

Rehabilitating Reasoning in Schizophrenia

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Reasoning in schizophrenia appears to lie beyond the bounds of sense. For example, how are we to make sense of believing that one's partner is unfaithful because the fifth-lamppost along on the left is unlit? By analyzing empirical results on biases in schizophrenia, I argue that reasoning in schizophrenia not only is within the bounds of sense, but in fact overlaps with ordinary reasoning. Delusion-leading reasoning in schizophrenia is the result of setting epistemic parameters in familiar ways, indeed, in ways that we praise in other contexts: setting low evidential thresholds for accepting hypotheses, and preferring first-personal experience over testimony as a source of evidence. This constitutes an epistemic style expressive of a transgressive, independent epistemic personality. Reasoning in schizophrenia is genuine, intelligible reasoning, in a continuum with ordinary cognition. Indeed, patients are excused for inhabiting this epistemic style in the context of making sense of strange experiences.