

ABSTRACT

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Over the past decades, delusions have become the subject of growing and productive research spanning clinical and cognitive neurosciences. No account of delusions, however, would be complete without a cognitive level analysis of belief per se. Despite this, belief has received little formal investigation in its own right. This may be due in part to the assumption that, unlike more established and accessible modular psychological process (e.g. vision, audition, face-recognition, language-processing, and motor-control systems), the structure of beliefs is thought to comprise more distributed and therefore less accessible central cognitive processes. In this talk I will review some defining characteristics of beliefs, as well as their functions, including the need to create and sustain encapsulated meaning and maintain internal consistency at both intra- and interpersonal levels. Working back from several recent productive cognitive accounts of delusions, will briefly consider some potential candidate cognitive processes that may be involved in normal belief formation.