

The paradox of theory of mind!

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Science folks unanimously agree about a fixed definition for “Theory of Mind”! That I think is a philosophical paradox as theory of mind has this very pivotal cannon of being open in empathizing and understanding different beliefs through attribution of mental state as in beliefs, intentions, knowledge and emotion. Thus, how could we all agree to establish one definition for “Theory of Mind” which conveys elimination of all other definitions or disregard openness to other definitions of “Theory of Mind” itself that might be quite different from the typical definition of theory of mind. As if one might staunchly emphasize that they believe in animal advocacy and rights but still keeps a songbird in a cage! I believe that some definitions cannot be strictly defined as a single omnipresent definition and depending on the subject and application would vary in definition. Theory of Mind can have one definition in mentally healthy human and yet another but not incorrect definition in mentally disordered people. Not to mention that theory of mind has been reported to be a personality trait in non-human primates as well!

Theory of Mind is simply defined as the ability to believe that not everybody thinks, believes or see the world like us. It is the ability to empathize and understand that other individuals may have different beliefs, notions, emotions and depiction of the surrounding phenomena than what we think is the single and sanctimonious of all! This is the problem that psychologists focus on studying brain function through behavioral assessments and neuroimaging techniques such as fMRI. Why we do believe that a belief is a false one and where in the brain gathers information based on various stimuli to process and conclude such belief! If we understand the mechanisms of theory of mind and deficiencies in it, we may unlock the long-lasting dilemma of wars, dictatorships and tyranny to anti-trust policies of giant companies and selfishness of people though they may come out successful!

Theory of mind can have a different definition though in mentally diseased people with a broad gamut of disorders such as schizophrenia to autism. I do believe that people with paranoid schizophrenia may indicate hyperfrontality (excessive activity of brain regions like mPFC) in neuroimaging studies which results which represents as paranoia and diminished first and second order of theory of mind! However, in a neurodevelopmental disorder such as autism, there might be various tough paradoxical indications of theory of mind employment. Some could not employ theory of mind as they have severe communicative functioning. But some cases of autism may show advanced first and second levels of theory of mind as forms of cooperativeness and adaption to new situations.

Theory of mind cannot be defined as a dictionary entry in a classic method; otherwise it will vanquish its own notion in believing in different definitions and beliefs.

