Mentalizing and the attachment process”

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Chief Executive, Anna Freud Centre

Menninger Clinic, 22nd March 2013

Some of the Mentalizing Mafia

- **UCL/AFC/Tavistock**
  - Prof George Gergely
  - Dr Pasco Fearon
  - Professor Mary Target
  - **Prof Anthony Bateman**
- **University of Leuven & UCL/AFC**
  - Dr Patrick Luyten

- Dr Liz Allison
- Professor Alessandra Lemma
- Professor Eia Asen
- **Dr Trudie Rossouw**
- **Dr Dickon Bevington**

Some more mafiosi (The USA branch)

- **Menninger Clinic/Baylor Medical College**

- Dr Jon Allen

- **Dr Carla Sharp**

- Dr Lane Strathearn

- Dr Efrain Bleiberg

- Dr Brooks King-Casas

- Professor Flynn O'Malley

- Dr Read Montague

- **Yale Child Study Centre**

- Prof Linda Mayes

- Professor Nancy Suchman

And European recruits to the ‘Family”

- **Dawn Bales**

- Professor Finn Skårderud

- Dr Mirjam Kalland

- **Professor Sigmund Karterud**

- Cindy Decoste
- Catherine Freeman
- Ulla Kahn
- Morten Kjolbe
- Benedicte Lowyck
- Tobi Nolte
- Marjukka Pajulo

- Svenja Taubner
- Bart Vandeneede
- Annelies Verheught-Pleiter
- Rudi Vermote
- Joleien Zevalkink
- Bjorn Philips
- Dr Peter Fuggle

And Rose Palmer for help with the preparation of this presentation.

Articles using ‘mentalization’ in title or abstracts

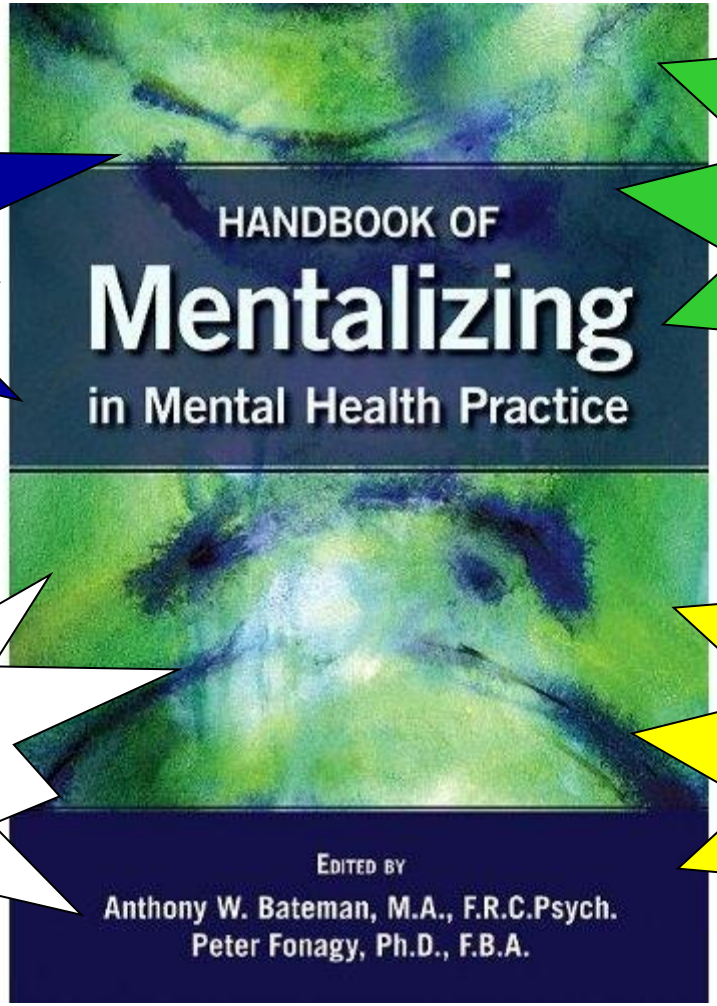
Number of articles on Web of Science Database

Source: http://apps.webofknowledge.com, Data collected 10.3.2013

The latest from the Mentalizing Ma a

NEW!
IMPROVED!

