

The cognitive origin of content

According to Hutto and Satne (2015) any proposed explanation of the origin of mental content must (i) not presuppose content and (ii) have recognized scientific credentials. Agreeing with both demands, in this talk I will try to propose a possible explanation about the natural origins of mental content. On the basis of Harnad (2002) approach, I will develop the idea the cognitive architecture includes some inner states that have proximal correction conditions. These states exhibit “protocontent” on the ground of purely internal resources. Protocontent is not supposed to be full-blown content given that it does not stand for any property of the external world. Besides, protocontent gives rise to what can be called “internal intentionality”. Faced with Hutto and Satne’s proposal, this story about the origin of content would (i) exclude evolutionary and non-mecnanistic factors on the explanation and (ii) avoid a mysterious picture about the emergence of content. This shows that, putting aside the standard cognitivist theories of content and their problems, cognitive science is able to offer an alternative explanation of the origin of concepts that has better credentials than its radical enactive opponent.

Harnad, S. (2002) “Symbol Grounding and the Origin of Language”, In Matthias Scheutz (ed.), *Computationalism: New Directions*, MIT Press

Hutto. D. and Satne, G. (2015) “The Natural Origins of Content”, *Philosophia* 43 (3), 521-536

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PROPOSED MONTH OF THE PRESENTATION: DECEMBER 2020