Origins of Mind
Pre-approved Essay Questions

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For any of these questions, your answer may focus on a particular domain, such as core knowledge of objects or of number. You are not required to provide a comprehensive survey.

The readings suggested here are for general guidance. You're welcome to see me to discuss readings in relation to your plans for the essay.

Contents

Mindreading

What is the puzzle about when humans can first represent others' beliefs? How might the puzzle be resolved?

—Reading

Kristine H. Onishi and Renée Baillargeon. 2005. "Do 15-Month-Old Infants Understand False Beliefs?" *Science* 308 (8): 255–258

Ágnes Melinda Kovács, Ernő Téglás and Ansgar Denis Endress. 2010. "The Social Sense: Susceptibility to Others' Beliefs in Human Infants and Adults". *Science* 330 (6012): 1830–1834. doi:10.1126/science.1190792

Renée Baillargeon, Rose M. Scott and Zijing He. 2010. "False-belief understanding in infants". *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 14 (3): 110–118

Stephen A. Butterfill and Ian A. Apperly. 2013. "How to Construct a Minimal Theory of Mind". *Mind and Language* 28 (5): 606–637

Peter Carruthers. 2013. "Mindreading in Infancy" [in en]. *Mind & Language* 28 (2): 141–172. doi:10.1111/mila.12014

Core knowledge

What is core knowledge and what role, if any, could it play in explaining the transition from being unable to know things to being able to know things?

—Reading

Susan Carey and Elizabeth Spelke. 1996. "Science and Core Knowledge". *Philosophy of Science* 63:515–533

Elizabeth S. Spelke et al. 1992. "Origins of knowledge". *Psychological Review* 99 (4): 605–632. doi:10.1037/0033-295X.99.4.605

Elizabeth Spelke and Katherine D. Kinzler. 2007. "Core Knowledge". *Developmental Science* 10 (1): 89–96

Susan Carey. 2009. *The Origin of Concepts.* Oxford: Oxford University Press

Innateness

What if anything is innate in humans?

Hint: You should be careful to examine the notion of innateness (see Samuels 2004). Otherwise the reading is divided into topics; you should not try to cover all topics. I also suggest *not* structuring your essay by topic.

—Reading

Richard Samuels. 2004. "Innateness in Cognitive Science". *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 8 (3): 136–41

—Reading: comparative (cross-species)

Cinzia Chiandetti and Giorgio Vallortigara. 2011. "Intuitive physical reasoning about occluded objects by inexperienced chicks" [in en]. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 278, no. 1718 (September): 2621–2627. doi:10.1098/rspb.2010.2381

Daniel B.M. Haun et al. 2010. "Origins of spatial, temporal and numerical cognition: Insights from comparative psychology". *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 14, no. 12 (December): 552–560. doi:10.1016/j.tics.2010.09.006

—Reading: syntax

Note: this is one-sided.

Jeffrey Lidz, Sandra Waxman and Jennifer Freedman. 2003. "What infants know about syntax but couldn't have learned: experimental evidence for syntactic structure at 18 months". *Cognition* 89, no. 3 (October): 295–303. doi:10.1016/S0010-0277(03)00116-1

Jeffrey Lidz and Sandra Waxman. 2004. "Reaffirming the poverty of the stimulus argument: a reply to the replies". *Cognition* 93, no. 2 (September): 157–165. doi:10.1016/j.cognition.2004.02.001

—Reading: replying to Fodor's argument

Jerry Fodor. 1981. "The Present Status of the Innateness Controversy". In *Representations.* Brighton: Harvester

Susan Carey. 2009. *The Origin of Concepts.* Oxford: Oxford University Press chapters 4, 8

(There is also an exchange between Carey and Rey forthcoming in the journal Mind and Language—their papers may be available by the time you read this.)

Knowledge of colour

At birth humans do not know this lime fruit is green whereas that tomato is red. How could some humans come to be in a position to know this?

Hint: you should discuss categorical perception of colour and its relation to knowledge. There was a lecture on this topic; the handout includes many references.

—Reading

Kurt Kowalski and Herbert Zimiles. 2006. "The Relation between Children's Conceptual Functioning with Color and Color Term Acquisition". *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* 94:301–321

Anna Franklin et al. 2005. "Color term knowledge does not affect categorical perception of color in toddlers". *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* 90 (2): 114–141

Anna Franklin, Michael Pilling and Ian Davies. 2005. "The nature of infant color categorization: Evidence from eye movements on a target detection task". *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* 91 (3): 227–248

J. Alison Wiggett and Ian R. L. Davies. 2008. "The effect of stroop interference on the categorical perception of color". *Memory & Cognition* 36 (2): 231–239

Social interaction

If humans were incapable of social interaction and could only observe each other from behind one-way mirrors (if such a thing existed), how if at all would this affect the processes by which they get to know things?

