

Can a profound mental illness be more philosophical than organic, driven by "meaning" more at the level of sentences than mid-level salience? Monographs discussing delusional disorders appear to call for considering a philosophical turn. The author in effect responds: "Bravo, and let it be an epistemological turn."

The author names as likely categories of *strange hypotheses*: the super-natural (immaterial); the super-technological (conceivable but "impossible"); and the super-social (so often as surveillance coordinated at an "unbelievable" scale). These should provoke a sense of recognition -- being so suggestive of a familiar range from tinfoil-hats to Truman-show-paranoia.

At a more abstract or schematic level, two criteria appear to constrain possible *categories of strange hypotheses* and *categories of strange evidence*. In an NxM grid implied by individual named categories, we could expect *characteristic reports* to reflect particular combinations of one strange-hypothesis category with one strange-evidence category. We may thus expect the overall *symptomology* to follow from the two original *constitutive criteria*.

The criteria the author names are as simple as these: Categories of strange evidence must help rationally explain a person's ability to find strange evidence anytime, anywhere, almost at will. Categories of strange hypotheses must *disease-like "explain"* finding evidence essentially everywhere.

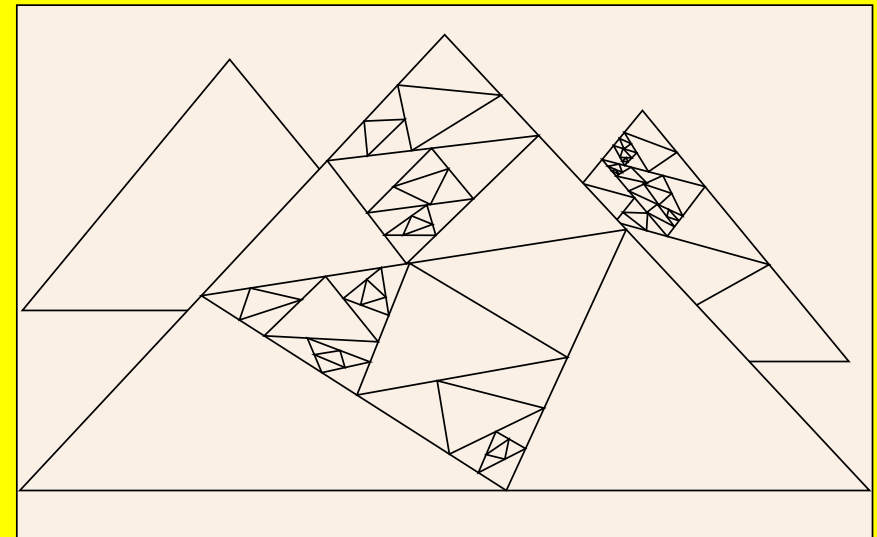
Interestingly, on a Humean view our normal generalizations from some evidence to universal expectation are not altogether better-founded. There are parallels to be noted between materialist epistemology, faith epistemology, and delusional epistemology.

Finding Two Axes

Jerry Van Polen

Finding Two Axes:

A model and navigation aid
for paranoid delusions



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