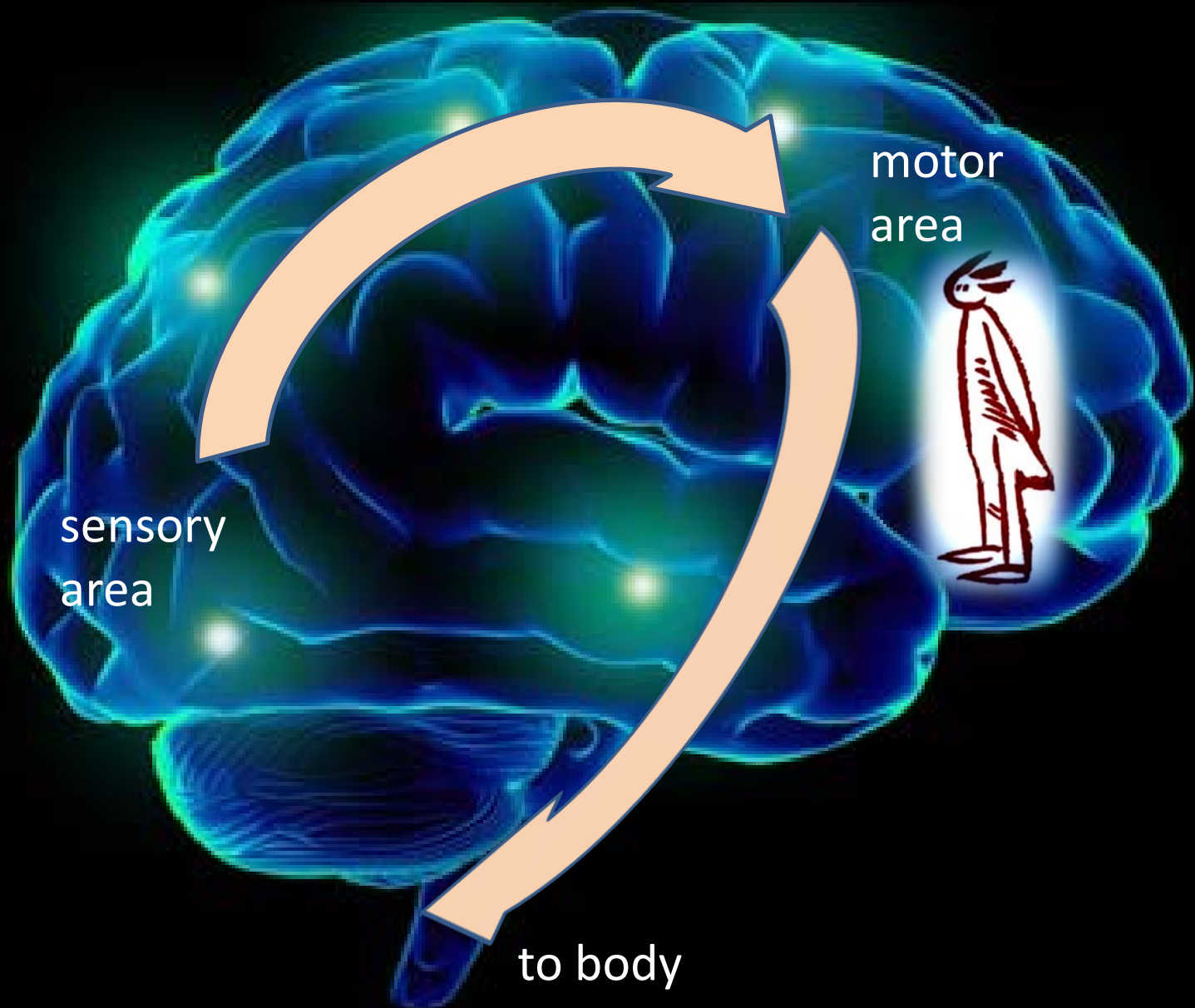


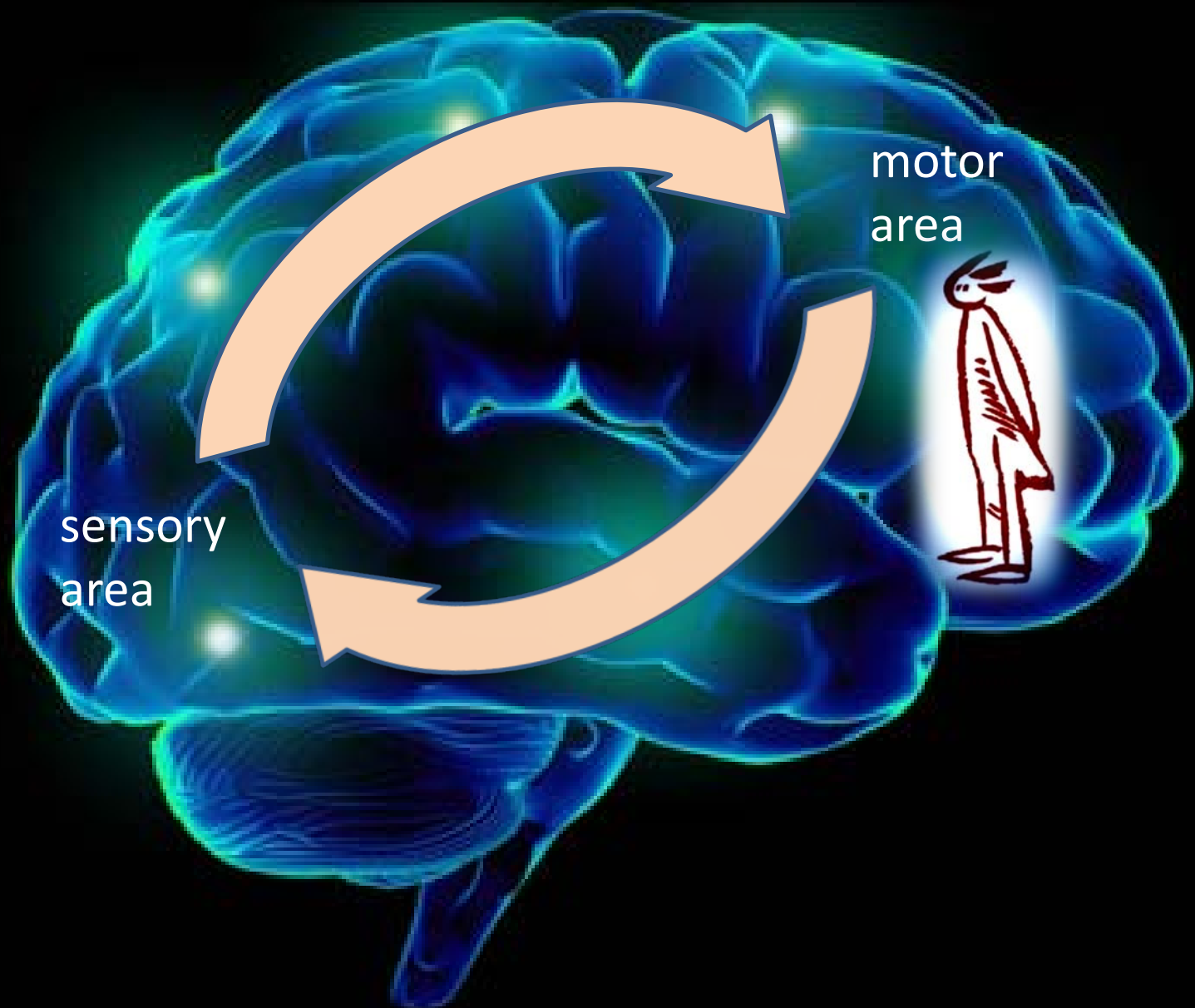


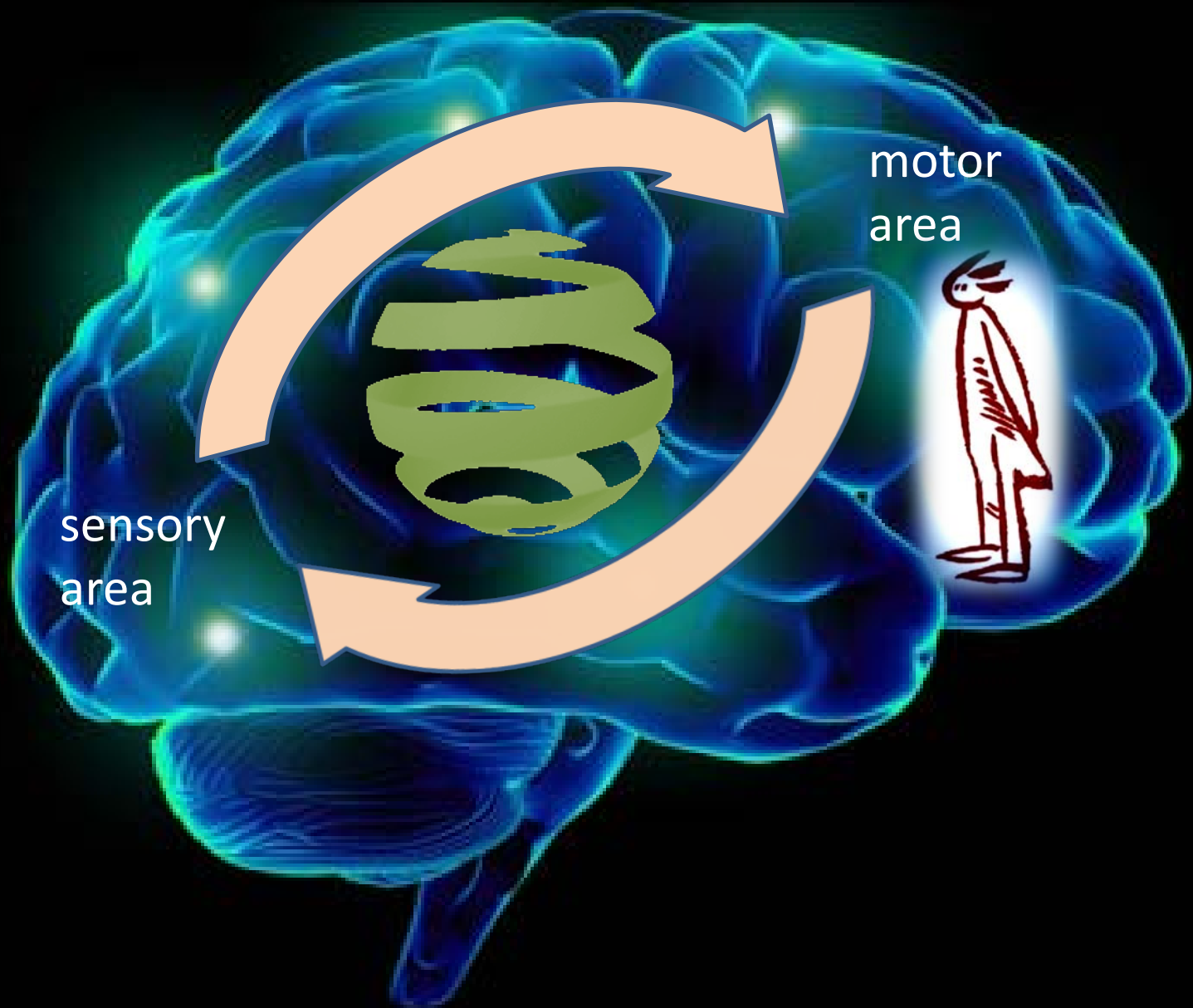
sensory
area