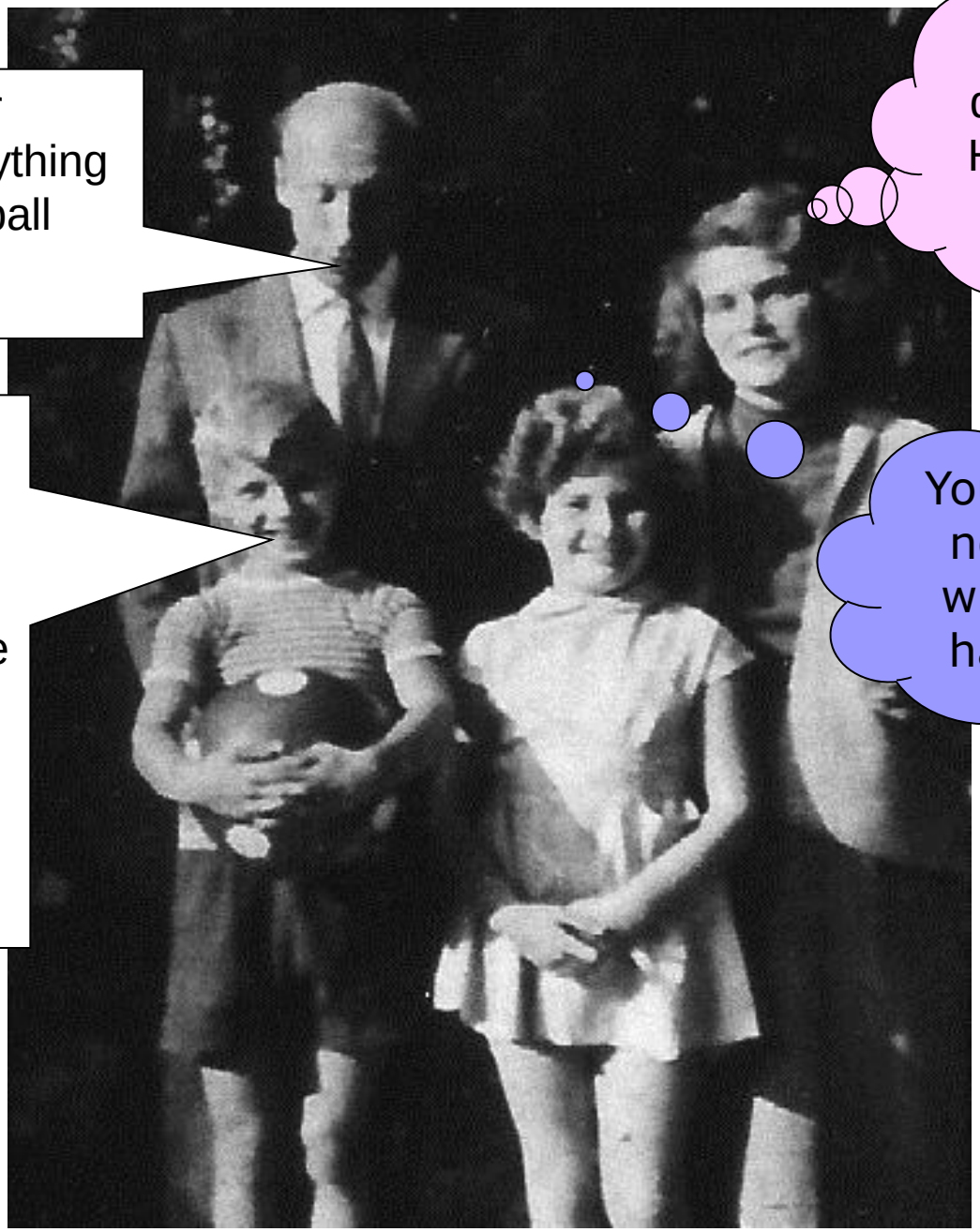
JUST RELEASED!



Washes brains whiter!

Longer than all previous versions!

American Psychiatric Publishing, Inc 2012


You will never amount to anything if you hold a ball like that!
Let the boy dream Ivan, He is a born dilettante!
I want to write my PhD on the “Use of low signal-to-noise ratio stimuli for highlighting the functional differences between the two cerebral hemispheres”.
You look smug now but you will lose your hair just like Dad

Mentalizing: Cognitive vs. Emotional

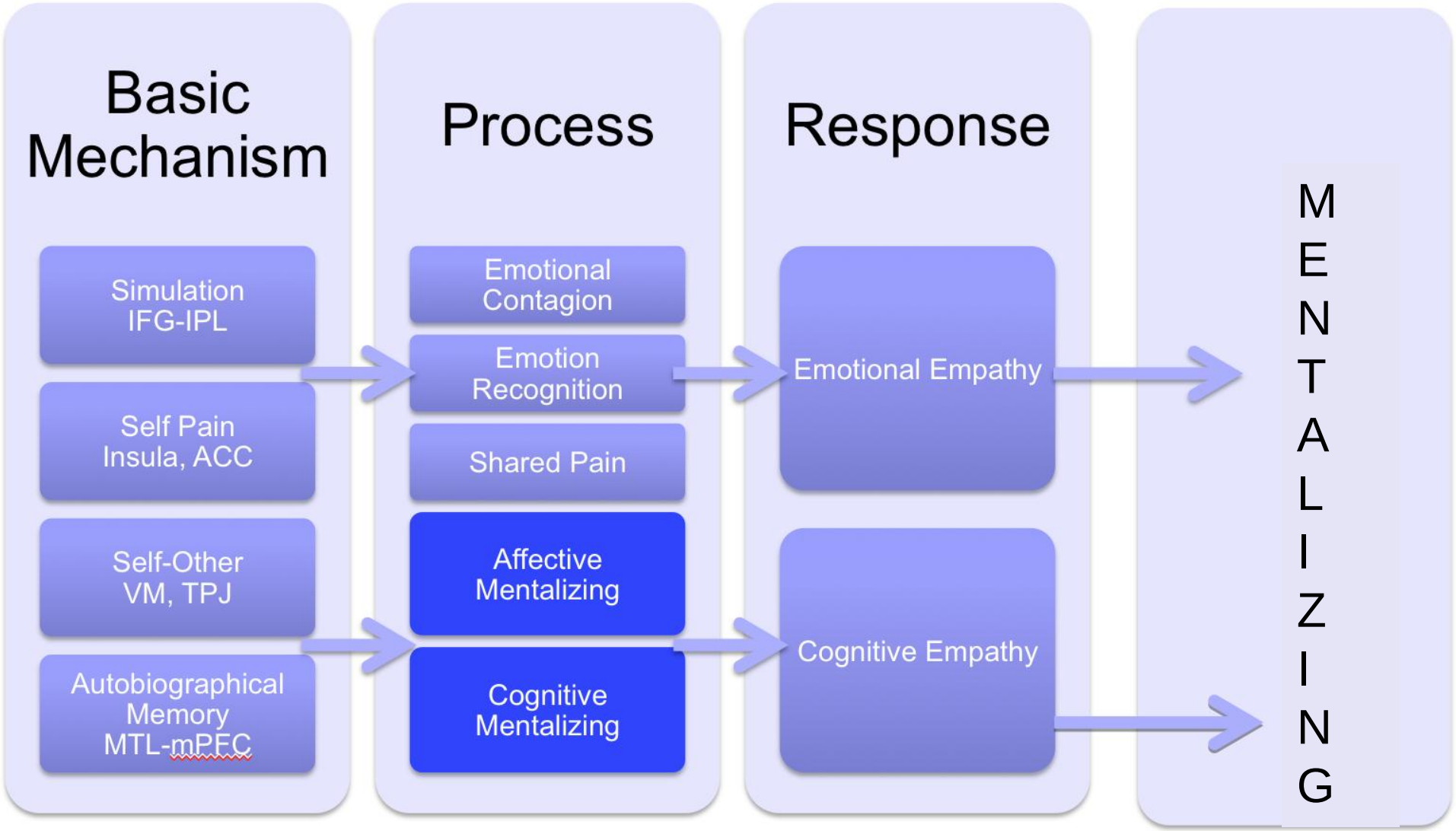
- **Emotional** Mentalizing
  - The capacity to *experience* **affective reactions** to the observed experiences of others

