

Minds and Machines

spring 2003

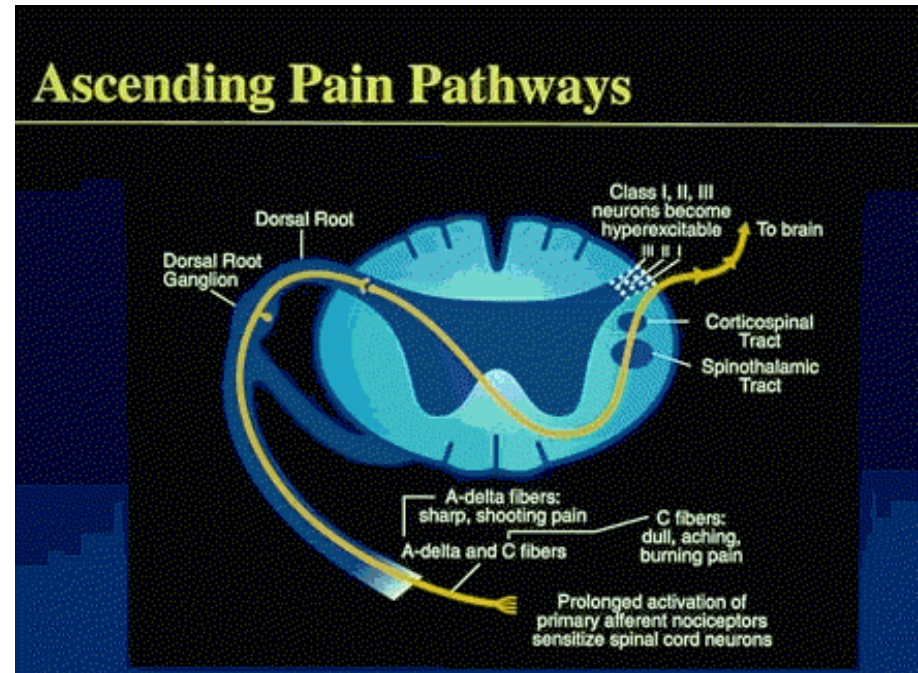
The identity theory, contd.

preliminaries

- problem set 3
- web slides
- pop quiz

the identity theory

- proposed by JJC Smart and UT Place in the 1950s
- a “theoretical identity”
water=H₂O
heat=molecular kinetic energy
pain=c-fibers firing
(“c-fibers” is just a placeholder for a more realistic candidate)



the property of being in pain = the
property of having firing c-fibers

=>

every event of feeling pain is identical to
an event of c-fibers firing (and vice
versa)

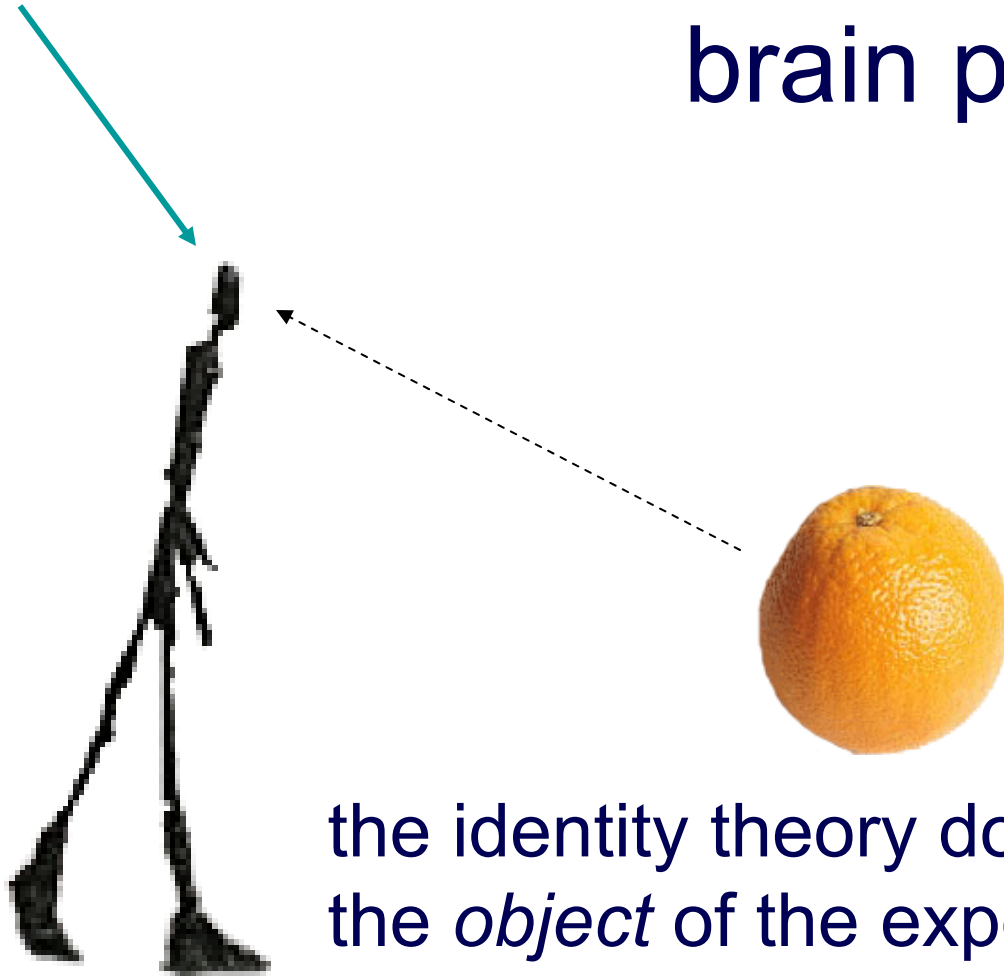
- so the so-called “type-type” identity theory implies a strong sort of token-token identity theory

