

# **A Dilemma for Russellian Monists about Consciousness**

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Paper available at <https://brown.academia.edu/AdamPautz>

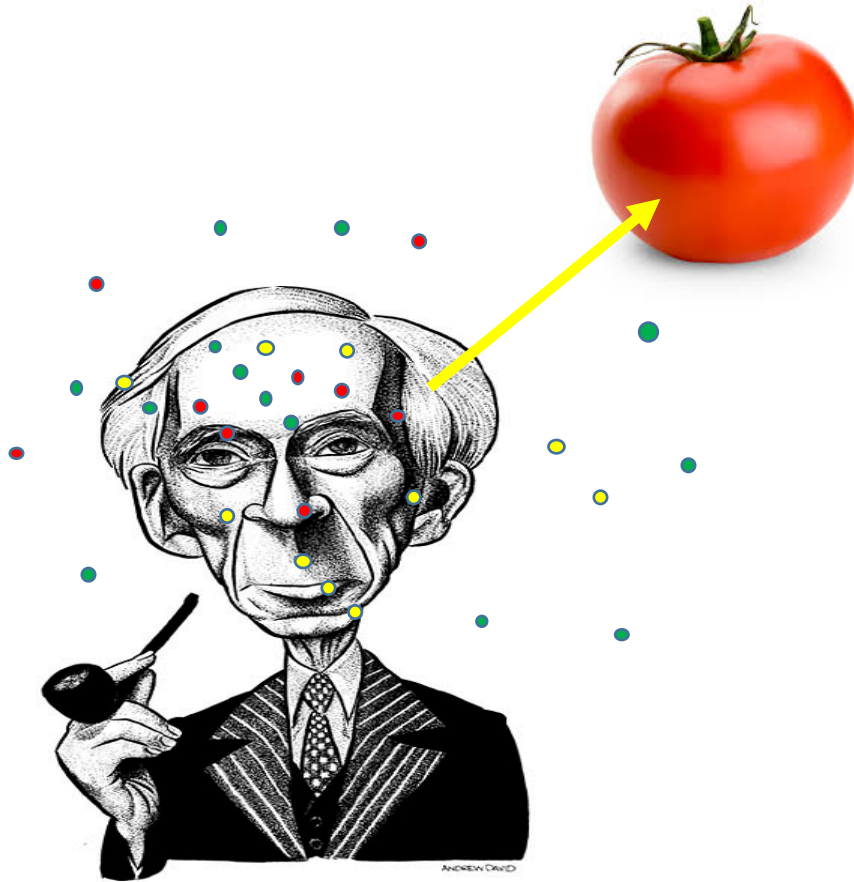
- **Chalmers:** RM – **combines virtues** of dualism **and** physicalism while avoiding their problems. Best of both!! “*Hegelian Synthesis*”!!
- **My talk:** raise a problem – not combination problem. Take form of dilemma.

***First, explain Russellian Monism and  
“Hegelian Synthesis”***

- Russell: physics gives a big Ramsey-sentence telling  **$(EP)(EQ)(P \text{ nomic role } X \text{ in laws } \& Q \text{ nomic role } Y)$**
- **RMs:** Every property – mass, charge - each has its own “substantial nature”, going beyond nomic role. Different properties could’ve played same role. “Quiddities”.

- *Example: **maybe**, in actual, phenomenal redness plays mass role, and phenomenal yellowness plays charge role.*
- *There are facts like this – but we'll never know them. Not colors. But pretend.*

# The main idea of Russellian monism

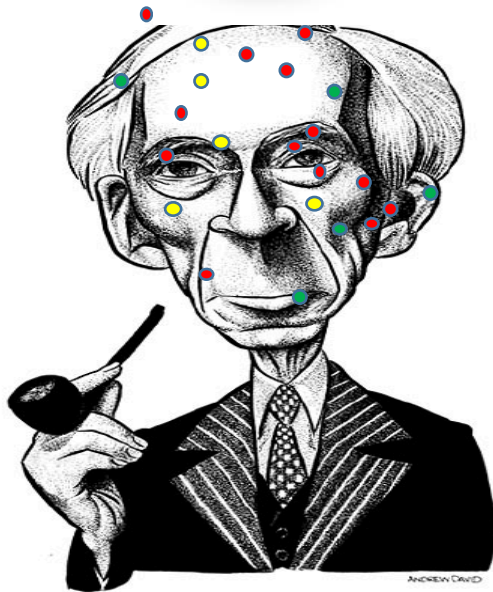


“Quiddities fill gap”. “No explanatory gap for God”, even if us. If quids. physical, weird form of a priori physicalism.

## Strange, but “Hegelian Synthesis”

- *Broadly speaking*, non-standard **physicalism** – **simple** and **uniform**, with distribution of quids. and nomic entailing.
- Also, *like dualists*, RMists can use “conceivability argument” to support their view, **while avoiding dualism.**

Like Dualists, **conceivability** against  
**\*standard\*** physicalism “accessible Zombie”



Don't Jump to  
Dualism.

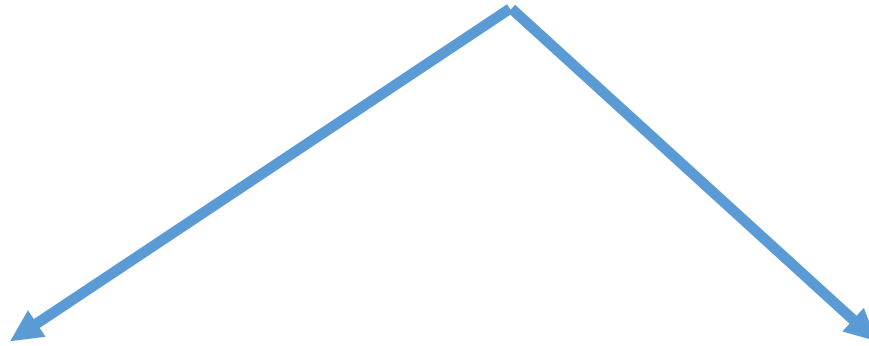
Another way:

**Quiddity-switching**





# A Dilemma



**“Reductive” RM**

Not a possibility!