- **Cognitive** Mentalizing
  - *Role-taking ability*: The capacity to engage in the cognitive process of **adopting another's** psychological **point of view**.
  - *Making **inferences*** regarding the **other's** affective and cognitive **mental** states

Distinguishing Emotional and Cognitive Mz

Level of Comparison	Emotional	Cognitive
Behaviors	Emotion **recognition**, emotional **contagion**, **motor** empathy, **shared** pain	Cognitive **ToM**, Affective ToM, **Perspective-taking**
Neuroanatomical networks	IFG, IPL, ACC, AI	vmPFC, dmPFC, TPJ, MTL
Phylogenesis	Rodents	Primates
Developmental stage	Infants	Adolescence
Neurochemical mechanism	Oxytocin	Dopamine

Mentalizing brain networks



Shamay-Tsoory 2011

Neurochemistry of Mentalizing

- **Cognitive** empathy is related to ***dopaminergic*** circuits
  - This neurotransmitter plays a crucial role in the **maturation of the frontal lobe** from preschool years (Lackner, et al., 2010)

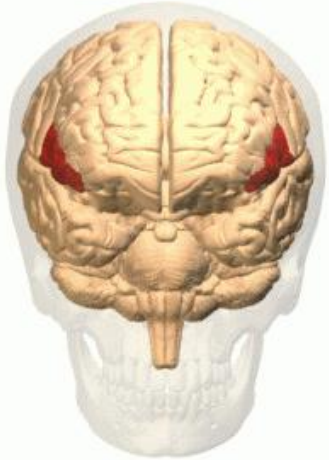
- **Emotional** empathy is related to ***oxytocinergic*** functioning (Hurlemann, et al., 2010)

Emotional Mentalizing and Oxytocin

- Facilitates empathic **facial recognition** and **in-group trust** (Bakermans-Kranenburg, in press)
- It increases perceived salience of **social cues** (Shamay-Tsoory et al., 2009)
- It improves **empathic accuracy** for less socially proficient individuals (Bartz et al., 2010)
- **Emotional empathic** approach recruits mainly ***left frontal*** areas. Oxytocin **improves altruistic behavior** in **individuals with** relatively higher ***right frontal*** activity (Huffmeijer et al., 2012)
- By enhancing activity in the *Insula* and *IFG*, it improves **understanding of others' emotions**, and **reduces anxiety** by decreasing *amygdalar* activity, facilitating **contingent responses** of help and compassion (Bakermans-Kranenburg, in press)

The Empathic Brain Mechanisms

Emotional empathy: Simulation



Inferior frontal gyrus
(IFG)

Inferior parietal lobule
(IPL)

- Both zones are rich in **mirror neurons**
- Implied in *emotional* ***contagion*** since infancy
- Implied in *emotion* ***recognition***

The Empathic Brain Mechanisms

Emotional empathy: Shared emotion and pain

Anterior cingulate cortex(ACC)

Insula

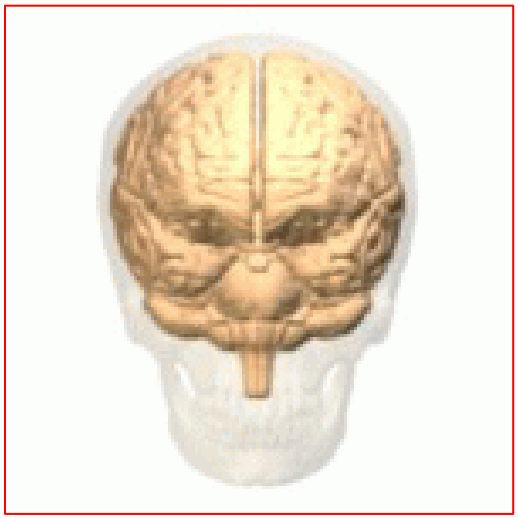
- These areas respond to ***both*** **observed** and **felt pain**

- Their intensity of their **activation correlates** with the explicit **judgment about severity** of pain

- **Observed** pain **activation decreases** depending on the context: **unfamiliar people**, people of **different race**, **alexithymia**, and in **medical practitioners**

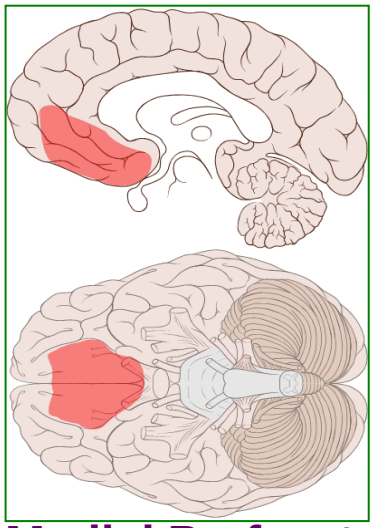
The Empathic Brain

Cognitive mentalizing: Theory of Mind



Temporoparietal Junction (TPJ)

Mainly responsible for **transient mental inferences** about other people, their goals, desires and beliefs.



