

Intuitive and reflective inferential processes

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Inference is an essential and ubiquitous aspect of animal cognition whereas reasoning proper, understood as involving a reflective attitude to assumptions, is a specifically human and rather puzzling development. We argue that reasoning is first and foremost an adaptation aimed at best exploiting communication (both for the communicator and the addressee). For the communicator, it is a means to persuade; for the addressee, it is a means not to be too easily persuaded. We outline a dual-process approach based on this evolutionary point of view.