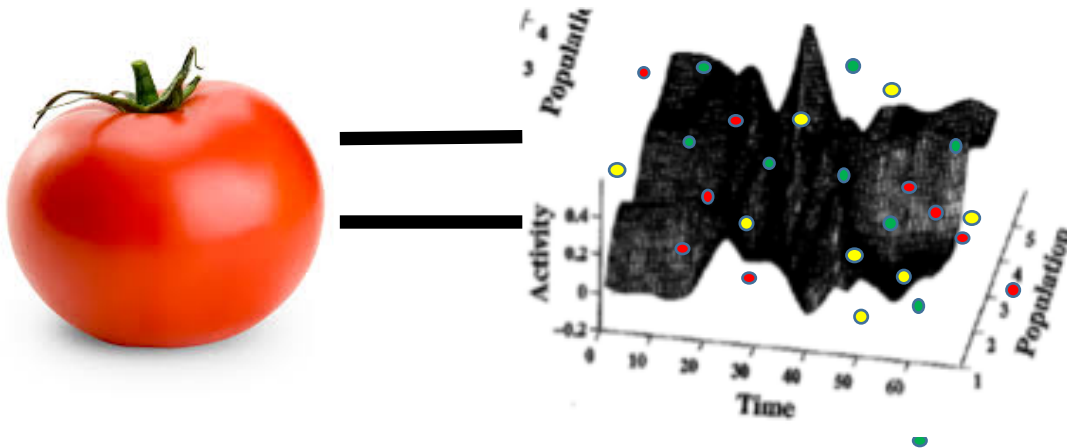
**“Primitivist” RM**

Similar to dualism

# **1<sup>st</sup>: “Reductive” Russellian Monism and Its Problems**

# To illustrate, simple “Reductive Russellian monism”

Let B be neural correlate - pattern

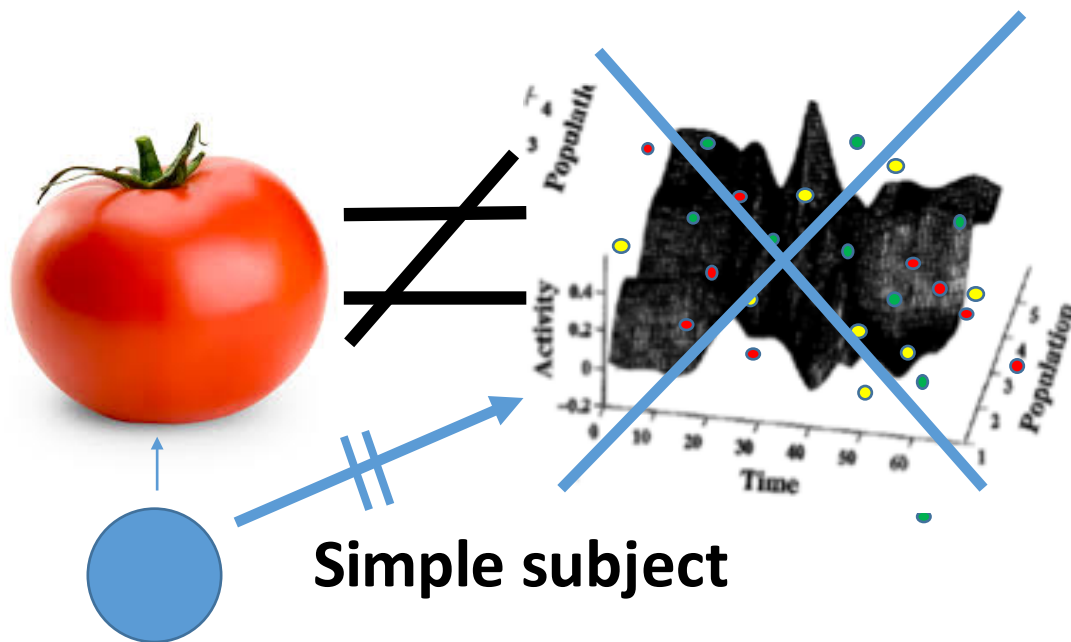


Let “B+” be B plus quiddities.  
Block, Papineau -  
but with quiddity-  
requirement  
added.

- All non-f **concrete things** just = **sums** built from fundamental physical things.
- All non-f **properties** = **complex properties** built from fundamental quiddities and “structural” properties.

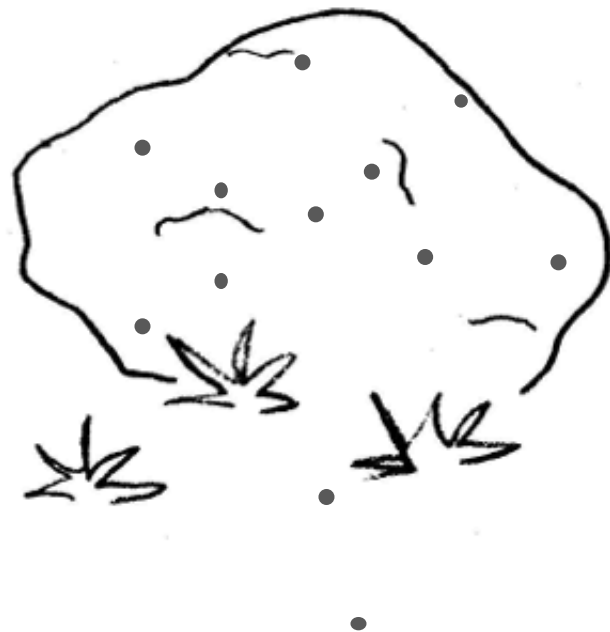
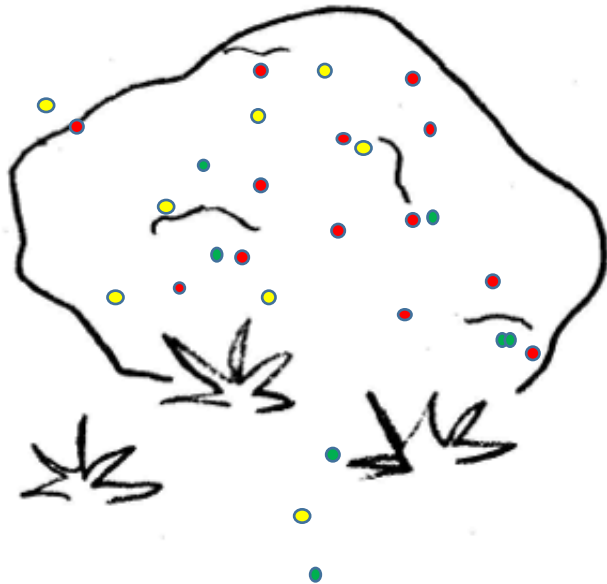
- RRM: a beautiful picture of the world – virtues of physicalism. A small handful of general “building principles” for things and properties is enough to explain the whole of the manifest image.
- But: I think Russellian monists just can’t accept it. RRM faces **three problems**.

# 1st: “The Problem of Simple Subjects”

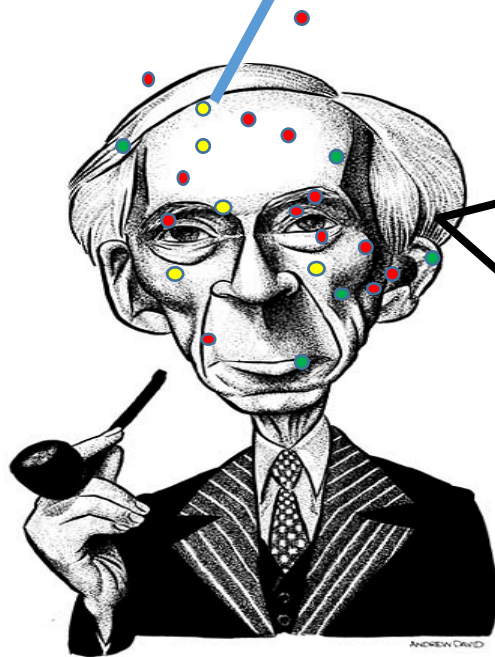


Remember RM  
use  
conceivability  
against SP. **But  
double edged  
sword.**

**2<sup>nd</sup> problem: “meta-semantic problem”**  
**Consider rock. Duplicate. Weird view.**  
**Problem: “*is a rock*”**