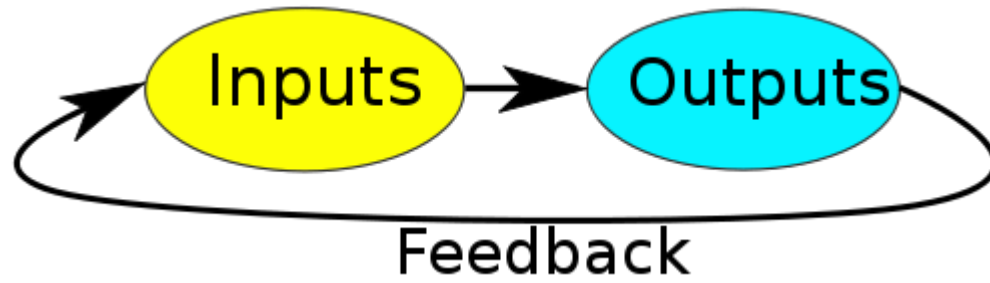
motor
area

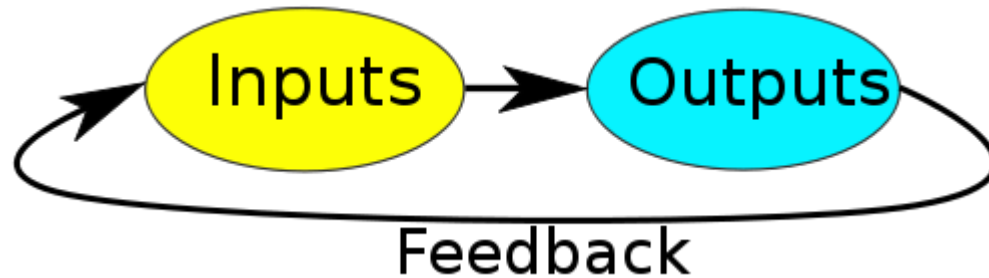








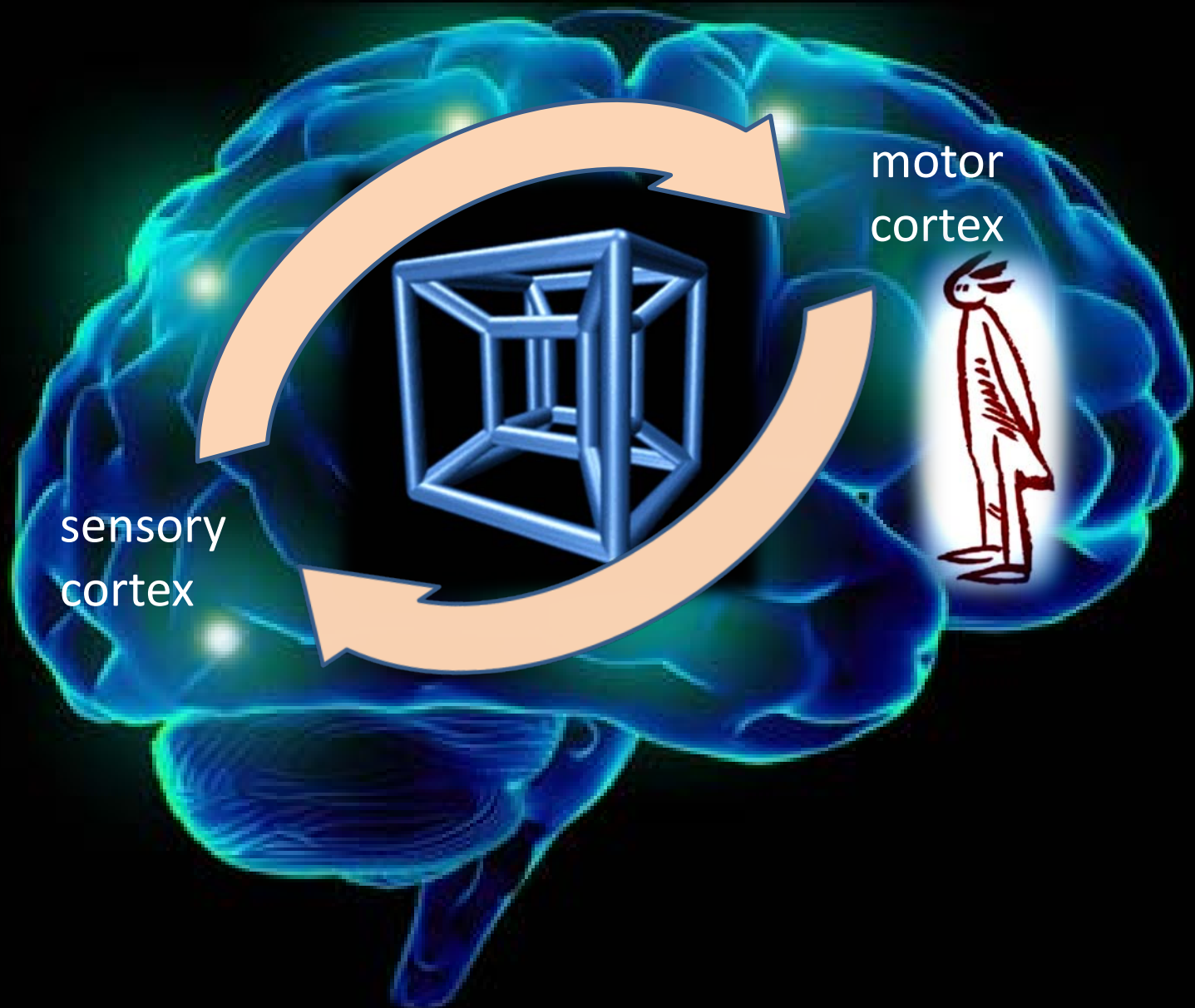