—Reading

M. Tomasello. 2008. *Origins of human communication.* The MIT Press

Michael Tomasello et al. 2005. "Understanding and Sharing Intentions: The Origins of Cultural Cognition". *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 28:675–735 [Read the commentaries.]

Stephen Butterfill. 2012a. "Interacting mindreaders". *Philosophical Studies* 165 (3): 841–863. doi:10.1007/s11098-012-9980-x

Joint action

Could there be a role for joint action in explaining how humans come to know things about other minds?

—Reading

Henrike Moll and Michael Tomasello. 2007. "Cooperation and human cognition: the Vygotskian Intelligence Hypothesis". *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B* 362 (1480): 639–648

Malinda Carpenter. 2009. "Just How Joint Is Joint Action in Infancy?" [In en]. *Topics in Cognitive Science* 1 (2): 380–392. doi:10.1111/j.1756-8765.2009.01026.x

Deborah Tollefsen. 2005. "Let's Pretend: Children and Joint Action". *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 35 (75): 74–97

Stephen Butterfill. 2012b. "Joint Action and Development". *Philosophical Quarterly* 62 (246): 23–47

Language

'Children learn words through the exercise of reason' (BLOOM). Discuss.

Note: the reading for this is one-sided, which makes this question difficult.

—Reading

Paul Bloom. 2000. *How children learn the meanings of words.* Learning, development, and conceptual change. Cambridge, Mass. ; London: MIT Press

Dare Baldwin. 2000. "Interpersonal Understanding Fuels Knowledge Acquisition". *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 9 (2): 40–5

Mark Sabbagh and Dare Baldwin. 2001. "Learning Words from Knowledgeable versus Ignorant Speakers: Links Between Preschoolers' Theory of Mind and Semantic Development". *Child Development* 72 (4): 1054–1070

Danielle Matthews, Elena Lieven and Michael Tomasello. 2008. "How Toddlers and Preschoolers Learn to Uniquely Idenitfy Referents for Others: A Training Study". *Child Development* 78 (6): 1744–1759

Michael Dummett. 1993. "Language and Communication". In *The seas of language.* Oxford: Clarendon Press

What is 'shared intentionality' and what might it explain?

Compare Tomasello et al. (2005, p. 688): 'Our ... hypothesis is that it is precisely these two developing capacities [to read intentions and to share psychological states] that interact during the first year of life to create the normal human developmental pathway leading to participation in collaborative cultural practices.'

—Reading: theoretical

Pick one of these (first is probably the best; last is shortest; the middle one comes with critical commentaries).

*Henrike Moll and Michael Tomasello. 2007. "Cooperation and human cognition: the Vygotskian Intelligence Hypothesis". *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B* 362 (1480): 639–648

Michael Tomasello et al. 2005. "Understanding and Sharing Intentions: The Origins of Cultural Cognition". *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 28:675–735

Michael Tomasello and Malinda Carpenter. 2007. "Shared Intentionality". *Developmental Science* 10 (1): 121–5

—Reading: experimental (pick one or more)

Henrike Moll et al. 2008. "Fourteen-Month-Olds Know What We Have Shared in a Special Way". *Infancy* 13 (1): 90–90

Felix Warneken, Francis Chen and Michael Tomasello. 2006. "Cooperative Activities in Young Children and Chimpanzees". *Child Development* 77 (3): 640–663

Michael Tomasello, Malinda Carpenter and Ulf Liszkowski. 2007. "A New Look at Infant Pointing". *Child Development* 78 (3): 705–722

—Reading: background

Michael E. Bratman. 1992. "Shared Cooperative Activity". *The Philosophical Review* 101 (2): 327–341

John R. Searle. 1990. "Collective Intentions and Actions". In *Intentions in Communication*, edited by P. Cohen, J. Morgan and M.E. Pollack, 90–105. Reprinted in Searle, J. R. (2002) *Consciousness and Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (pp. 90–105). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Stephen Butterfill. 2012b. "Joint Action and Development". *Philosophical Quarterly* 62 (246): 23–47