

The Structure of Credition

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A philosophical survey on concepts of decision making

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Abstract

I will begin by analysing some aspects of E.T. Rolls' theory of decision-making (e.g. Rolls 2011), along with other data on the influence of affects/emotions on decisions (Carver-Scheier 1998; Levine 2011). The main point of this first part of my presentation will be twofold: a) underlining the relevance of emotional aspects in the decision-making process, and b) suggesting how the decision-making process has a strong influence on the continuous construction of the "self-identity".

Then, I will focus on some key aspects of M. Jeannerod's approach to the problem of actions and the self (Jeannerod 2006; 2009). This will lead us, once again, to reflect upon the role that action-monitoring and error-correction play in the construction of our self-identity (what Jeannerod calls, following S. Gallagher, the "narrative self") with special reference to the idea that the feedbacks received from the actions executed on the basis of a decision may bring the subject to revise her/his "system of beliefs".

Finally, I will refer to C. S. Peirce doctrine of pragmatism. This will give us the occasion to reflect upon two points. First, the fact that the decision-making process could, and perhaps should, be invested with a wider role than that of bringing to the choice among two or more possible alternative behaviours. Following Peirce philosophy, it may be proposed that decision-making plays a key role also in knowledge-related affairs (such as, for example, theory-choice in science). Secondly, this will open up a perspective according to which the inquiry into the decision-making process (considering the role attributed to emotions, the wider knowledge-related role of decision-making, and the relevance of decision making for the construction of self-identity) points to an integral understanding of the human being in its cognitive and emotional as well as mental and bodily dimensions.