

VI Imagination, Empathy, Knowledge of Others

Some distinctions

- (i) Visual v. non-visual (more generally, sensory v. non-sensory). Does imagination involve the visual system? More generally, does the visual involve mental images? (Pylyshyn etc.)
- (ii) From the inside v. from the outside (compare *de se* v. *non de se*).
- (iii) Imagining the world v. imagining our own state of mind. Different forms of attitude to the same content: imagining seeing that F, wanting that F, believing that F etc.

Empathy

Empathy as imaginative identification with the situation of others. From the outside or the inside? Smith on imaging someone on the rack. Is this important in ethical competence? Issues of knowledge v. issues of motivation.

Knowledge: simulation v. theory-theory. Compare with other domains: testing a model aeroplane in a wind-tunnel to investigate a real one. This seems to require embedding in a theoretical framework.

Motivation: idea that motivation comes from empathy. Again, consider Hume and Smith. Inferences from autism. Wing's triad: social competence; communication; imagination; from the latter, perhaps, difficulties with empathy. But no diminution of moral motivation. Contrast sociopathy.

Other roles for imagination in gaining knowledge

- (i) Modal knowledge: conceivability (imaginability) as a (defeasible) guide to possibility;
- (ii) Knowledge of counterfactuals.

Possible connections between episodic memory and imagination.

Laurie Paul on the limits of imaginative knowledge.