the experience vs. the object of
the
experience



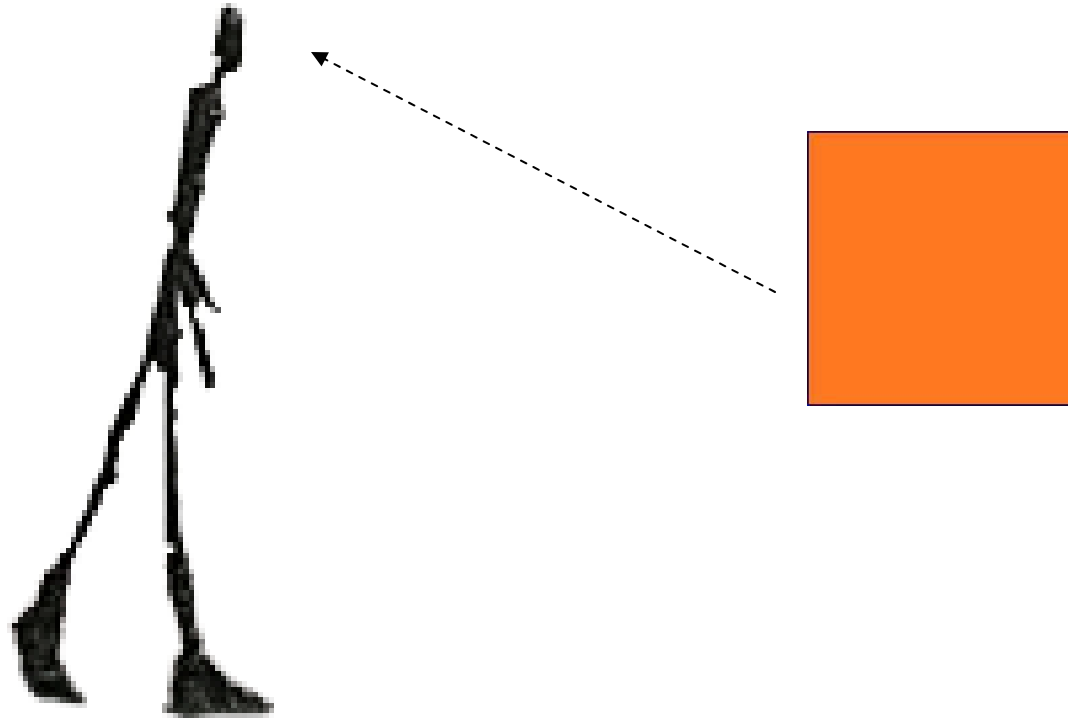
the *object* of the experience is colored orange, not the experience itself

the *experience* = such-and-such
brain process

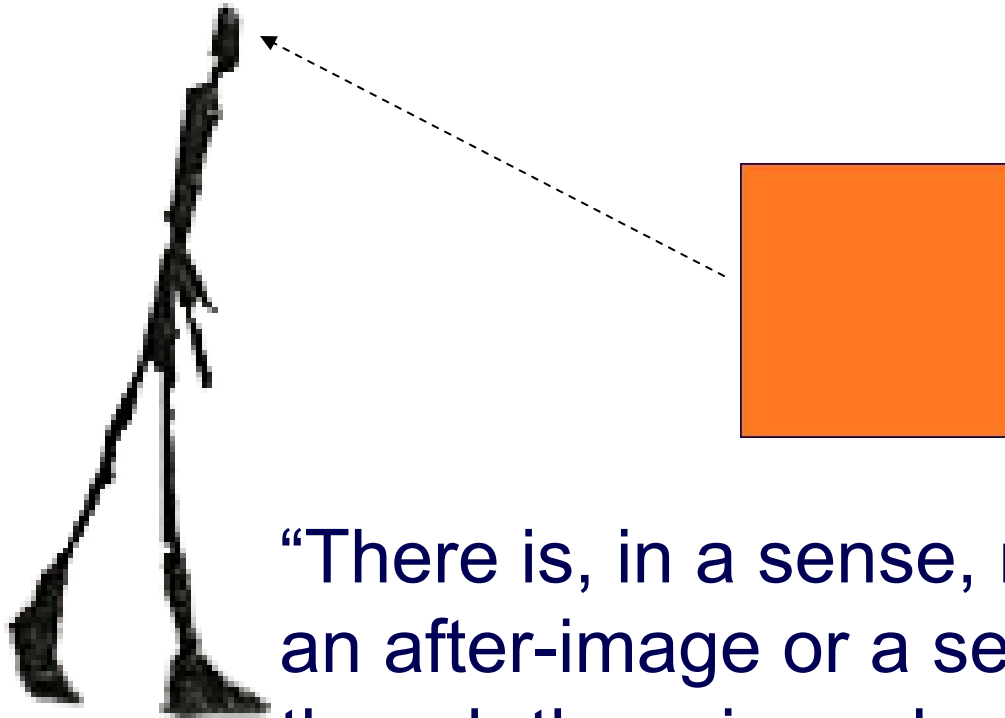


the identity theory does not identify
the *object* of the experience with a
brain process

Objection: the after-image is orange, but the brain process is not orange. So the after-image is not a brain process. (cf. “Objection 4”)



“I am not arguing that the after-image is a brain process, but that the experience of having an after-image is a brain process...”

