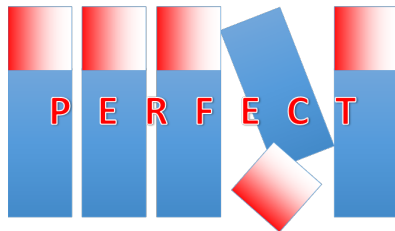




Philosophy of Mind Workshop Series 2. Experiences



European
Research
Council



Workshop series developed by Sophie Stammers, research fellow at Project PERFECT, University of Birmingham, and conceived of in partnership with Mind in Camden in 2017. Email s.stammers@bham.ac.uk

Guiding questions

1. What is the “naïve model” of unusual and unshared experiences?
2. How do we perceive the world? Passively or actively?
3. What do the different models of perception mean for the naïve model?

1) Naïve model
of unusual and unshared experiences

Naïve model of unusual and unshared experiences

The naïve model makes 2 claims.

- 1) It associates these experiences with **illness** or **malfunctioning**
- 2) It says these experiences are **bad** for us.

Naïve model of unusual and unshared experiences

2) It says these experiences are **bad** for us.

i) Psychological costs:

These experiences make us *feel* bad.

ii) “Epistemic” (knowledge) costs:

These experiences do not depict reality. So they harm our *knowledge* of ourselves and the world.

2) Group discussion on perception and experience

What is an experience?

What causes our experiences?

If 2 people are in exactly the same situation, do they have exactly the same experience?

The Dress



Matt Hendrick, Creative Commons, cropped.
<https://tinyurl.com/thedresscc>

“shared reality” and “unshared reality”

What sort of experiences do we tend to share?

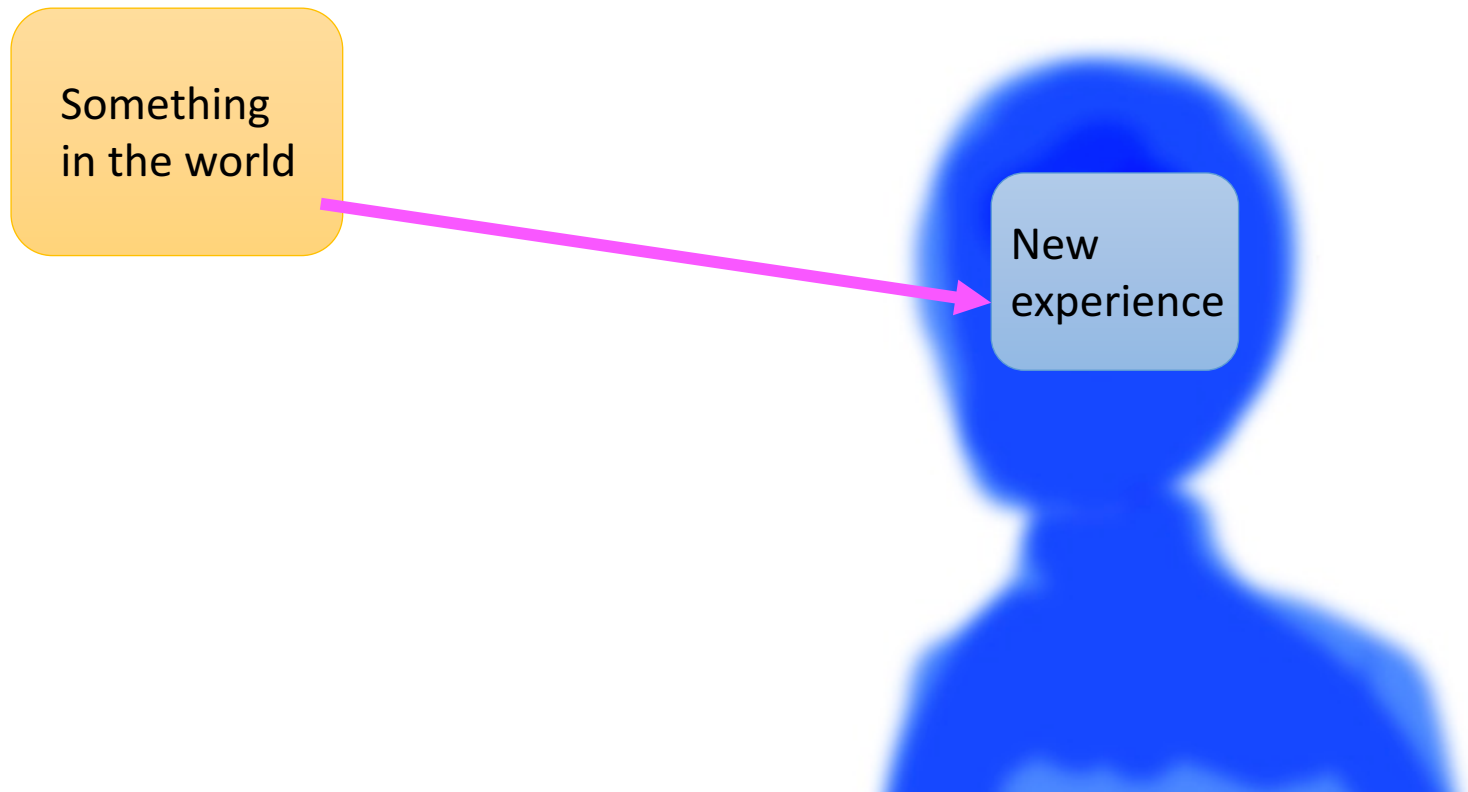
What are they like?