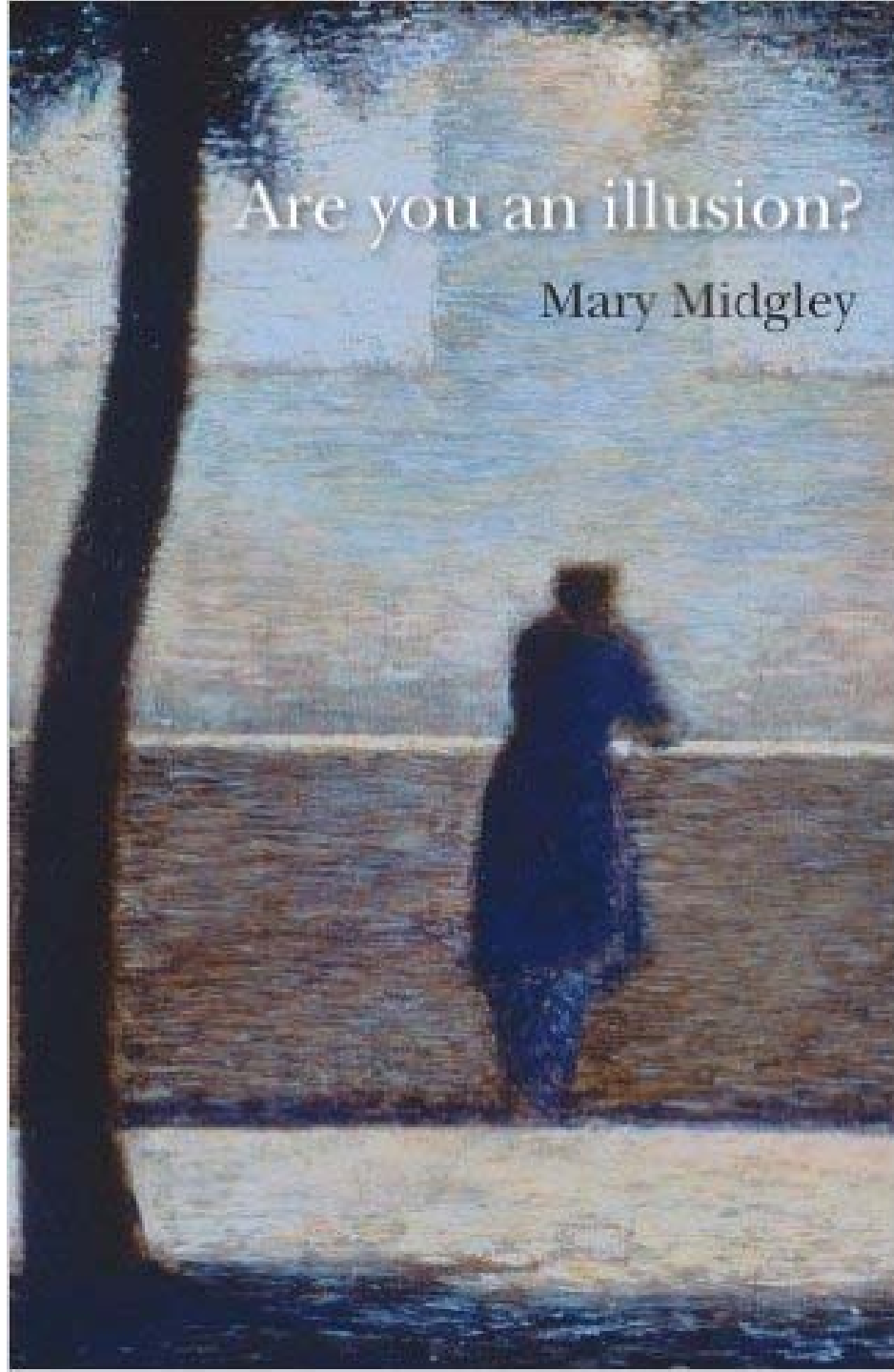


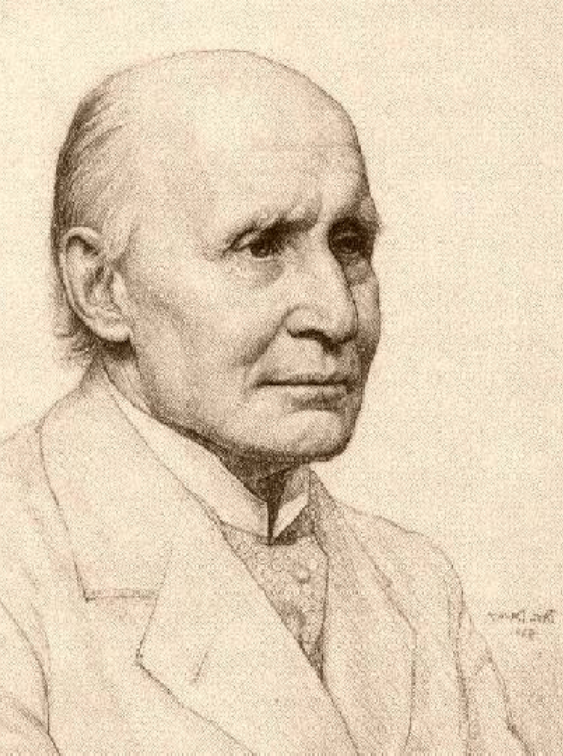
Delay Differential Equation



A “strange attractor” developing in a feedback loop