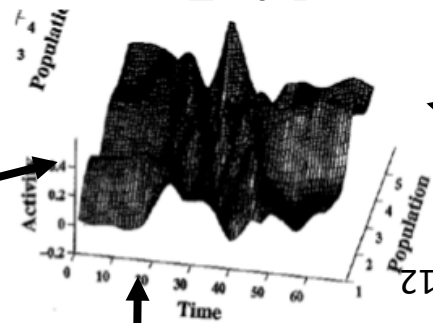


Go Back. **This type of experience** is great!" If quiddities, 2 candidates:

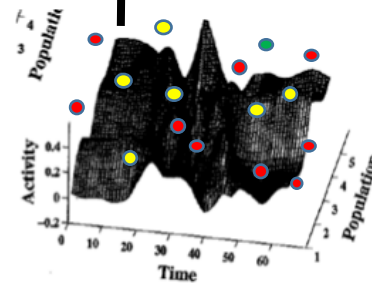


RUSSELL

1<sup>st</sup>: B

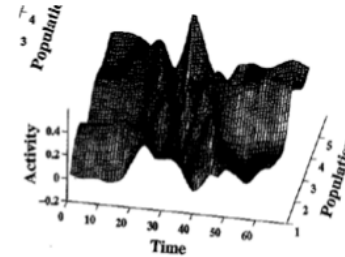
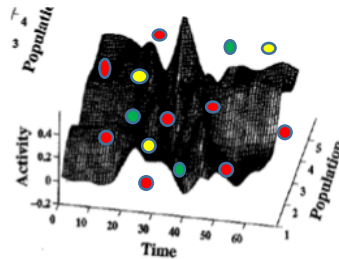


2<sup>nd</sup>: B+





“This”

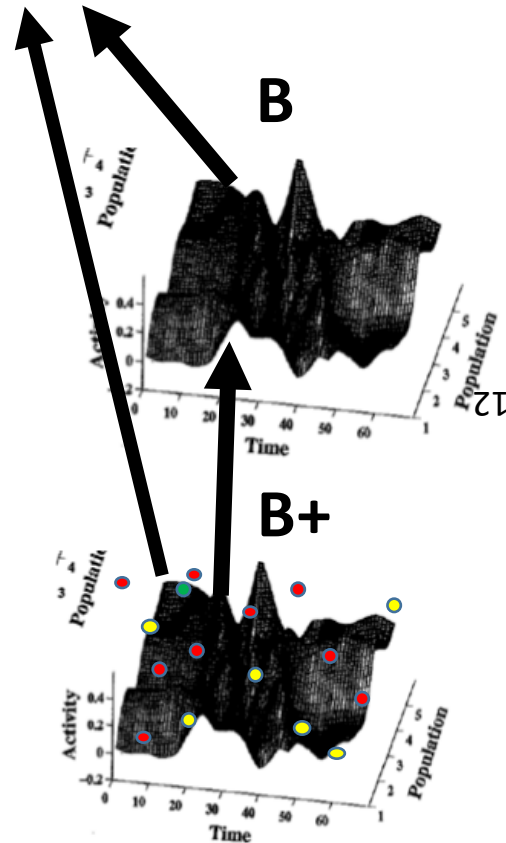


1. Commitment of RM that Russell's use of “This experience” DOESN'T refer to B (share), Rather, ***B+ - that only Russell has.*** “I'm having this but my poor twin isn't”
2. But then, if RRM, must also *reductive account*, in physical terms, of how “This” homes in on ***B+ and not B, tho' differ minutely.***
3. **But it can be argued there is no such account. Why believe this???**

# ***“This type of experience”***

WHAT'S THE  
“SEMATNIC  
GLUE”??

MARTIAN  
OBSERVER



~~Causation~~

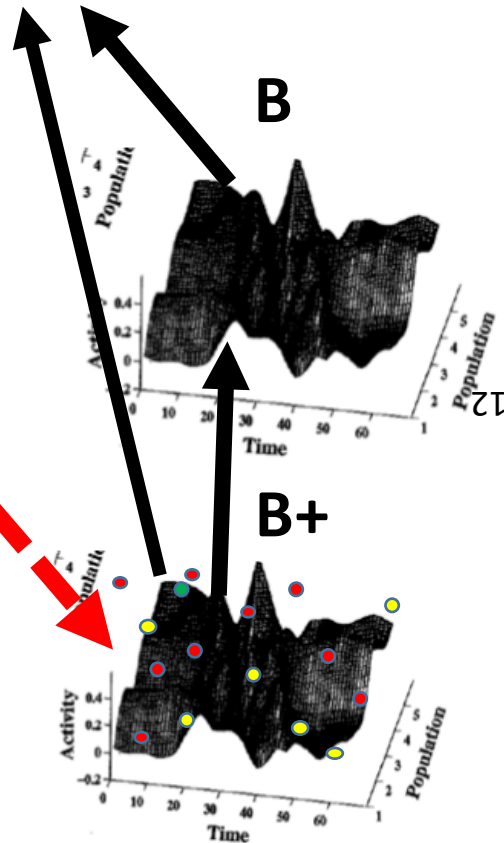
“Naturalness”

In general, if you  
look at physical  
facts, insufficient.



**“This type of experience”**

**ACQUAINTANCE  
TO THE  
RESCUE???**  
**Zoink!**



**Causation**

**“Naturalness”**

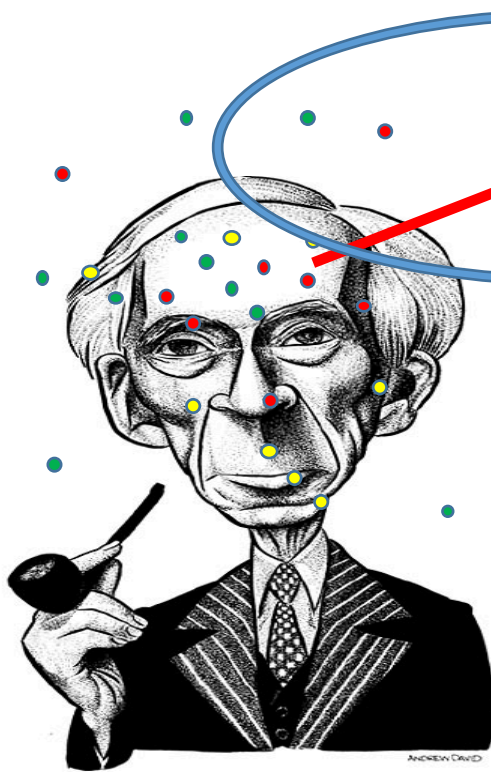
**Use**

**Descriptive Fit**

**3<sup>rd</sup> and final problem: “phenomenal representation”.**

- If **RRM**, not enough to say “experience is grounded in the quiddities” and go home.
- Must **work**: gesture at quiddity-involving *reductions* of puzzling mental facts.