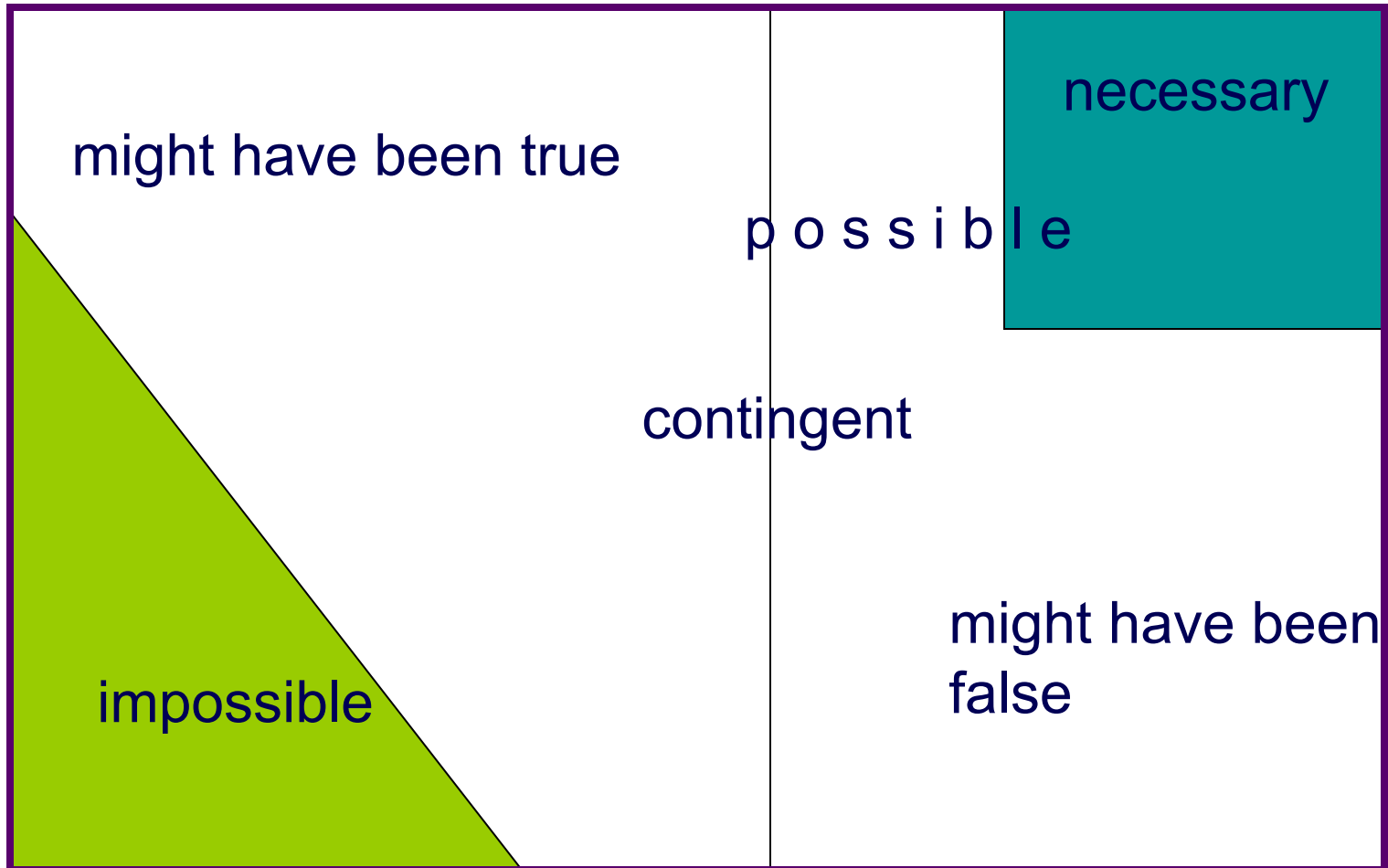


“There is, in a sense, no such thing as an after-image or a sense-datum, though there is such a thing as the experience of having such an image”

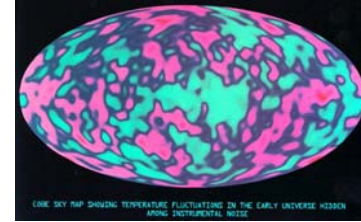
Kripke's objection

propositions

false : true



possible worlds



- “complete stories” -- maximal ways the world might have been
- a proposition is necessary iff it is true at every possible world
- a proposition is possible iff it is true at some possible world

the necessity of identity

Consider any object ***a***. ***a*** is identical to itself.
Further, ***a*** couldn't possibly have been identical to something else.

In other words, necessarily ***a*** is identical to itself.
(In every possible world, ***a*** is identical to itself.)