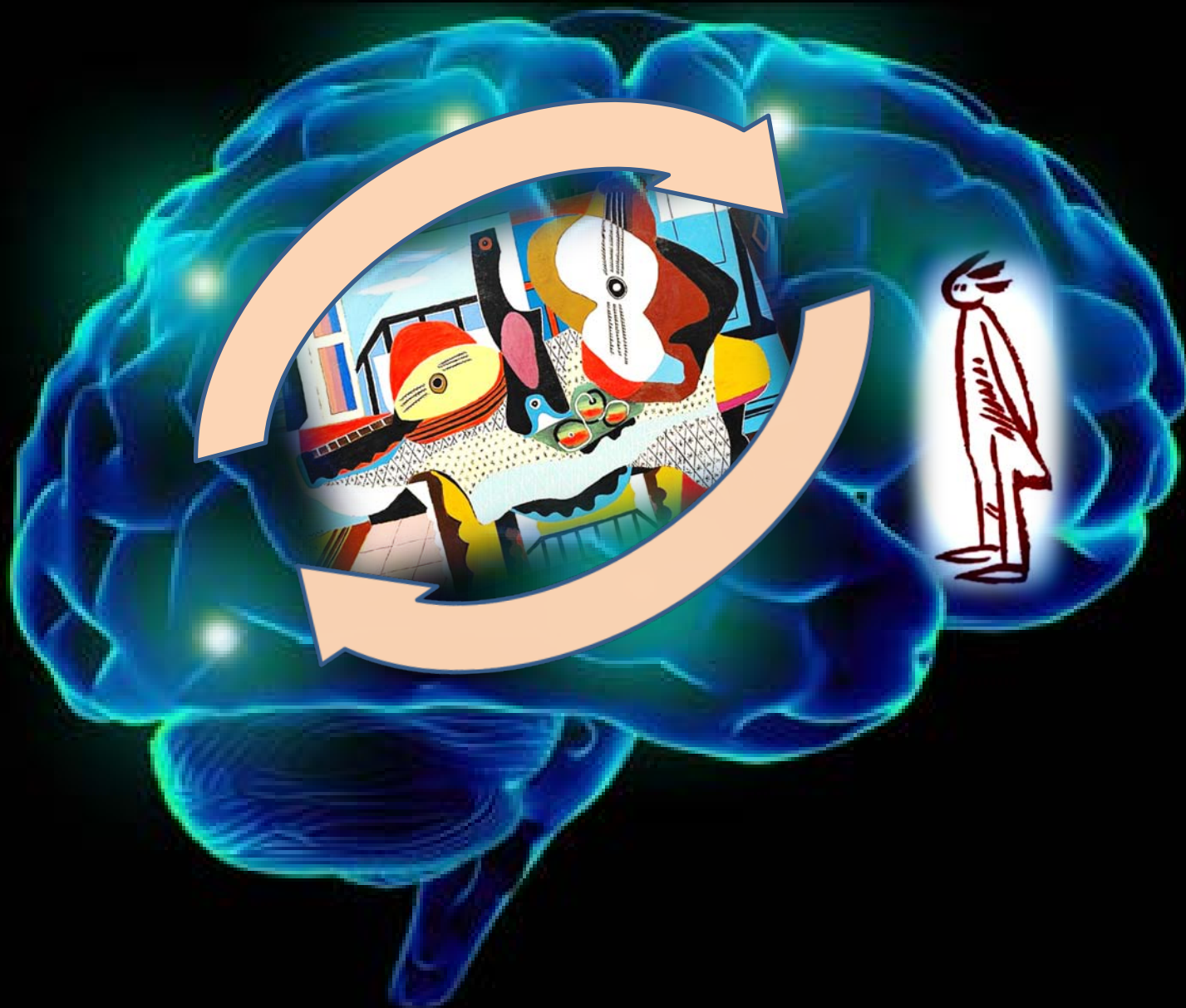




A.N. Whitehead 1926:

As if Nature is a dull affair, soundless,
scentless, colourless; merely the hurrying