# One puzzling mental fact: experience representational



Redness and roundness

**Given rep, RRM  
faces a new  
problem.  
What's reductive  
account of dyadic  
ph. rep relation?**

## Standard reductive (Dretske and Tye): “**tracking theory**”

- Sensible properties = physical properties instantiated in our environment.
- Phenomenally relation btw subjects & sensible properties = “tracking relation” = Subject X is in a physical state that is cognitively accessible and that **Normally** tracks the instantiation of property Y in external environment.

## Two Reasons RRM can't accept

**1<sup>st</sup> reason.** This tracking theory just a “standard” physicalist account - “**accessible** physical properties and relations”. Since into CA, can't accept.

**2<sup>nd</sup> problem.** Standard tracking – phenomenal externalism. RMs: **Phenomenal internalism.**

**Super non-standard: subject X  
phenomenally represents property Y iff  
X .....Y      We just have no idea!**

**“problem of  
phenomenal  
representation  
”**



Redness and roundness



**“If you can’t gesture at  
toy reduction, probably  
doesn’t exist”**



## **2<sup>nd</sup> Horn: “Primitivist” Russellian Monism**

# Analogy: Moorean view of normativity

ought-to-do-it-ness

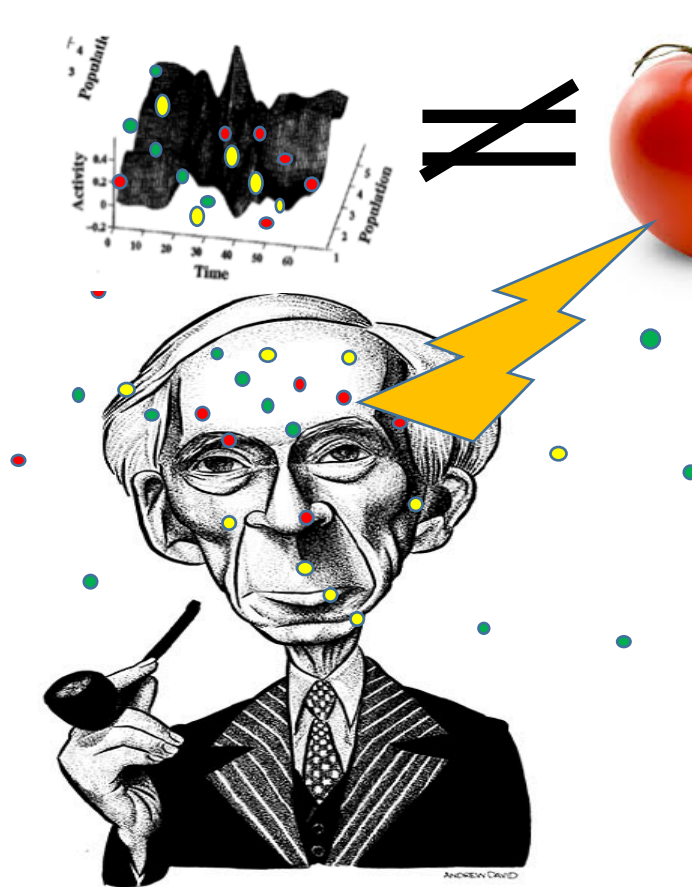
OUGHT  $\neq$  IS



**Grounding!!!!**

**Non-normative property – *saving the life of a baby***

# Primitivist Russellian monism

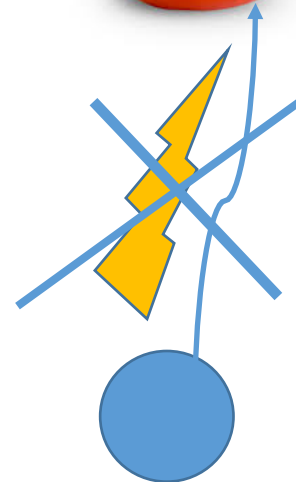
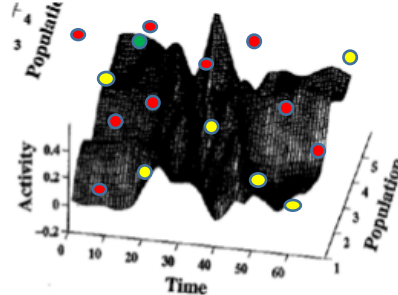
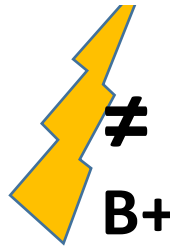


- (1) Unlike RRM, no “interesting” reductive account. Primitive.
- (2) Retain RM idea: no “Gap for God”. If God looked into Russell’s brain...

# First, accommodates “Simple subjects”

Since T-like  $\neq$   
complex  
physical ground,  
no problem!

Occurrence  
grounded in @,  
Not in SS world.



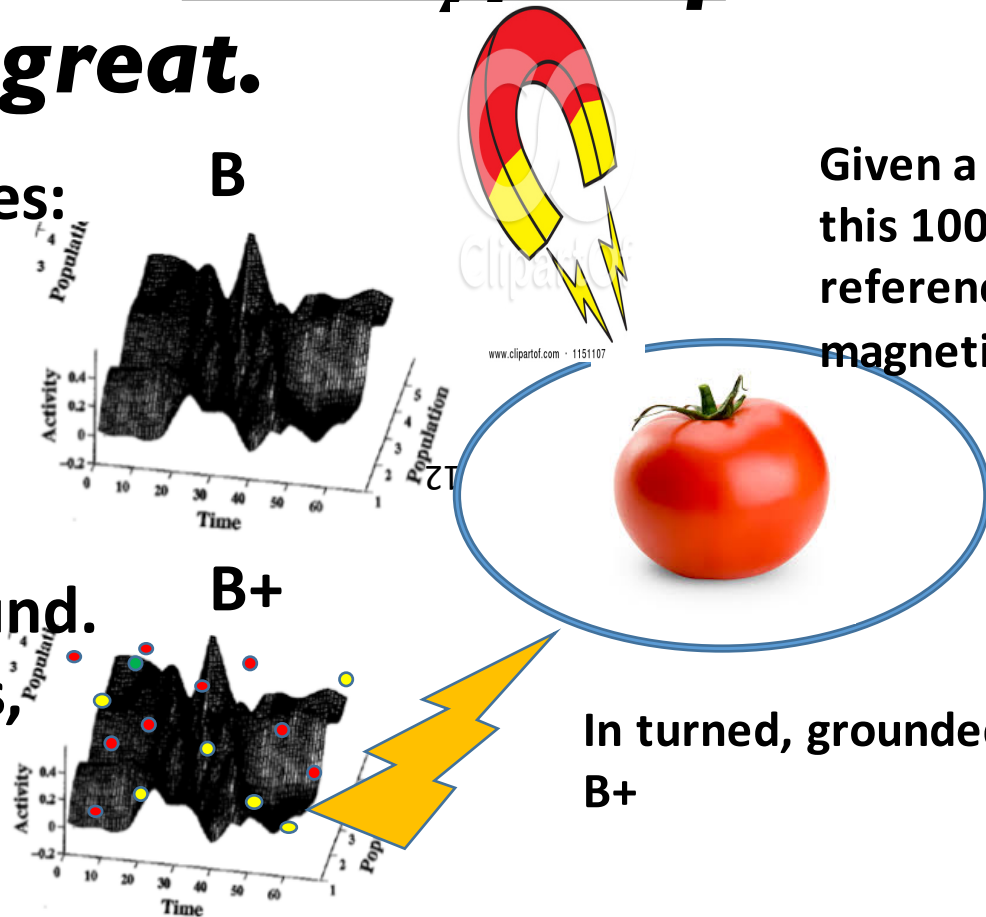
**Second, solve MS. “This type of experience” is great.**

Recall, RRM, 2 candidates:  
B+, B.