NB: do not confuse this thesis with the claim that names or other expressions in natural languages are “rigid designators”. The necessity of identity is not a thesis about language at all.

rigid designators

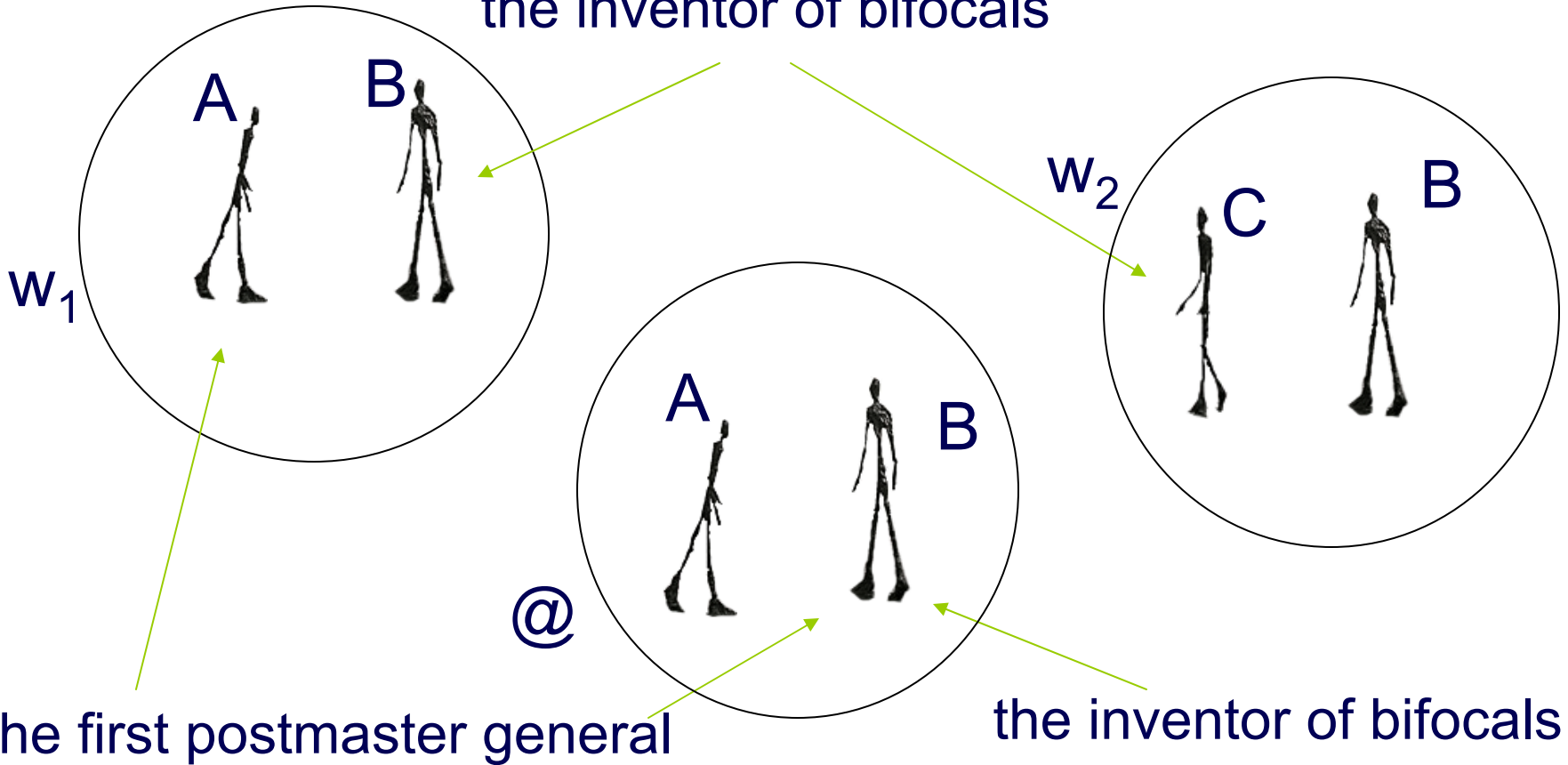
Imagine some possible world w . Consider the questions: “Who (or what) is T in w ?”, and “Who (or what) is T in the actual world?” (or, simply, “Who (or what) is T ?”).

If, for every world w , these questions have the *same* answer -- namely, “A certain object o ” -- then ‘ T ’ is rigid.

