

IV Our Moral Natures II

What we do: Tomasello's *Why We Cooperate*

Basic idea: we are born as natural cooperators; we then come to refine that into something that is more reciprocal.

Evidence for natural cooperation:

Helping At 18 months, children will help an adult; this behavior is cross cultural, is shared with chimpanzees. Reward will actually diminish helping behavior, suggesting that it is intrinsically motivated (some background here: Deci and Ryan on intrinsic motivation; the theory of cognitive dissonance.) In contrast, empathy increases the behavior. Children's pointing seems to involve theorizing about what the other person wants: getting the battery at 20 months. (Background here: ascription of desires; ignorance; false belief.) Compare Hamlin, Wynn and Bloom: children less than a year old expect puppets to prefer other puppets that help them over those that hinder them; and they prefer to play with the helper puppets.

Informing At 12 months infants will point to a stapler to show an adult where it is. Other primates very rarely point, and then only with humans and as an imperative.

Sharing Children are not so good at this. But they will provide for others when there is no cost to themselves, unlike chimpanzees: the pull board experiment with chimps and children of 25 months; children pull to help others, chimps pull randomly. (NB: this looks rather more like helping than sharing.)

Evidence for reciprocation:

(i) from around the age of 3, children help and share more if the others reciprocate. Chimpanzees, in contrast, show no obvious sense of fairness: they 'cooperate' in the ultimatum game for the least reward (beware of the early studies here on capuchins).

(ii) at least from the age of 3 children are sensitive to norms, and they are norm enforcers.

Further: non-human primate societies work using kinship relations and direct self-interest; human are involved in mutualism that looks more like a stag hunt than a prisoners' dilemma. That is, there are two dominant strategies—both cooperate or both defect—and cooperation brings a higher pay-off (though defection may be less risky). Young children positively enjoy cooperation, unlike chimps. However, getting ongoing cooperation requires three things: an ability to coordinate; norms, which we have already mentioned; and trust.

How we think: Greene's *Moral Tribes*

Basic idea: in general our behaviour is driven by two systems: fast and slow; Type 1 and Type 2. Compare the automatic and manual controls on a camera.

In the case of ethics, very roughly, Type 1 (fast) thinking is deontological; Type 2 (slow) is consequentialist. Type 1 makes use of emotional systems; Type 2 makes use of rational systems.

Type 2 gets the moral facts right; ultimately consequentialism is true; but deontology gives us good rules of thumb. (So Greene has something in common with Kant; and something against him.)

Question: even if this is right, why favour the rational? Perhaps we can grasp truths using affective responses that we cannot grasp using purely rational. And is it right: what is the conception of rational here? Computational? Kant is very rational. What about anti-consequentialist intuitions that just don't go away however much we think about them?

How we think: Haidt's *Righteous Mind*

Basic idea: in general we need affective responses to navigate the world; compare what happens with 'acquired sociopathy'. In the moral sphere we are primarily driven by affective responses; witness the moral dumbfounding that occurs when we try to give justifications. Reasoning follows the affective responses, and it is typically involved in rationalizing them. Just occasionally the rational will lead us to revise our initial affective responses: reactions to incest cases after a two minute break. (Beware here: Haidt calls the initial affective response the *intuition*; philosophers are likely to think that the revision is based on our moral intuitions.)

These affective moral responses are many. They can't be reduced to a single principle. Haidt suggests five:

- care/harm;
- fairness/cheating;
- loyalty/betrayal;
- authority/subversion;
- sanctity/degradation.

He thinks these are innate, but he has, like most psychologists these days, a rather sophisticated view of innateness: not something that is unchangeable, but 'organized in advance of experience' (from Gary Marcus). It's not altogether clear why he picks on these five.

What we do: Mischel and delayed gratification

The marshmallow test. Self-control. The need not to think.

Self Presentation and Self Signalling

There is a further possibility. Human beings (whether by culture or evolution) want to think well of themselves. Early cognitive dissonance work focussed on the idea that people want to think of themselves as consistent. This is important, but it seems that the most powerful motive is to present oneself to oneself as good along various dimensions. One of these is an explicitly moral dimension. Morally good behaviour can provide evidence of this. Is such behaviour selfish? And is it that the agent primarily wants to have the belief that they are good, or that they primarily want to be good. Note that people can be motivated both by genuinely moral concerns, and by a desire to see themselves as motivated by such concerns.