Medial Prefrontal Cortex (mPFC)

Attribution of **more enduring** traits and qualities.

dmPFC: understanding **others' beliefs**

vmPFC: **others' emotions** and the difference between **self and others**

Hippocampus (HC)

Mainly responsible **autobiographical memory**: *past used to understand events happening to the self and others*

Gweon, et al., 2012; Shamay-Tsoory, 2011

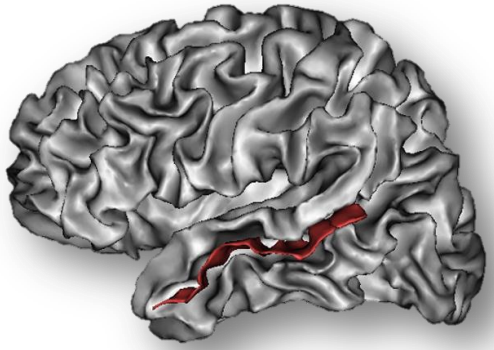
The Empathic Brain

Cognitive empathy: Theory of Mind, Mentalizing

Temporal Poles
(TP)

Other brain areas implicated in ToM

Precuneus

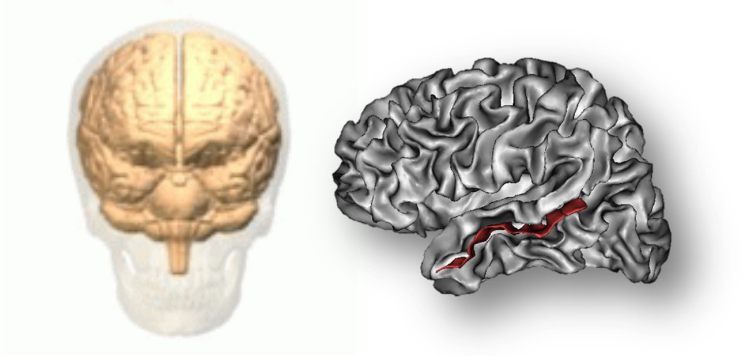


Superior Temporal Sulcus
STS

The Mentalizing Brain

Inferior frontal gyrus

The mirror neuron system is a first step: ***Emotional Contagion***

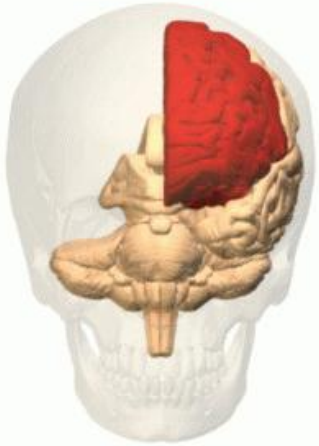


Temporo-parietal junction & superior temporal sulcus

Visio-spatial and cognitive **perspective-taking**

Temporal poles

Integration of perceived **information about others**, learnt information about **unique persons** and **contextual information**



Frontal and prefrontal Cortex

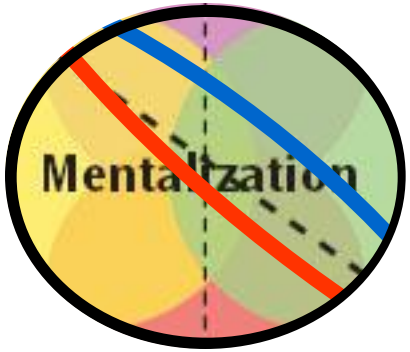
mPFC: Anticipating what oneself or others will feel and **behavior prediction**

Medial orbital cortex: **Emotional perspective-taking**

Ventral regions of the medial frontal cortex: thinking about **communicative intentions**