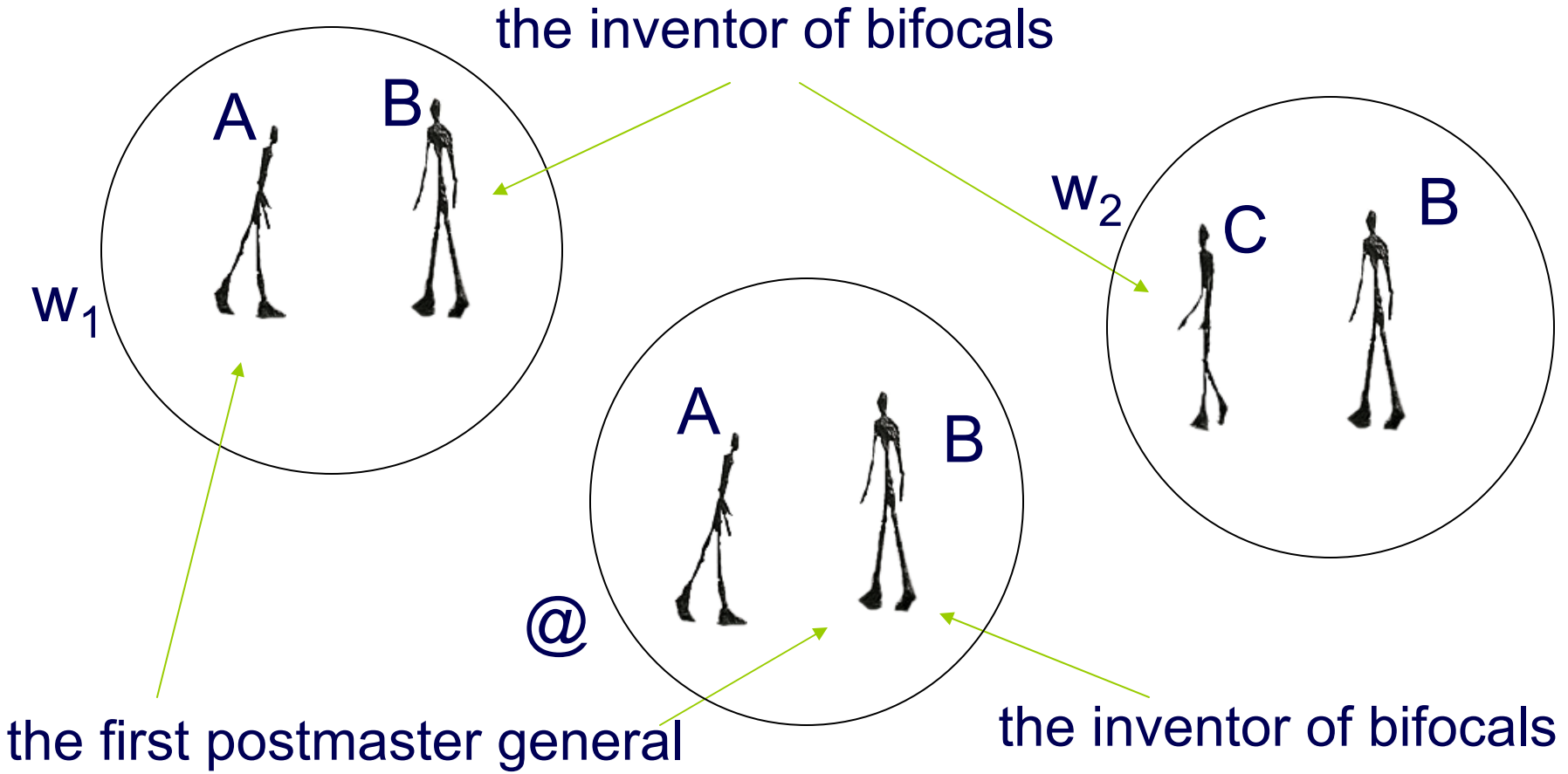
If the questions can be read so that the answer to one is “A certain object o ”, and the answer to the other is “A certain object o^* ”, and o and o^* are different objects, then ‘ T ’ is not rigid.