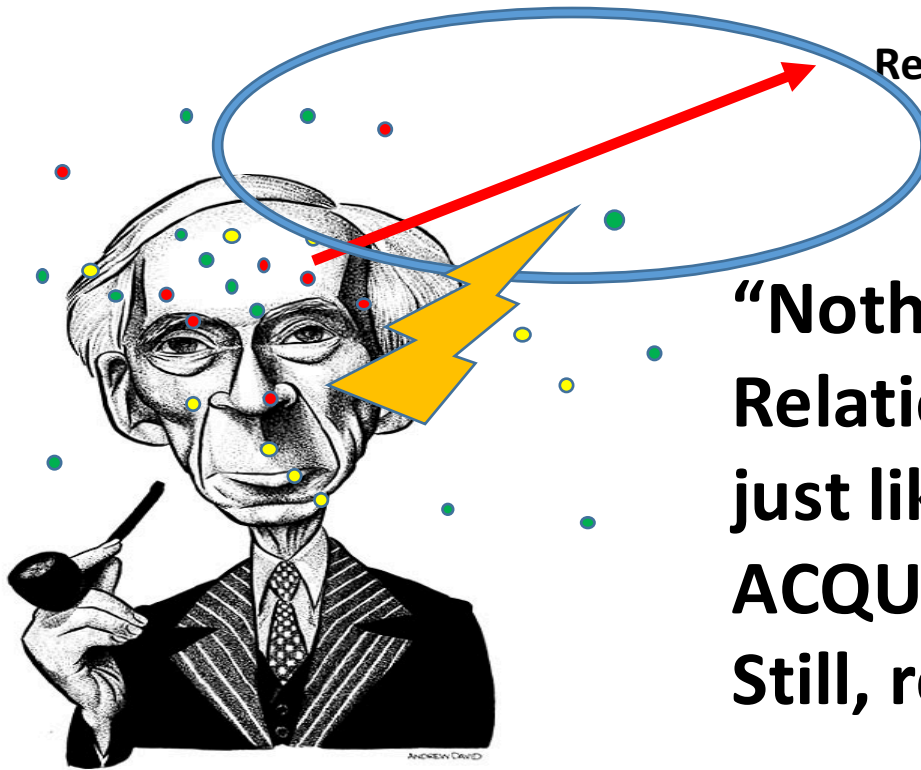
IN ADDITION, primitive  
experience.

Very different from ground.

Glows 100% naturalness,  
even if ground B+ is  
complex.



### 3<sup>rd</sup>: “The problem of phenomenal representation”



Redness and roundness

**“Nothing forbidden”.  
Relation primitive –  
just like Russell said  
ACQUAINTANCE is.  
Still, retain RM...**

BTW: Chalmers favors “primitivist Russellian monism”

“The nature [essence] of a phenomenal property is revealed by introspection although the grounds of a specific instance are not.”

# In what follows, “Primitivist RM”

## “Quite different”



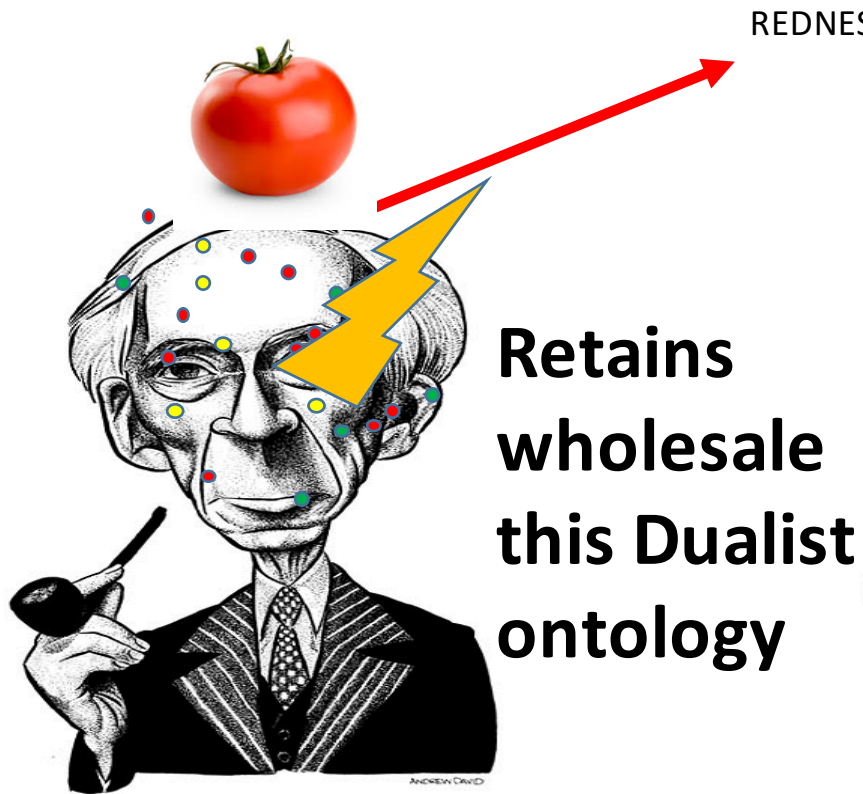
Redness and roundness

- (1) Relational/non-relational
- (2) 100% natural
- (3) Epistemically different.