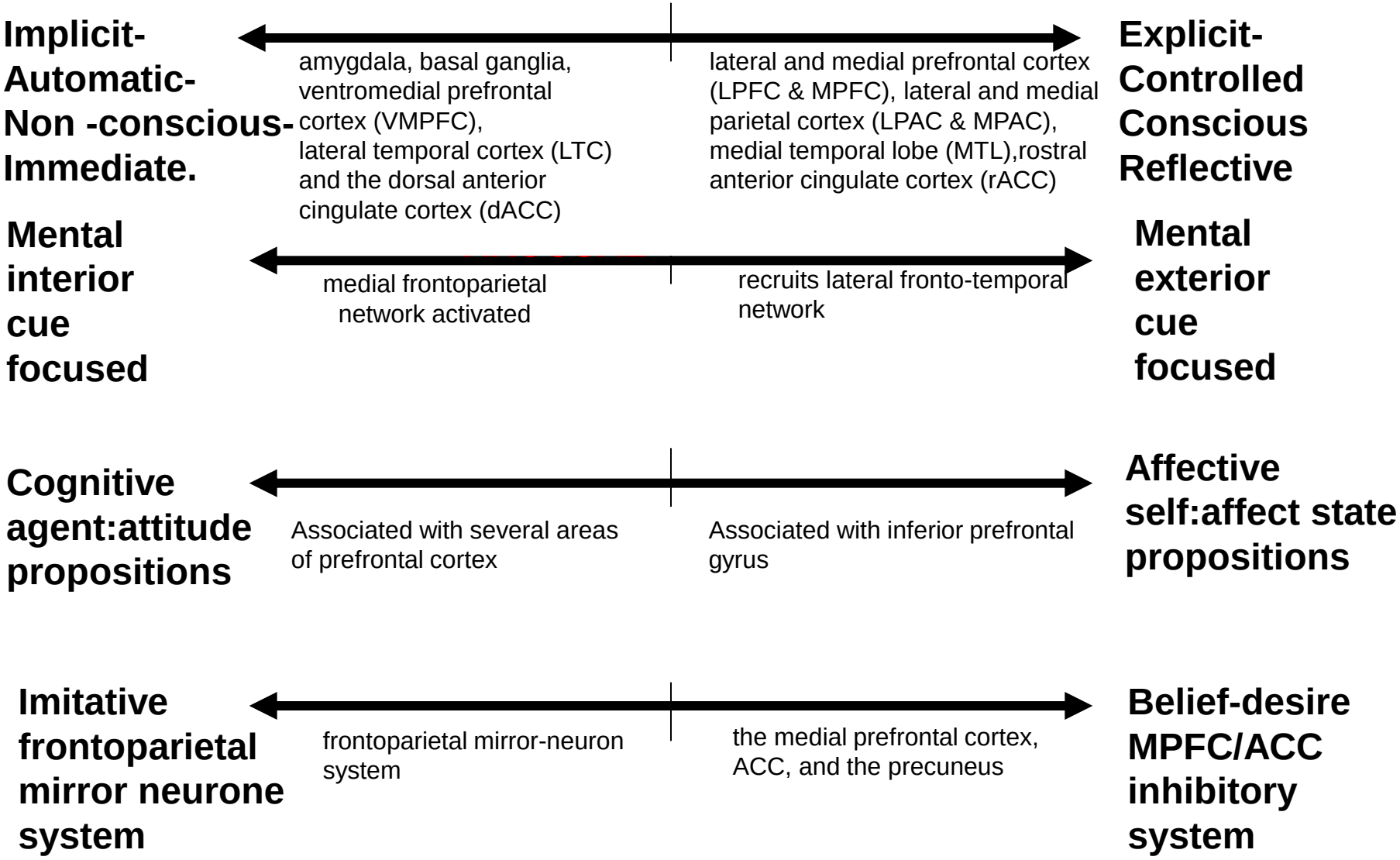
Frith & Frith, 2006

Mentalization and Overlapping Constructs (Choi-Kain & Gunderson, Am J Psychiat 2008)



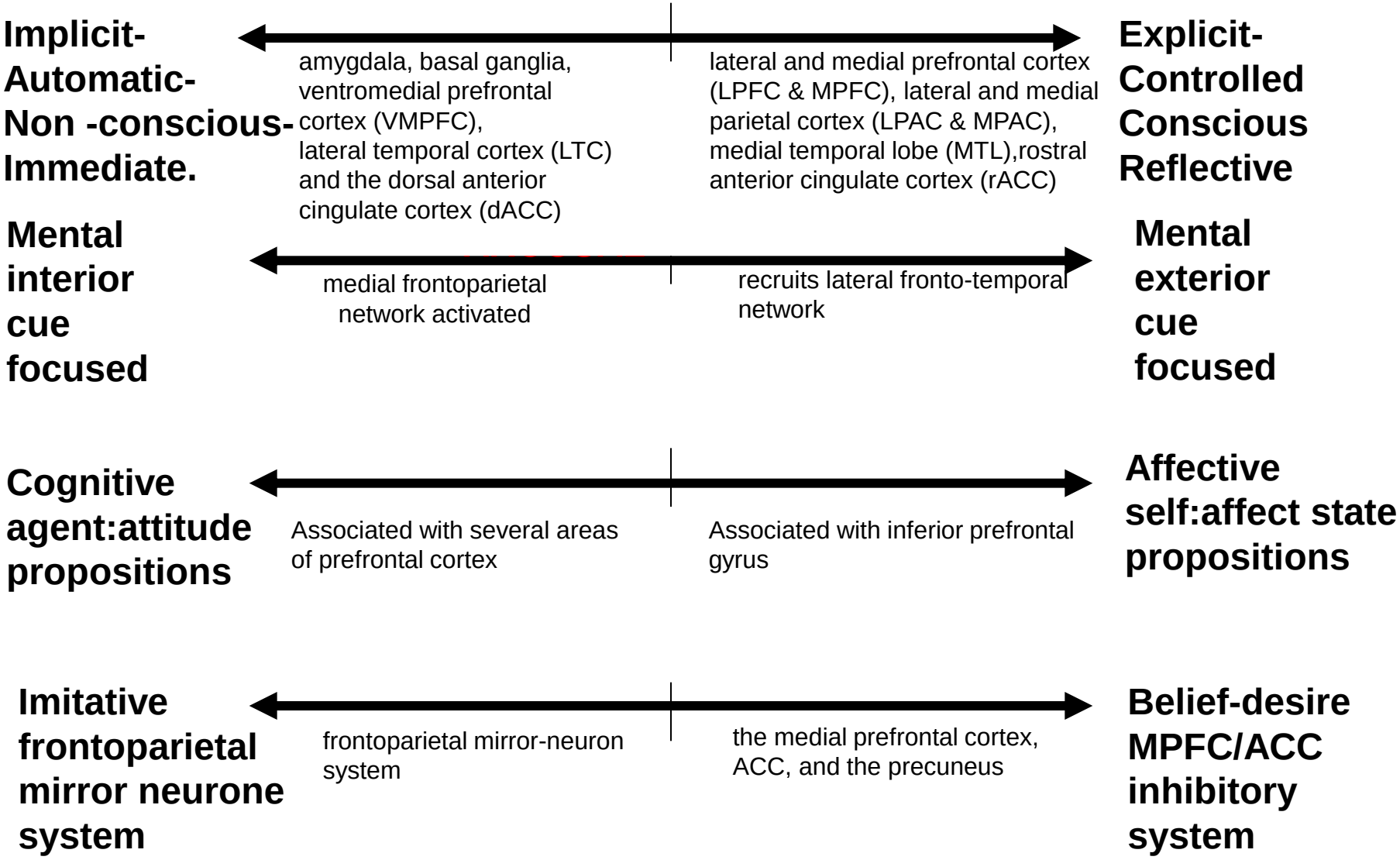
Mentalizing Profile: A multidimensional model

Fonagy, P., & Luyten, P. (2009). *Development and Psychopathology, 21*, 1355-1381.