of material, endlessly, meaninglessly?

It is quite unbelievable.



Picasso: Art is a lie that makes us realize truth.

Van Gogh: What I most want to do is to make of these incorrectnesses, deviations, or adjustments of reality something that may be “untrue” but is at the same time more true than literal truth.

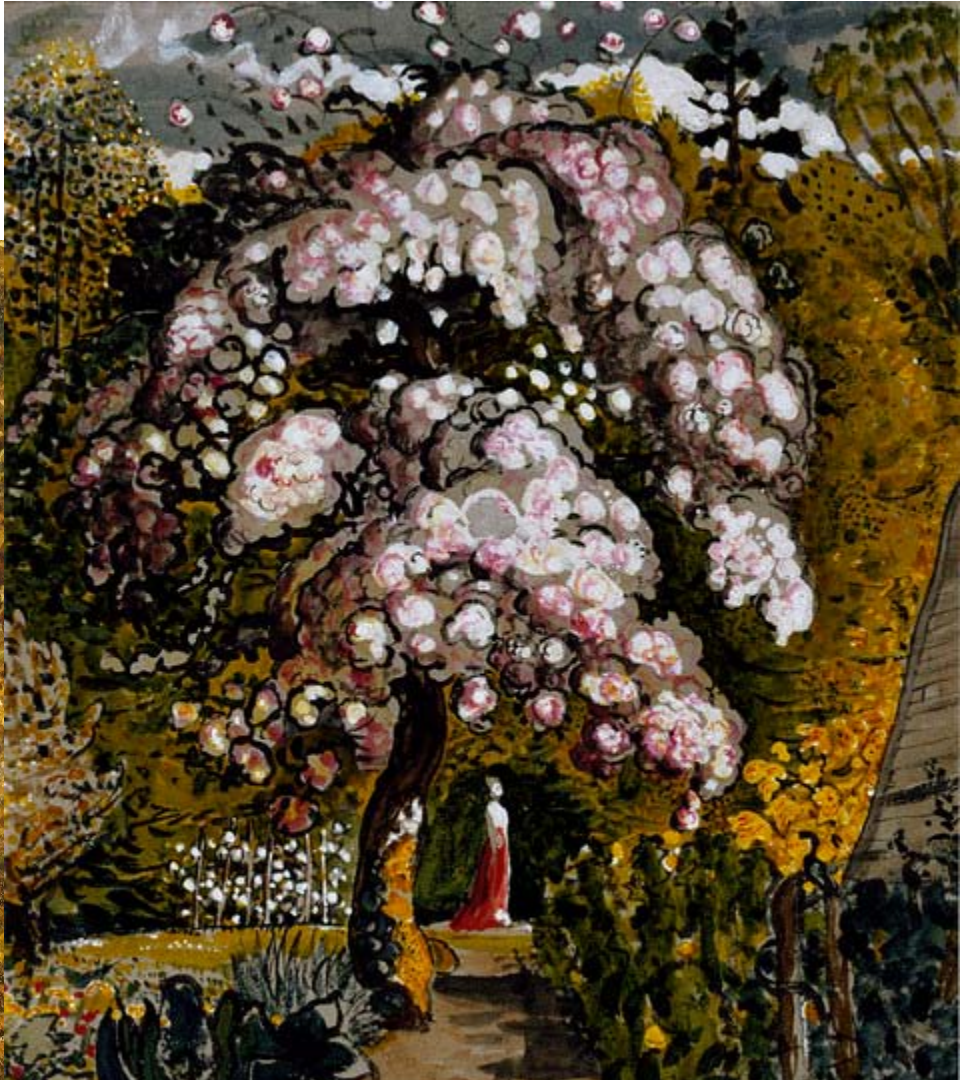
Klee: Art does not reproduce the visible; rather, it makes visible.