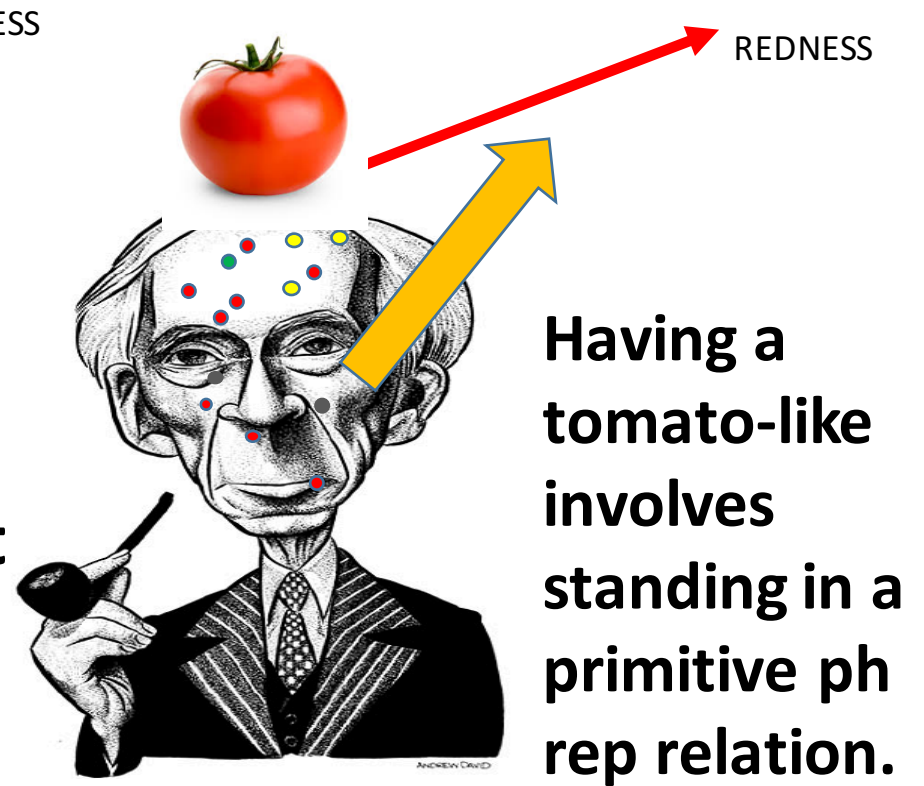


- PRM solves problems. Remains RM.  
What's wrong with it?
- Not false, not well motivated.***  
Remember “HS” argument. “Combines virtues of physicalism **and dualism** while avoiding problems.” **But not PRM!!!**

Indeed, PRM **similar to dualism – in fact:**



PRIMITIVIST RUSSELLIAN MONISM



CHALMERS'S PROPERTY DUALISM.

**Agree form “Psychophysical laws”**

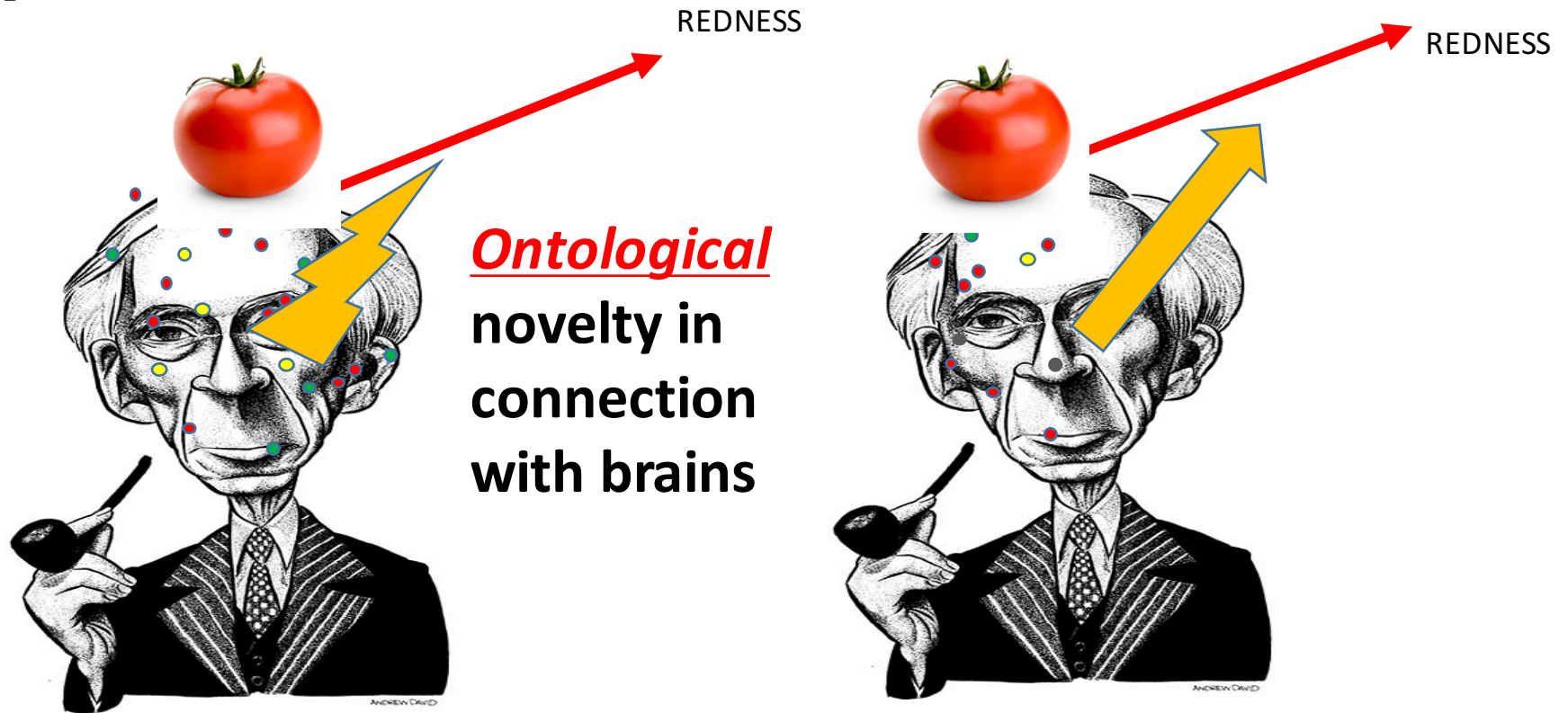
**Some  $f$ , necessarily, if some one has brain state B, then, because of this, they are in distinct state of standing in the primitive PR relation to  $f(B)$ .**

**--Only Difference, Property Dualist:** a posteriori and contingent.

**--PRM: speculative,** if knew quiddities of brain states, see **a priori** that this law records systematic, **metaphysically necessary** con. between brain states and quite different experiential conditions.

- Since so similar, PRM shares the same traditional problems as dualism.
- So Chalmers's "Hegelian synthesis" argument for RM fails. It's NOT the case that RM combines the virtues of physicalism and dualism while avoiding their problems.

# (I) BOTH FACE NON-UNIFORM



- Non-uniform in stock of principles.
- **Property dualists:**  
**“nomological danglers”,**  
contingent psychophysical laws  
that are anomalous, totally  
different from contingent laws of  
physics in the rest of nature.