What sort of experiences do we have which other people may not?

What are they like?

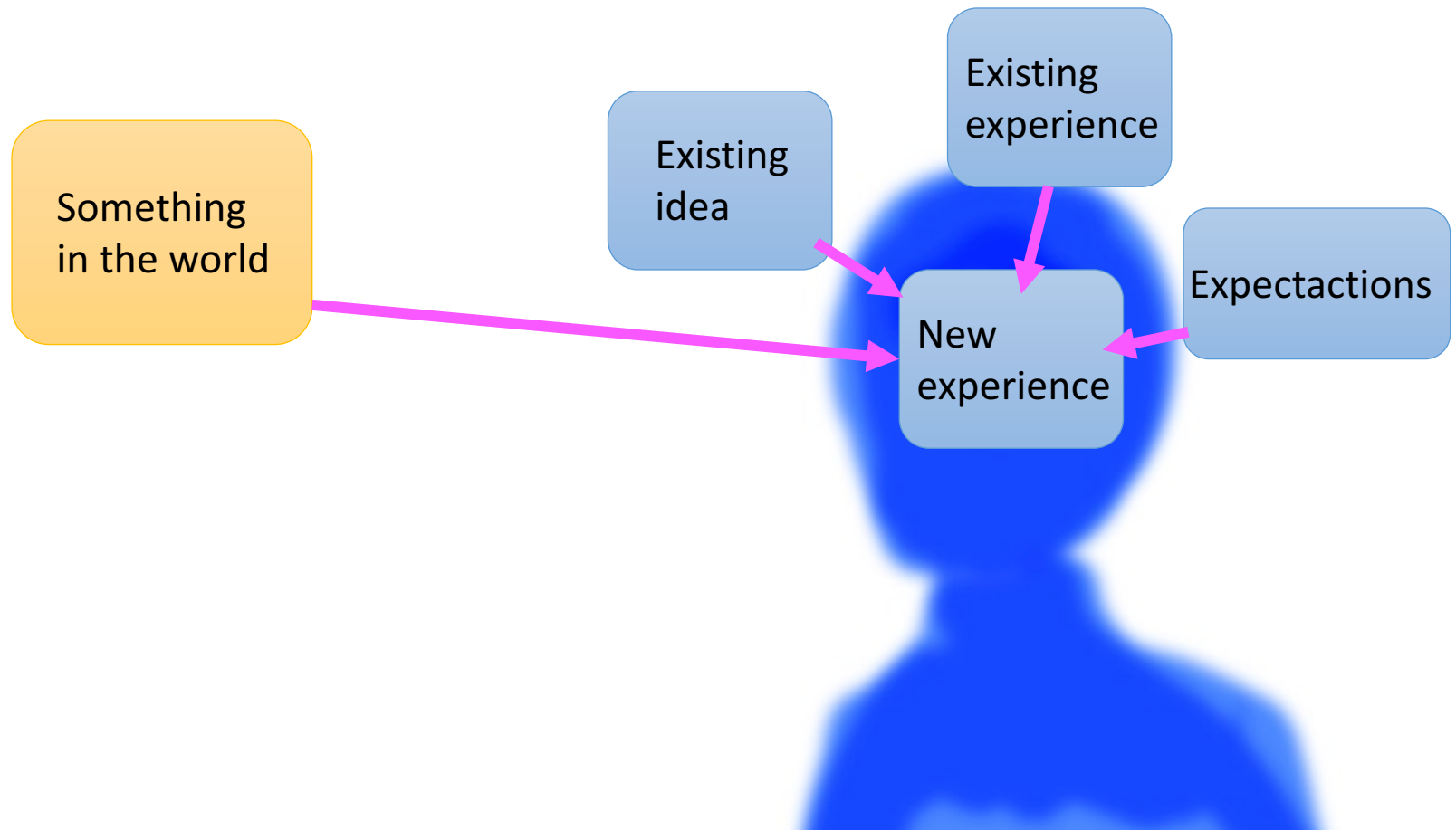
Two models of perceptual processing

Passive processing



Active* processing

* sometimes called “predictive” processing



Example