Mentalizing Profile Associated with Arousal

Fonagy, P., & Luyten, P. (2009). *Development and Psychopathology, 21*, 1355-1381.



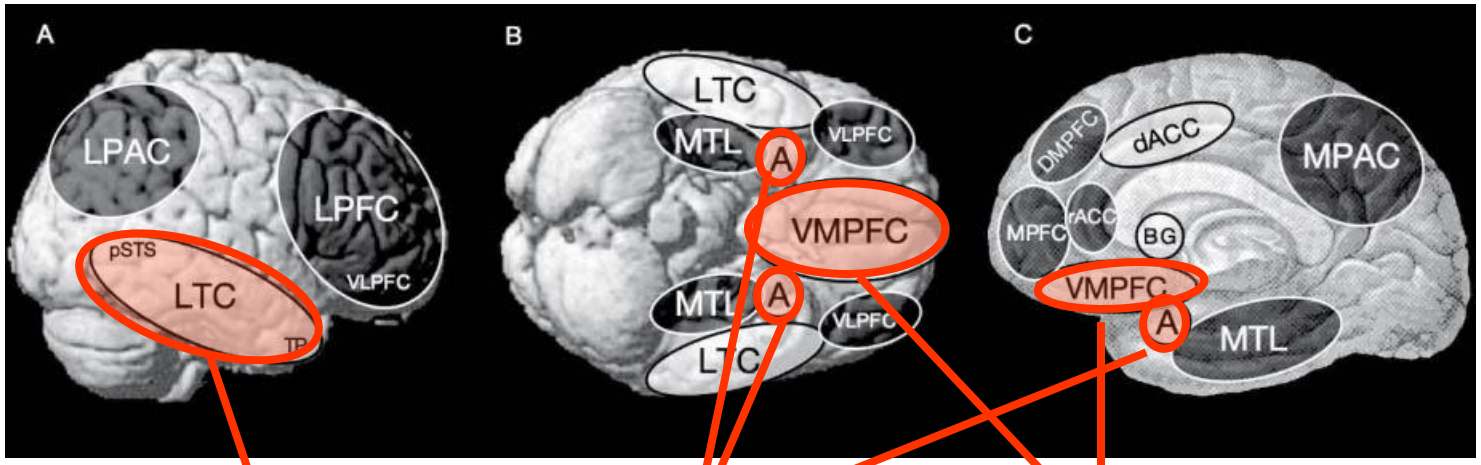
Dimensions of mentalization: implicit/automatic vs explicit/controlled in Othello

Why, how now, ho! from whence ariseth this?
Are we turn'd Turks, and to ourselves do that
Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites?
For Christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl:

Controlled — Automatic

Love Spurned/ Arousal

Dimensions of mentalization: implicit/automatic vs explicit/controlled in Othello's brain



Lateral temporal cortex

Amygdala

Ventromedial PFC

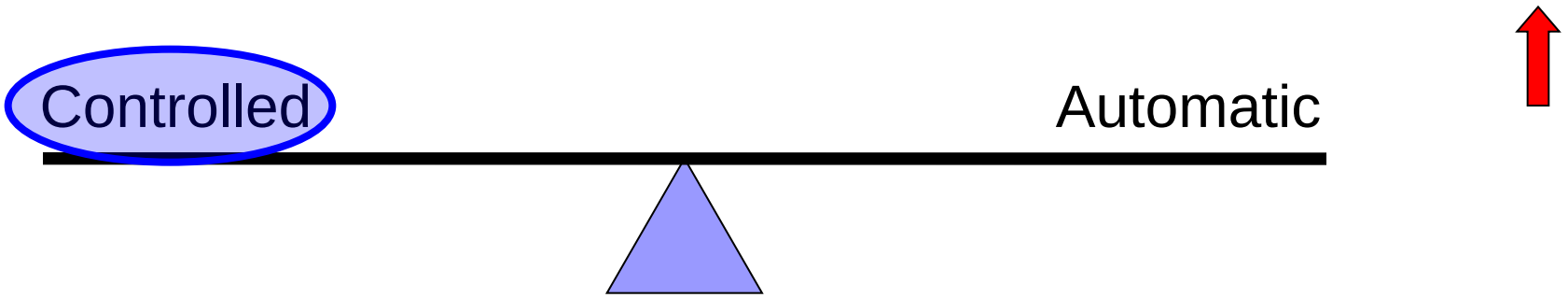
Controlled

Automatic

Arousal

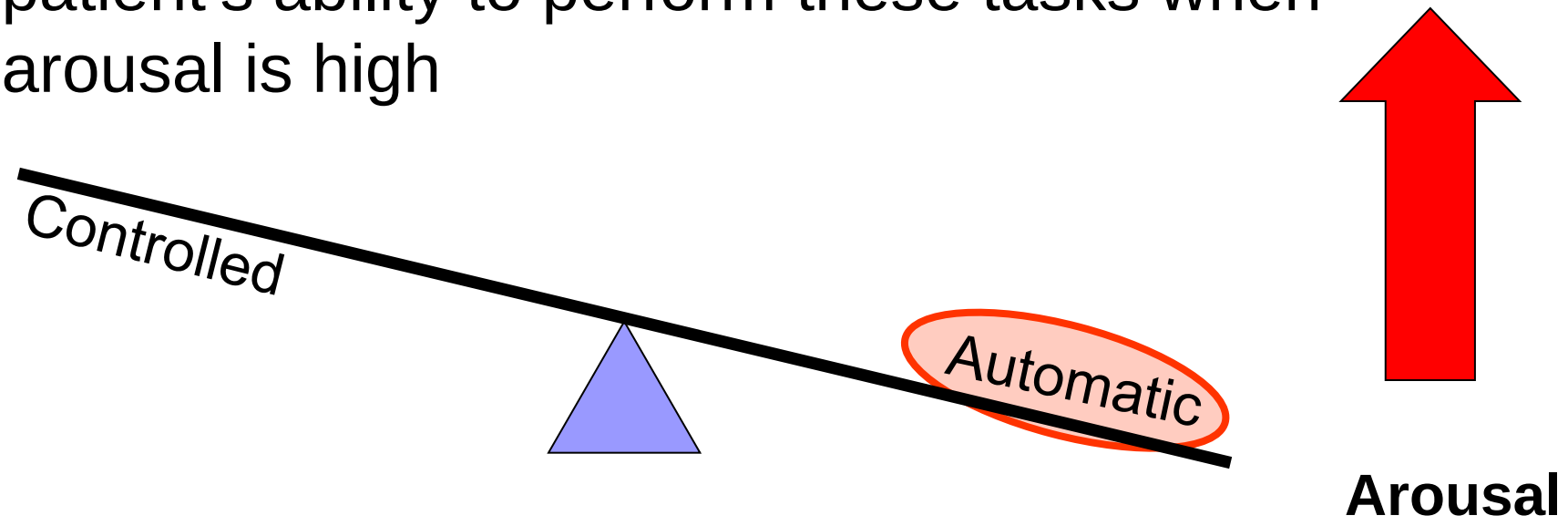
Dimensions of mentalization: implicit/automatic vs explicit/controlled

