

**What are the boundaries of consciousness?
Where does the world end and “I” begin?**

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According to a widespread tradition, consciousness takes place inside the head. In this regard, Galileo, neuroscience, and the movie *The Matrix* would all agree. Yet, is there any actual evidence of this? How are neurons able to create this internal *mental* world? Scientists have gone so far as to conclude that most of what we see around us—color, for instance—is not “out there.” Stephen Palmer, for one, stated this: “Color is a psychological property of our visual experiences when we look at objects and lights, not a physical property of those objects or lights.” Nevertheless, neuroscientists have so far provided no explanation as to how neural firings become colors, sounds, and smells.

In this talk, I will argue for a form of “externalism”: that the mind extends *beyond the brain*, out into the world. I will examine several traditional “internalist” arguments (illusions, phosphenes, hallucinations, Charle’s Bonnett’s syndrome, phantom limb, and dreams), and I will show that they are actually compatible with a realist and externalist view of the mind.

Consider the case of a red apple. I will put forward the controversial but fascinating hypothesis that consciousness of a red apple is nothing more than being partially overlapping with the red apple, albeit for a brief moment. After all, why is our mind being constituted by a red apple any more improbable than being constituted by the properties of neural processes? Are we so convinced that our mind is closer to our brain than to the external world? Why should it be so? When I think of my experience of a red apple, all that I can say is that it is “red,” “round-shaped,” and “shiny.” None of these properties are in any way similar to my neural activity. Thus it is logical to conclude that “my mind” is actually instantiated, in some way, by the apple itself.

Finally, I will contrast this externalist view with the available empirical evidence and with the most widespread models of the mind, both in philosophy and in neuroscience.