Moral & Social Cognition

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A ‘group’ core system?


- from 5 months to 5 year of life there is social preference for people speaking the same language
- extends to difference in accent interpretation
- language is a powerful cue for group membership
- infants are tracking group membership
Is there a moral ‘grammar’?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Similarities</th>
<th>Language faculty</th>
<th>Moral faculty</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Revisable at the request of an authority</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Always accessible to conscious report</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sensitive to complex abstract structure</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>+</td>
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</tbody>
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- Moral judgments, like grammaticality judgments, are generated by a tacit, complex, and sometimes unaccessible body of knowledge
- Unlike language, moral judgements have a stronger interface with central cognitive processes, lack a complex, hierarchical structure; moral diversity may not be analysed in terms of settings of binary parameters
- Hence the moral ‘grammar’ analogy is at best vague, and at worst misleading