Am I Delusional?

1. Background
   - Delusions are a significant feature of mental illnesses and can occur in many clinical conditions (Maher, 2001)
   - The standard clinical definition (American Psychiatric Association. DSM-5 Task Force, 2013) is highly contentious.
   - Much of the literature holds elements such as bizarrezza of content and incorrigibility of belief as defining factors of delusion.
   - On closer inspection, delusions are not so easy to pin down.

2. Objective
   - Highlight some of the difficulties associated with the definition of delusion
   - Clarify the phenomenology.

3. Methodology
   - Examination of some of the philosophical, psychological and psychiatric literature with regard to the definition of delusion.
   - Examination of first person descriptions of the experience.
   - Consideration of my experience of my own mental activity and experiences from my therapeutic work.
   - Identify areas for empirical research

4. Questions
   - Are delusions one kind of thing?
   - Are delusions a heterogeneous group?
   - Are we comparing oranges with armchairs?
   - What are the external characteristics of delusions?
   - Can we measure them?

5. Findings
   - External Characteristics of Delusion include:
     - Distress
     - Pervasiveness
     - Impact on behaviour
     - Impairment on functioning
     - Affect on onset
     - Emotional salience
     - Rationality
     - Plausibility
     - Amenable to revision
     - Conviction
     - Fit with personality/history
     - Cultural normality
     - Intensity
     - Preoccupation
     - Integration

6. Being slightly (sub-clinically) delusional might be good for your mental health

7. More Questions
   - Different kinds?
     - Do the different characteristics at onset and during maintenance tell us something about different kinds of delusions?
   - Embodied, Extended, Enactive, Embedded:
     - What place might there be for a 4E framework?
     - How might this fit with the medical model and/or the bio-psycho-social model?

8. Next Steps:
   - More empirical Research

References:

Am I Delusional?…we are all capable of having convictions and it is a universal human characteristic to hold on to our own mistaken judgements.” (Jaspers (1913), 1963, p.63)