some possible worlds

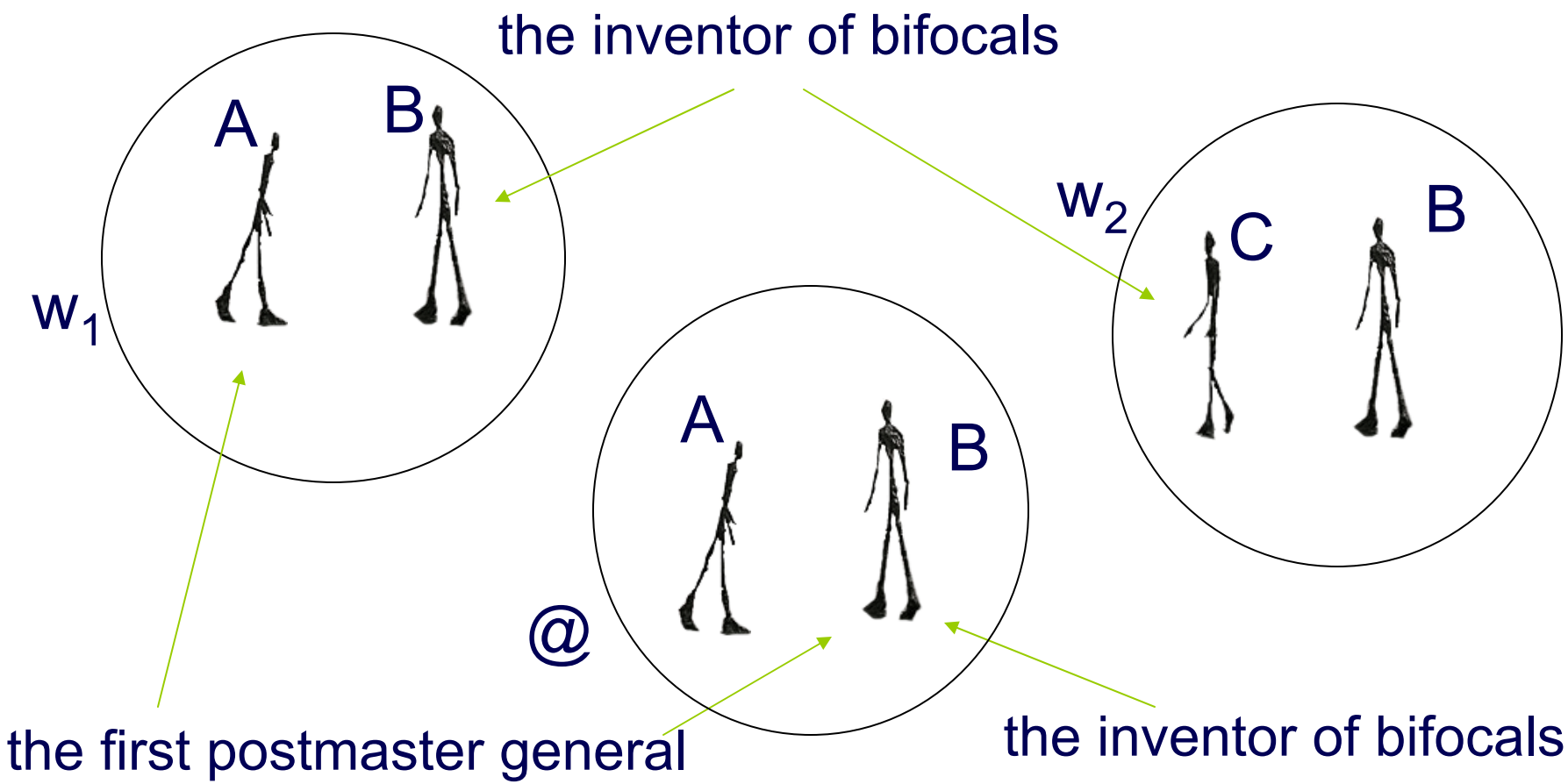
the inventor of bifocals



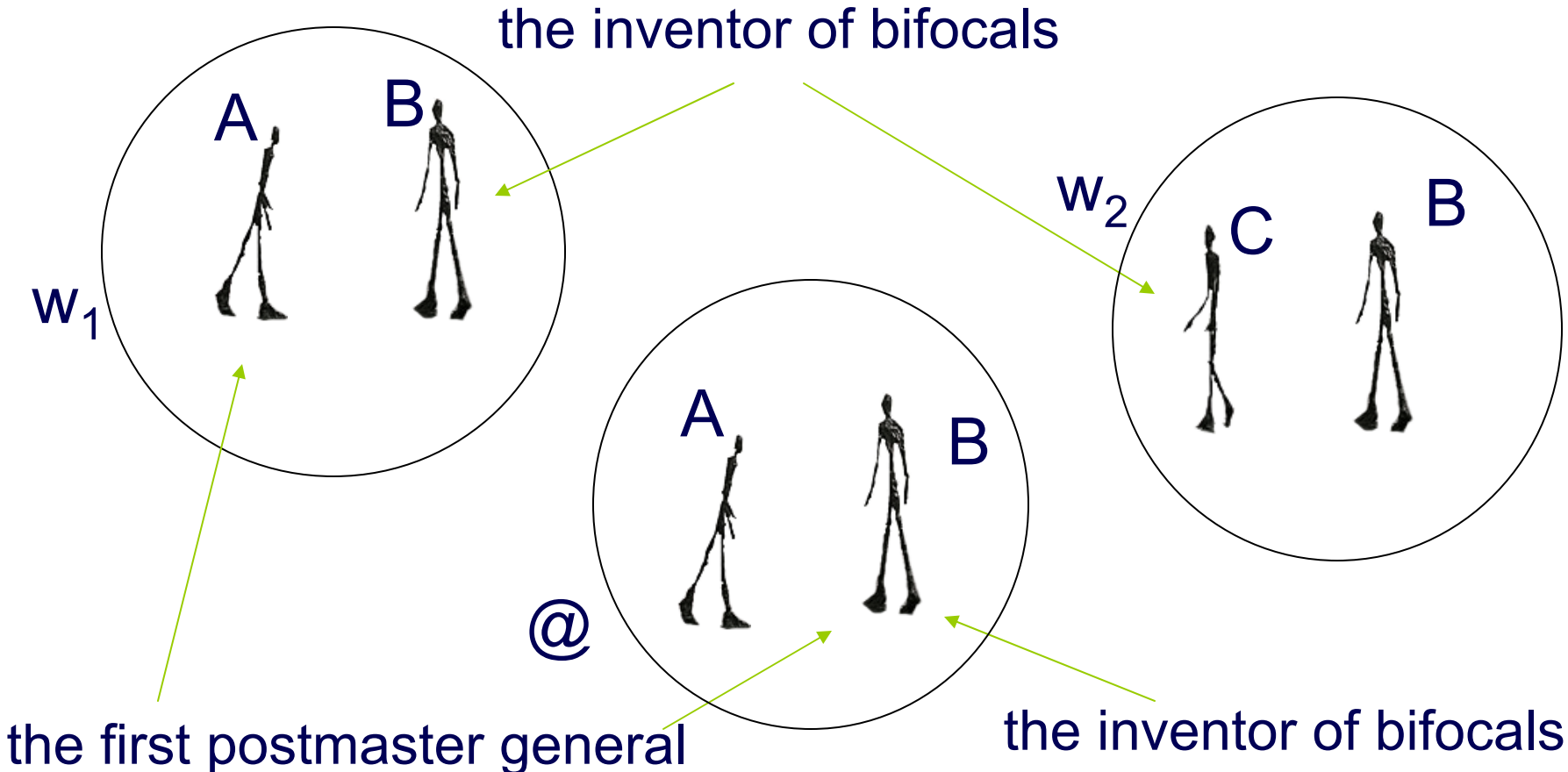
- Who is the inventor of bifocals in @?
- B



