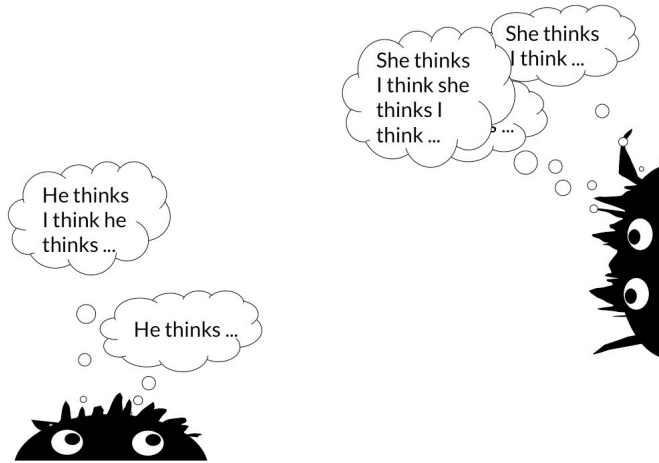# Lecture 09: Social Cognition

s.butterfill@warwick.ac.uk

1. Reciprocity

2. Interacting Interpreters

The problem of opaque means: failures to identify to which ends actions are means can impair goal ascription.

A Gricean circle communicative actions characteristically have goals which the actions are means to realising only because others recognise them as means to realising those goals.

3. Your goal is my goal

An outcome is a *collective goal* of two or more actions involving multiple agents just if the actions are directed to this goal and this is not, or not just, a matter of each action being individually directed to that goal.

1. You are about to attempt to engage in some joint action[1] or other with me.

2. I am not about to change the single goal to which my actions will be directed.

Therefore:

3. A goal of your actions will be my goal, the goal I now envisage that my actions will be directed to.

Some routes to knowledge are closed to interpreters who rely exclusively on observation but open to interacting interpreters.

4. Sharing a Smile

1. On Radical Interpretation (and the Intentional Stance), the outputs of social cognition are (i) propositional attitude ascriptions and (ii) action predictions.

2. Emotions unfold ...

3. ... and this is not comprehensible as a series of changes in propositional attitudes.

So: 4. Understanding the way emotions unfold is not a matter of ascribing propositional attitudes or predicting actions.

But: 5. Humans do sometimes understand how anothers' emotions are unfolding.

So: 6. Radical Interpretation (and the Intentional Stance) is not a fully adequate computational description of human social cognition.

Control is a way of knowing.

Smiling is sometimes a goal-directed action, a goal of which is to smile a smile

Expressions of emotion can affect the ways emotions unfold (Wood et al. 2016; Niedenthal et al. 2010).

What is involved in sharing a smile?

1. What I'm feeling controls, and is controlled by, what you are feeling

Therefore:

2. You are feeling what I am feeling.

And:

3. Reciprocal control of expression or emotion has a charactersitic phenomenology.

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[1] We leave open the issue of how joint action is to be characterised subject only to the requirement that all joint actions must involve collective goals. Attempts to characterise joint action in ways relevant to explaining development include Tollefsen (2005), Carpenter (2009), Pacherie (2011) and Butterfill (2012).

Therefore:

4. If I know what what I am feeling, I am in a position to know what you are feeling.

Conclusion: Observation may enable us to know things about the category of others' emotions (fear vs joy, say), but interaction opens a route to knowing how others' emotions unfold.

5. Conclusions

1. A central project in social cognition for philosophers is constructing computational descriptions of processes.

2. Humans probably enjoy categorical perception of actions directed to the expression of particular emotions.

3. In adult humans,

   there are two (or more) distinct mindreading processes

   which rely on different models of minds and actions.

4. The available evidence already justifies concluding that humans are not unique in being able to represent mental states.

5. Interacting interpreters can be in a position to know things which they would be unable to know if they were manifestly passive observers.

6. Existing attempts to provide computational descriptions (Davidson's Radical Interpretation, Dennett's Intentional Stance) are inadequate.

7. The process architecture of social cognition matters for philosophical approaches to social cognition.

8. The process architecture of social cognition is fragmented.

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