Psychological understanding drops and is rapidly replaced by confusion about mental states under high arousal



Dimensions of mentalization: implicit/automatic vs explicit/controlled

Psychotherapist's **demand to explore** issues that trigger intense emotional reactions involving conscious reflection and explicit mentalization are inconsistent with the patient's ability to perform these tasks when arousal is high



Early Development of Mentalizing

- **6 and 10-month-old** infants show **preference for characters that help others** over characters that are not cooperative or hindering (Hamlin, Wynn, & Bloom, 2007)
- Infants as young as **12 months** of age begin to **comfort victims** of distress (Warneken & Tomasello, 2009)
- Children aged **14-18 months** display spontaneous and **unrewarded helping** behaviours (Warneken & Tomasello, 2009)
- Children aged **18-25 months** are inclined to **sympathize with others in strife**, which implies an early form of emotional perspective-taking (Decety, 2011)

Development of empathy: Regression?

At **17 months** of age, 34.6% of children **helped another child** who was feeling sick

A year after, **17% of boys and 12% girls stopped** showing this behavior

19% of children **who *do not* show** empathic behavior at 29 months of age, had **shown it** 1 year **before**

- **Ceasing to exhibit prosocial** behaviors during toddlerhood is a **normative aspect** of early social development
- **Prosocial behaviors** become **regulated** during **preschool** years

- Children learn to **inhibit prosocial** behaviors as they become aware of the **implicit rules** of social and moral conduct
- They learn where, when and **whom to help**: **reciprocity**, **equity** and **deservedness**

Baillargeon et al., 2007; Baillargeon et al., 2011; Brownell, 2013; Hay, 1994

Development of Empathy

Moral behavior

- **Empathic** behavior towards others
- **Rule-compatible** behavior without supervision

Empathic behavior during toddlerhood **prevents externalizing pathology** and **predicts** developmental **adaptation**

→ It causes **greater positive reciprocity** in the relationship with close figures

→ Positive relationship **foster mental health** and **positive socialization** trajectories

Kochanska et al., 2010

Development of empathy

Emotional empathy **develops very early**

- It relies on somato-sensoriomotor resonance and mimicry

Newborns and infants become **distressed** shortly after **another** infant **starts crying**



Mimicry of facial expressions starts around **10 weeks**

Development of Empathy

Cognitive empathy develops later

- It relies on more **sophisticated** functions
  - Theory of mind (**ToM**)
  - **Executive** function
  - **Self-regulation**

This allows for regulated **responses to others'** distress, **without feeling distressed** oneself

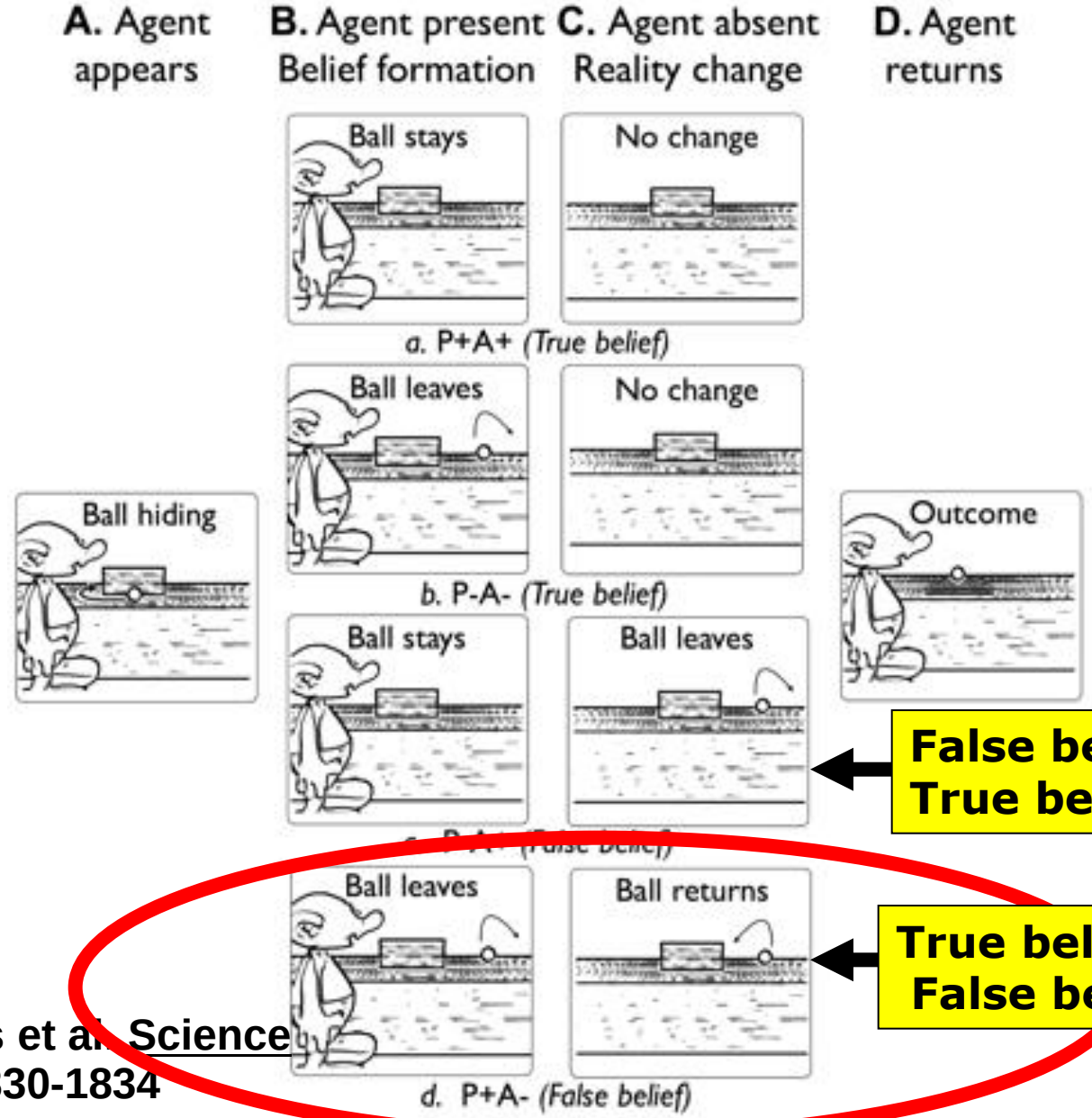
- These are implemented in the **prefrontal cortex**
  - It **develops** more **slowly** than the rest of the brain
  - Reaches **maturity** during **adolescence**