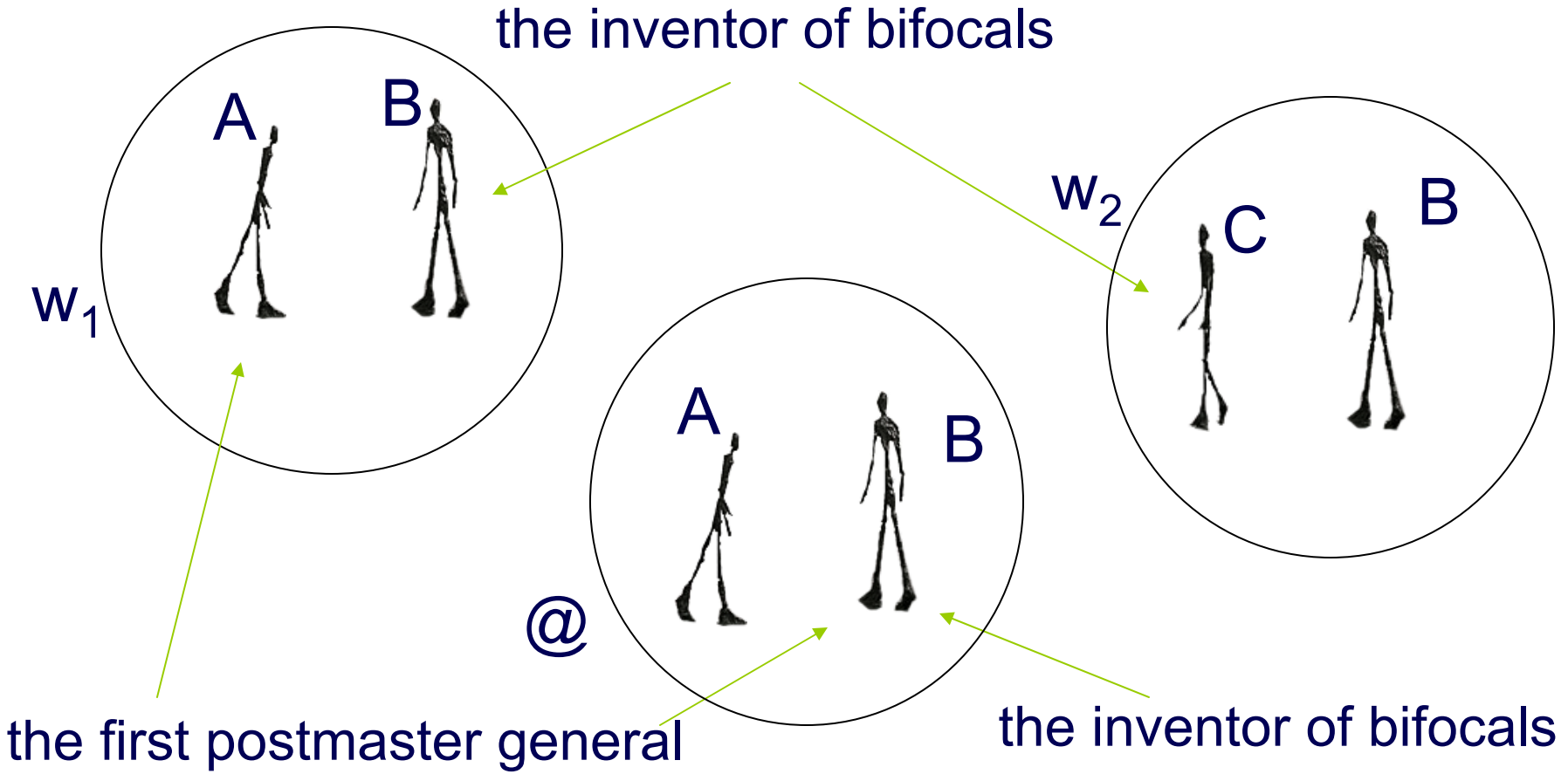
- Who is the inventor of bifocals in W_1 ?
- B
- Who is the inventor of bifocals in W_2 ?
- C (a person other than B)