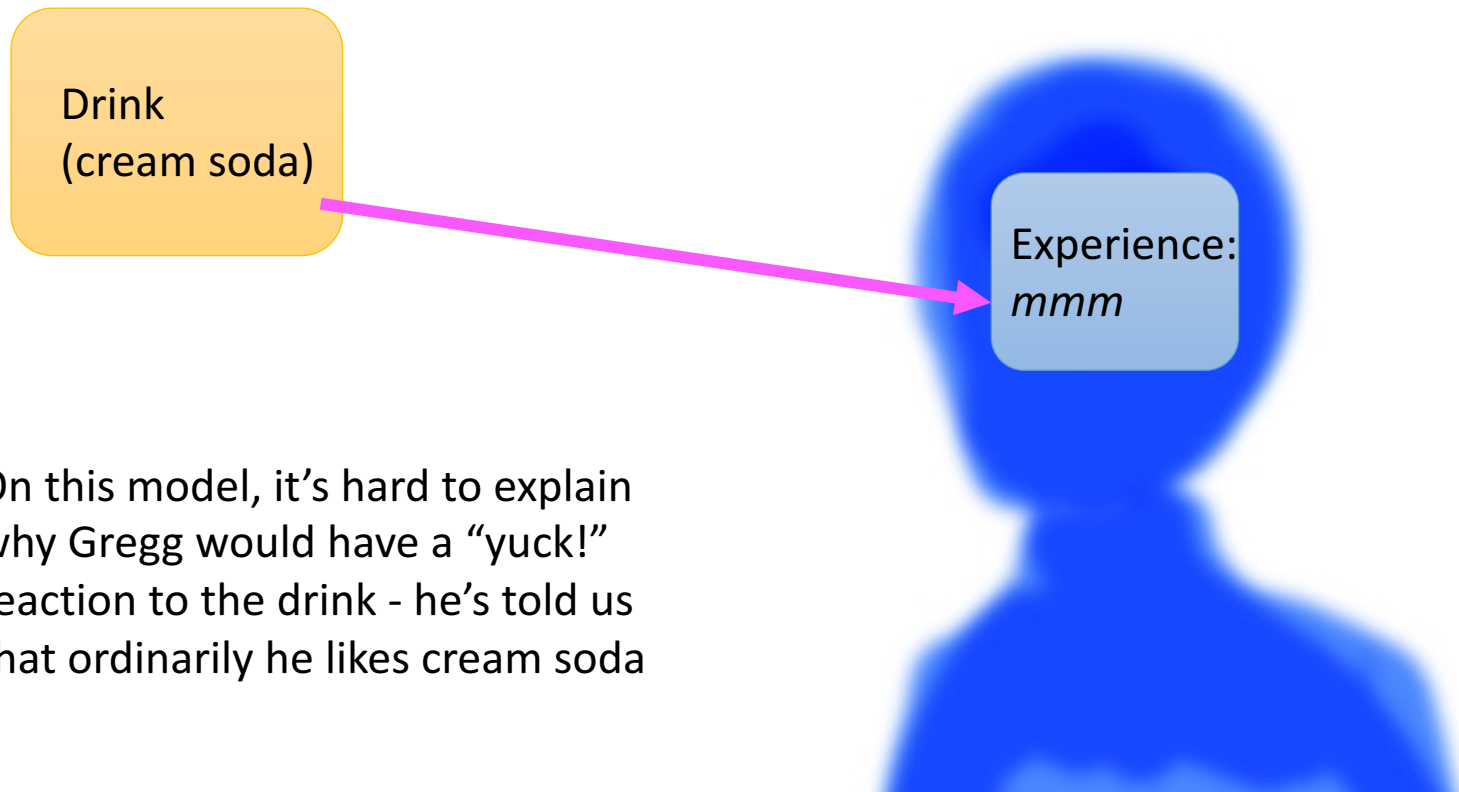
“One time, when I was in high school, my friend switched sodas on me. I thought I was taking a swig of Coca Cola, but he had replaced it with cream soda. I immediately spit it out, thinking it tasted horrible. But I generally like cream soda. So what gives?”