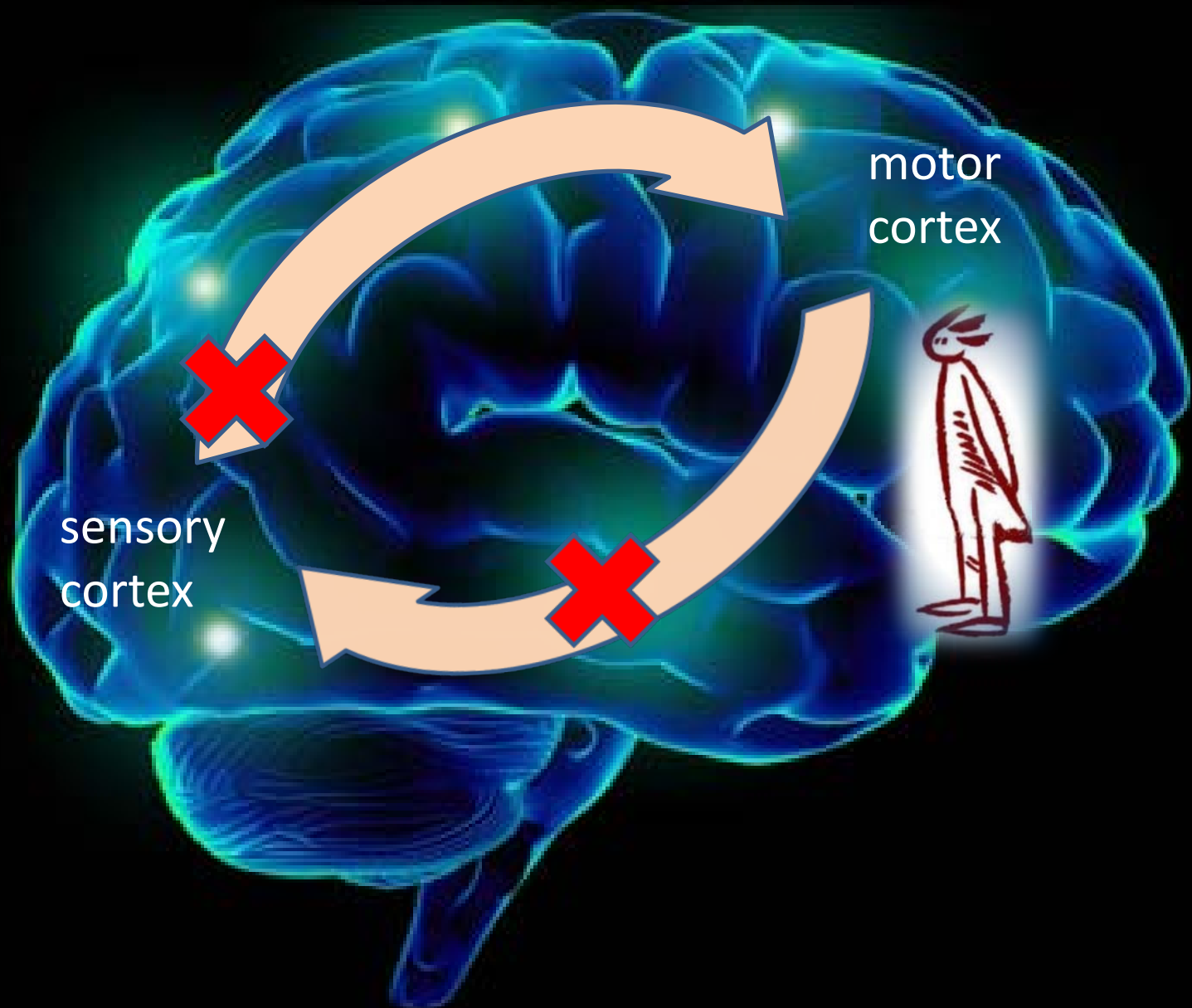
Nietzsche: Art is not merely an imitation of the reality of nature, but in truth a metaphysical supplement to the reality of nature.



Samuel Palmer 1824:

Bits of nature are
generally much improved
by being
received
into the
soul.







Pablo Picasso 1951

“She’s more like a goat than a real goat, don’t you think”.