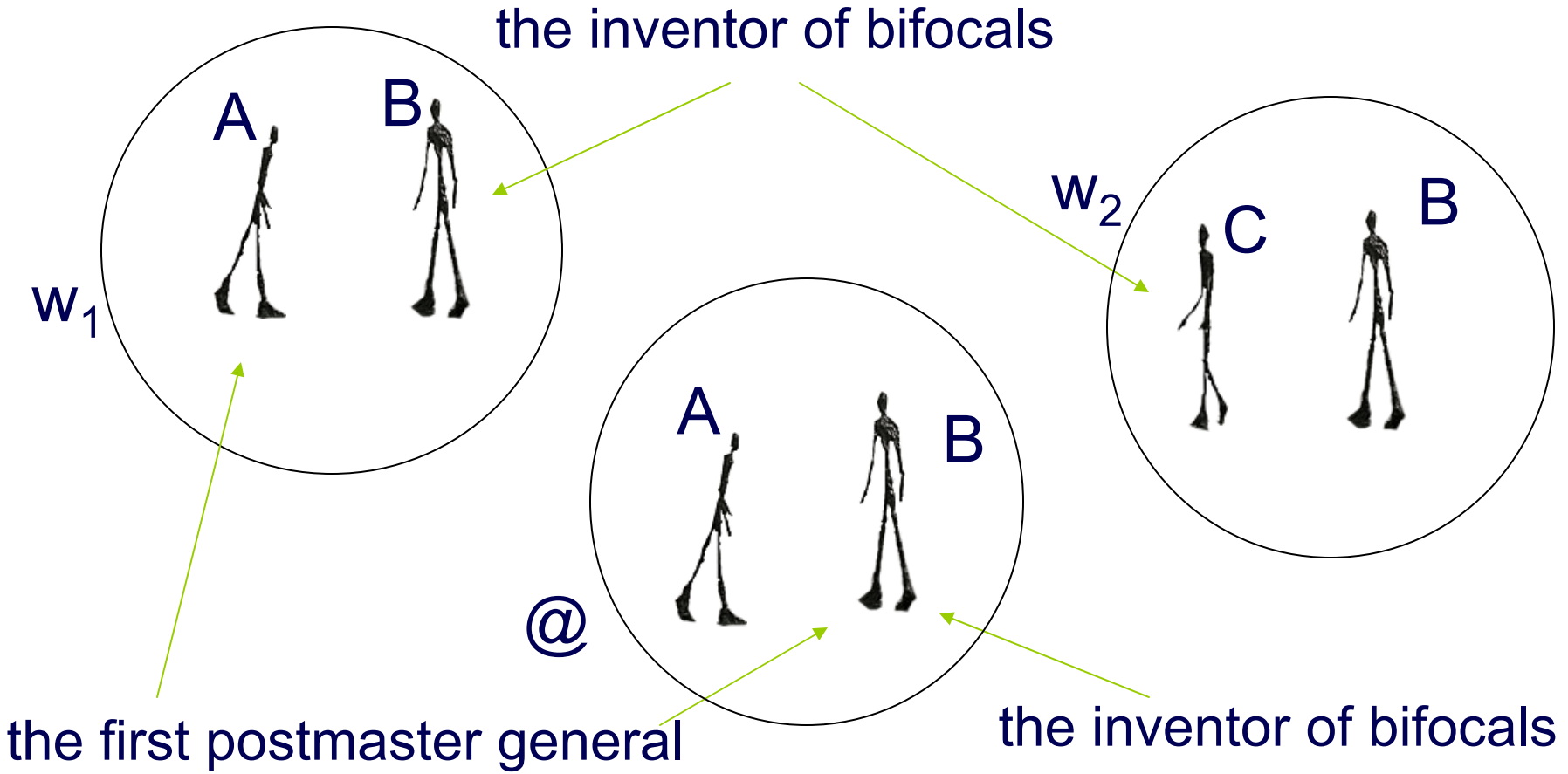
➤ So, 'the inventor of bifocals' is not rigid



- Who is Benjamin Franklin in @?
- B
- Who is Benjamin Franklin in W_1 ?
- B (ditto W_2 , etc.)



➤ So, 'Benjamin Franklin' is rigid



identity statements and rigid designators

- 'The inventor of bifocals = the first postmaster general' is contingent
- 'The inventor of bifocals = Ben Franklin' is contingent
- 'Samuel Clemens = Mark Twain' is necessary
- If 'A' and 'B' are rigid, then 'A = B' is, if true, *necessarily* true

according to Kripke, the following are
rigid designators

- proper names like 'Benjamin Franklin', 'Avril Lavigne'
- nouns for "natural kinds", like 'heat', 'tiger', 'water', 'c-fibers'
- nouns for sensations like 'pain'

so, according to Kripke, the following identities are necessarily true, if true at all

- heat=molecular kinetic energy
- pain=c-fibers firing

argument D

1. If I can clearly and distinctly conceive a proposition **p** to be true, then **p** is possible. (“[E]verything which I clearly and distinctly understand is capable of being created by God so as to correspond exactly with my understanding of it” (p. 16).)
2. I can clearly and distinctly conceive that the proposition that my mind is not identical to my brain is true.

Therefore:

3. It is possible that my mind is not my brain (there is a “possible world” in which my mind is not my brain).

Therefore:

4. My mind is not my brain.

argument K_1

1. If I can clearly and distinctly conceive a proposition p to be true, then p is possible.
2. I can clearly and distinctly conceive that there is heat without mke (and vice versa). That is, I can clearly and distinctly conceive that the proposition that heat=mke is not true.

Therefore:

3. There is a possible world in which heat is not mke (it is not necessarily true that heat=mke).
4. If it's *true* that heat=mke, then it is *necessarily* true.

Therefore (from 3, 4):

5. Heat is not mke.

objection

(2) is false. What you are really imagining clearly and distinctly is a situation in which someone senses a phenomenon in the same way we sense heat, that is, feels it by means of its production of the sensation we call 'the sensation of heat', even though that phenomenon was not molecular motion...and that the person does not get the sensation of heat when in the presence of molecular motion. (See Kripke, 331)

argument K_2

1. If I can clearly and distinctly conceive a proposition p to be true, then p is possible.
2. I can clearly and distinctly conceive that there is pain without c-fiber firing (and vice versa). That is, I can clearly and distinctly conceive that the proposition that pain=c-fiber firing is not true.

Therefore:

3. There is a possible world in which pain is not c-fiber firing (it is not necessarily true that pain=c-fiber firing).
4. If it's *true* that pain=c-fiber firing, then it is *necessarily* true.

Therefore (from 3, 4):

5. Pain is not c-fiber firing.

objection?

I do not see that such a reply is possible. In the case of the apparent possibility that molecular motion might have existed in the absence of heat, what seemed really possible is that molecular motion should have existed without being *felt as heat*.

But, a situation in which c-fiber firing exists without being *felt as pain* is a situation in which it exists without there *being any pain*.

(See Kripke, 331)

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- read Armstrong,
Putnam,
Lewis