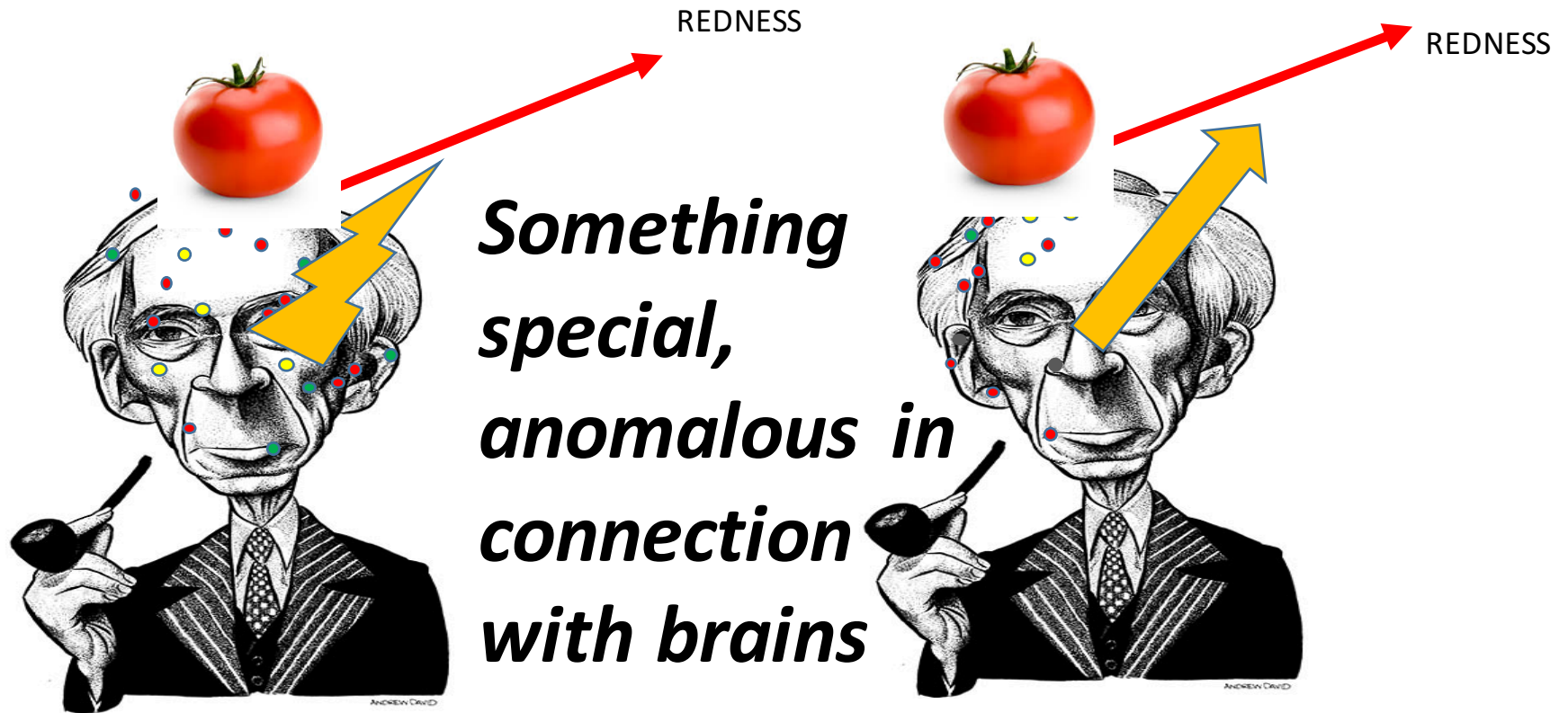
- P-Russellian Monist: **“a priori danglers”**.  
After all, same psychophysical laws as the dualist, connecting brain states with **quite different experiences**, but speculates that **they’re a priori**.
- **Where else in nature: functional laws that systematically connect QUITE DIFFERENT ranges of properties THAT ARE A PRIORI?**

Answer: **Nowhere!**

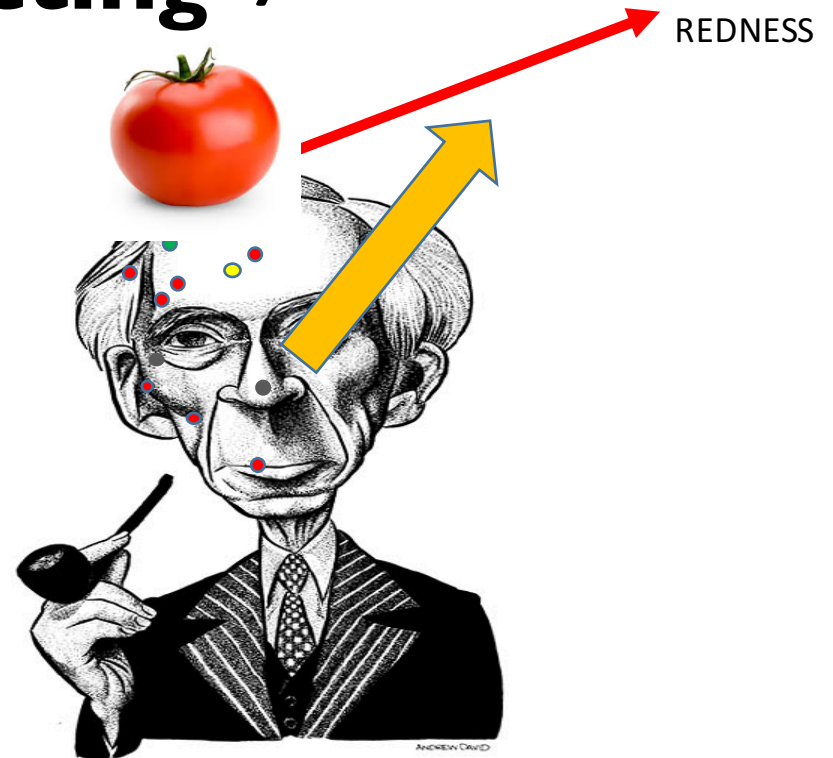
- Rest of nature, a priori principles: logical truths, determinates-determinable, **maybe** composition.
- PRM: speculates occurrence of experiences is explained by a priori connections of **TOTALLY DIFFERENT, AND WHOLLY NOVEL SORT.**  
**On one hand laws, on other a priori.**



