

Lecture 08: Mindreading / Metacognitive Feelings

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Dual Process Theory (core part): Two (or more) processes for tracking Xs are distinct: the conditions which influence whether they occur, and which outputs they generate, do not completely overlap.

Metacognitive feelings are aspects of the overall phenomenal character of experiences which their subjects take to be informative about things that are only distantly related (if at all) to the things that those experiences intentionally relate the subject to.

Metacognitive feelings can be thought of as *sensations* in approximately Reid's sense: they are monadic properties of events, specifically perceptual experiences, which are individuated by their normal causes and which alter the overall phenomenal character of those experiences in ways not determined by the experiences' contents (so two perceptual experiences can have the same content but distinct sensational properties).

Like sensations, metacognitive feelings can lead to beliefs via learnt associations (compare Reid 1785a, Essay II, Chap. 16, p. 228; Reid 1785b, Chap. VI sect. III, pp. 164–5).

'the intensity of felt surprise is not only influenced by the unexpectedness of the surpris-

ing event, but also by the degree of the event's interference with ongoing mental activity, [...] the effect of unexpectedness on surprise is [...] partly mediated by mental interference' (Reisenzein 2000, p. 271)

'the SoA [sense of agency] may provide an important experiential marker, both for alerting to the need for corrective action, and for guiding learning' (Sidarus et al. 2017, p. 11)

'metacognitive feelings ... allow a transition from the implicit-automatic mode to the explicit-controlled mode of operation.' (Koriat 2000, p. 150)

The Assumption of Representational Connections: the transition involves operations on the contents of core knowledge states, which transform them into (components of) the contents of knowledge states.

Many proposals rely on this Assumption, including: (i) Spelke's suggestion that mature understanding of objects derives from core knowledge by virtue of core knowledge representations being assembled (2000); (ii) claims by Leslie and others that modules provide conceptual identifications of their inputs (Leslie 1988); (iii) Karmiloff-Smith's representational re-description (1992); and (iv) Mandler's claim that 'the earliest conceptual functioning consists of a redescription of perceptual structure' (1992).

Conjecture Only metacognitive feelings (and behaviours and other intentional isolators) con-

nect early-developing processes for tracking objects, causes, actions and minds to the epistemic.

References

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