Gregg Henriques, “Perception and Perceptual Illusions”

<https://tinyurl.com/m1reading2>

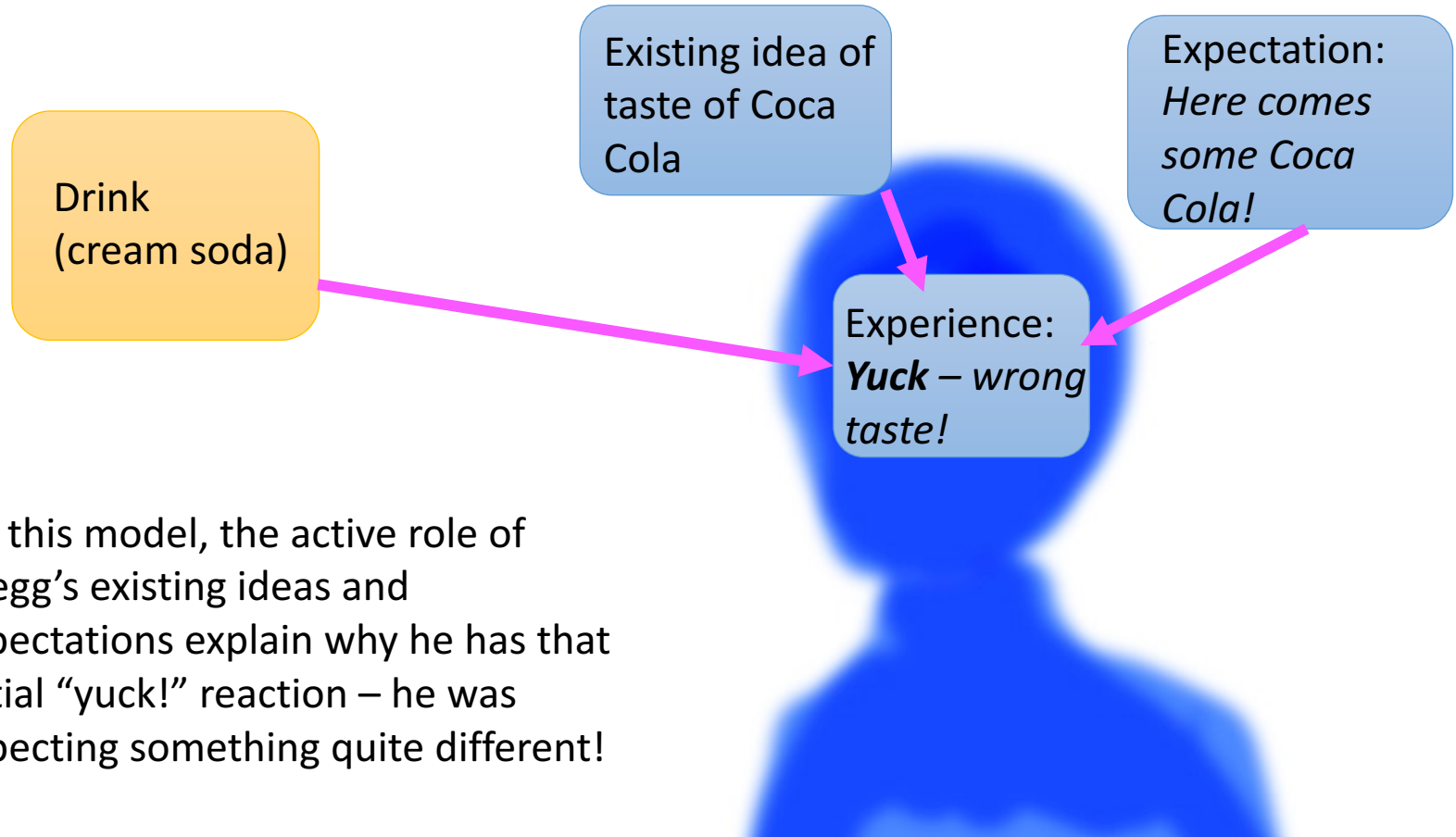
Which model, passive or active processing, better explains this example?

Passive processing



On this model, it's hard to explain why Gregg would have a "yuck!" reaction to the drink - he's told us that ordinarily he likes cream soda

Active processing



Illusion 1

[https://tinyurl.com/
illusionlink1](https://tinyurl.com/illusionlink1)

Illusion 2

<https://tinyurl.com/illusionlink2>

Active processing suggests that our existing ideas
can help us to make sense of reality

- even though they do not always represent things
which are “out there” or shared by other people.

3) What do the different models of perception mean for the naïve model?

Naïve model of unusual and unshared experiences

Recall that the naïve model makes 2 claims.

- 1) It associates these experiences with **illness** or **malfunctioning**
- 2) It says these experiences are **bad** for us.

Naïve model of unusual and unshared experiences

2) It says these experiences are **bad** for us.

i) Psychological costs:

These experiences make us *feel* bad.

ii) “Epistemic” (knowledge) costs:

These experiences do not depict reality. So they harm our *knowledge* of ourselves and the world.

A new model needed?

Optional reading for next session

1. Could Being Unrealistic Actually Be Good For Your Mental Health?

<https://tinyurl.com/m2reading1>

2. Why False Beliefs Are Not Always Bad

<https://tinyurl.com/m2reading2>