# EQUALLY NON-UNIFORM VIEWS OF NATURE

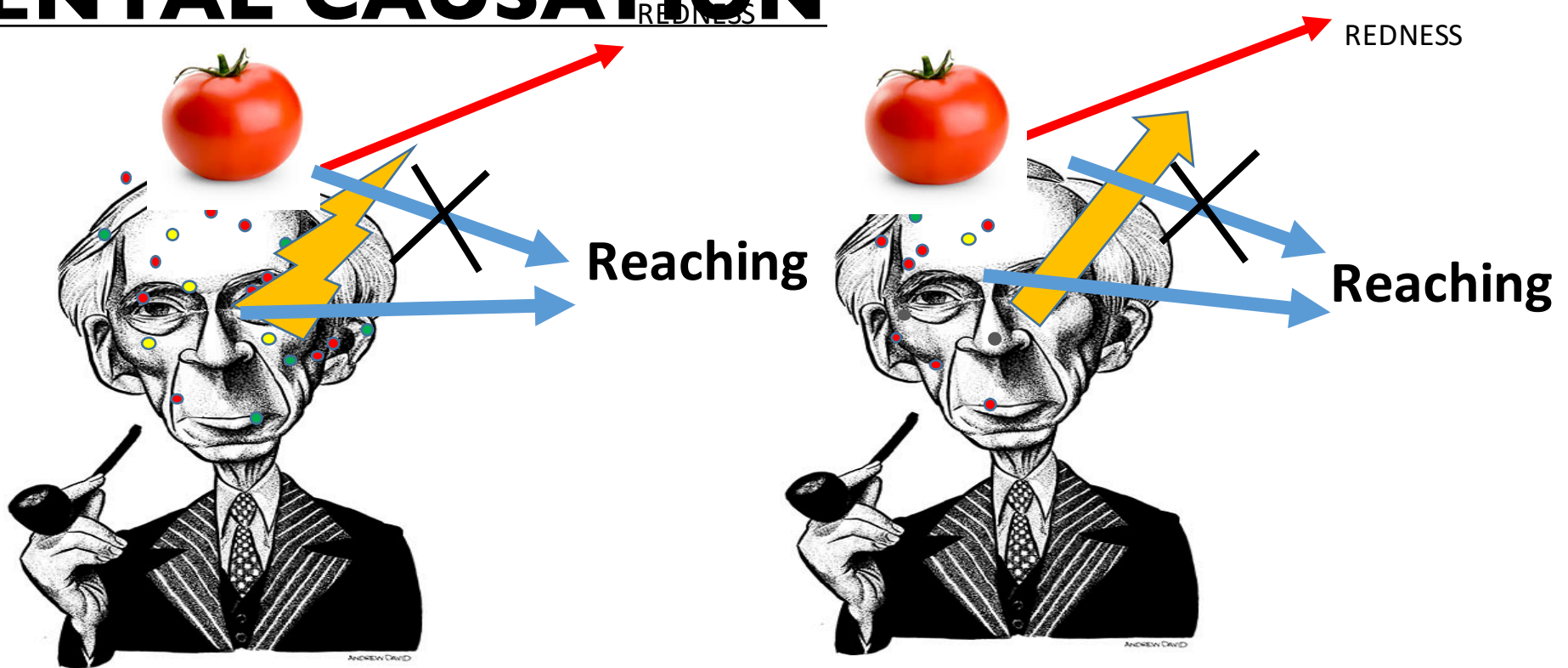


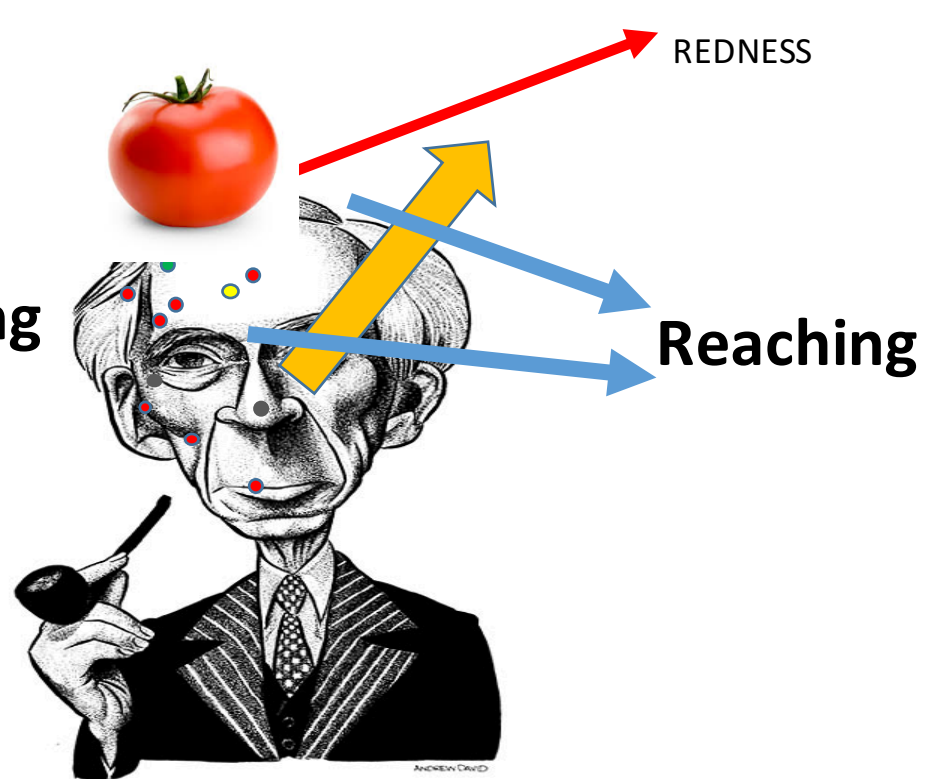
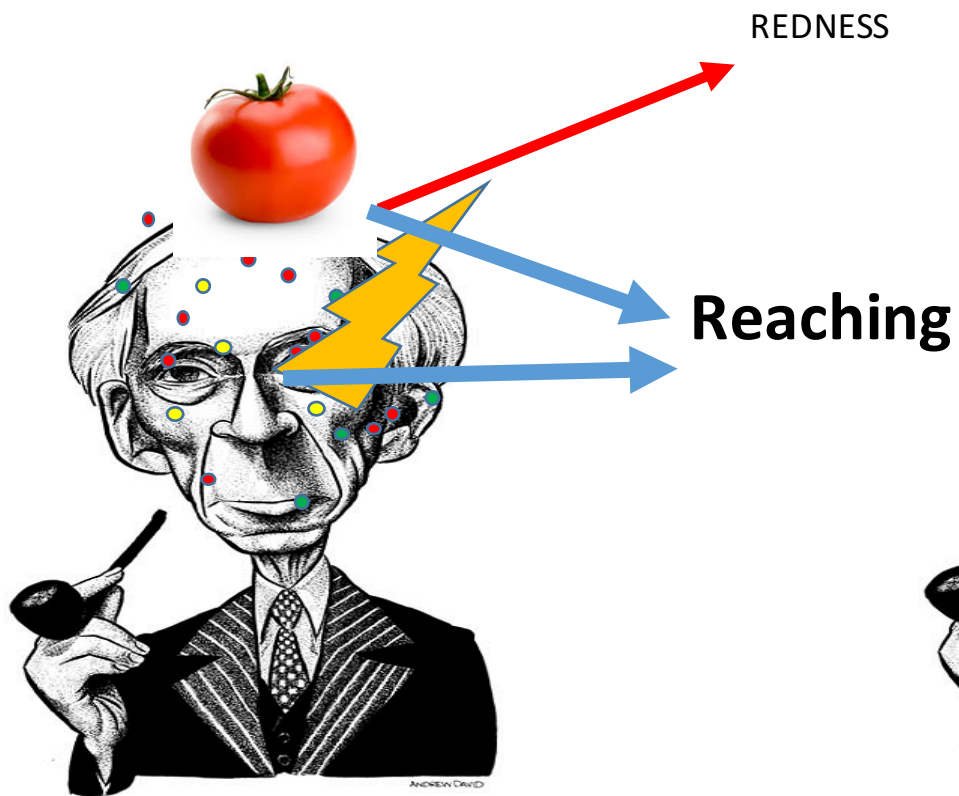
# **ALSO, COMPLEX -- SAME SYSTEM** **OF PSY LAWS connecting $\neq$**



- **Analogy:** Suppose empiricist like D. Lewis **fundamental physical laws**. Now suppose Leibniz comes along.
- Do we, right now, have a **simplicity-based** reason to prefer Leibniz's view that laws of physics are a priori & necessary, over Lewis's view?

# ALSO FACE EQUALLY PROBLEM OF MENTAL CAUSATION





## ***FINALLY, BOTH FACE A PROFOUND IGNORED PROBLEM ABOUT “LUCK”***

- Dualist: lucky that laws fine-tuned yield “congruent experiences”.
- PRM: Dull-pain scenario: same in all accessible physical respects, but dull-pain. Conceivable!!
- How possible? Sucky quiddities. Why not actual? **Quiddistic fine-tuning.**

## Conclusion

- **If you use CA reject standard physicalism . . . . .**
- NOT- ***reductive*** RM.
- ***Primitivist*** RM or Dualism. But on a par.

**THANKS**