Greimel, et al., 2010; Decety, 2011

Belief Computation in Infants

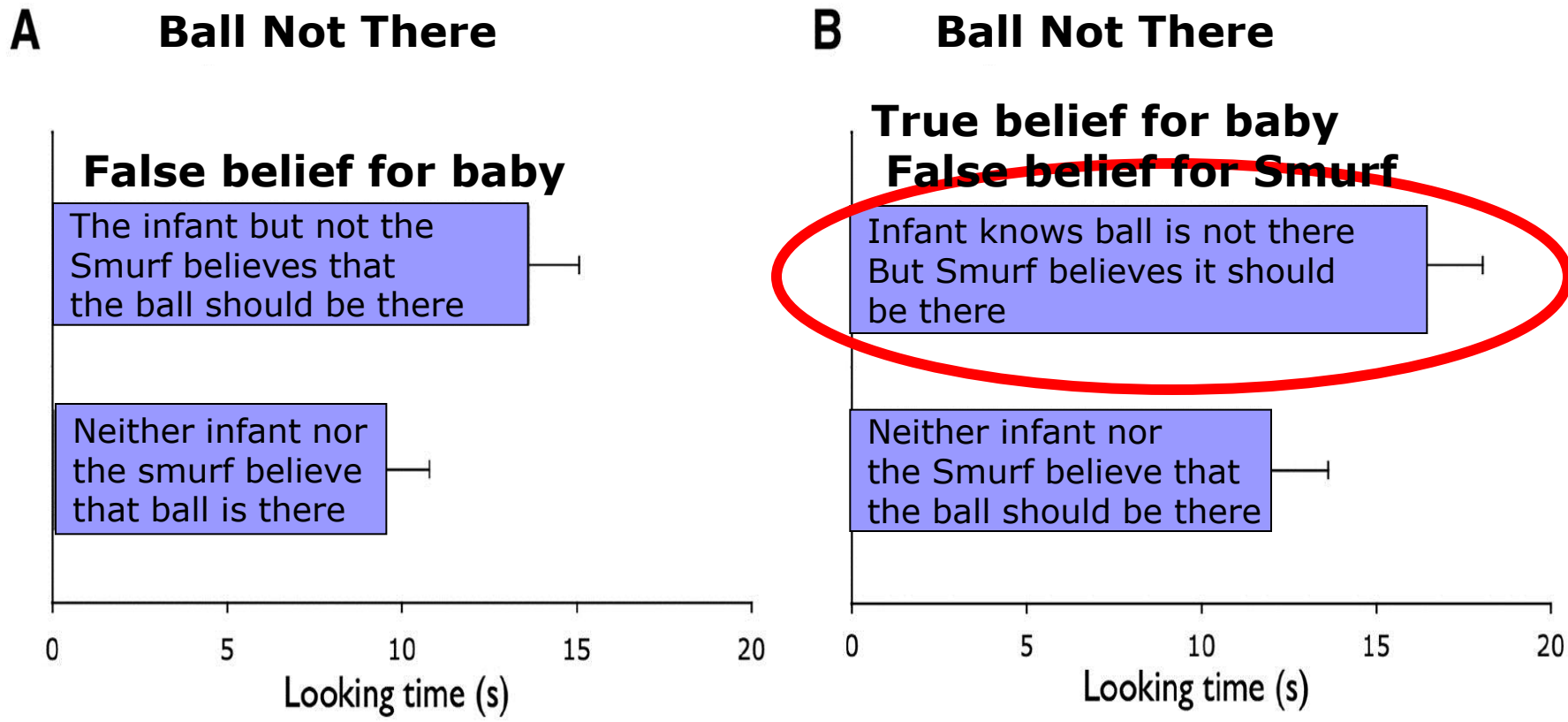
Familiarization

Sensitivity to others' state of mind



Á M Kovács et al. Science 2011;330:1830-1834

Sensitivity to others' state of mind

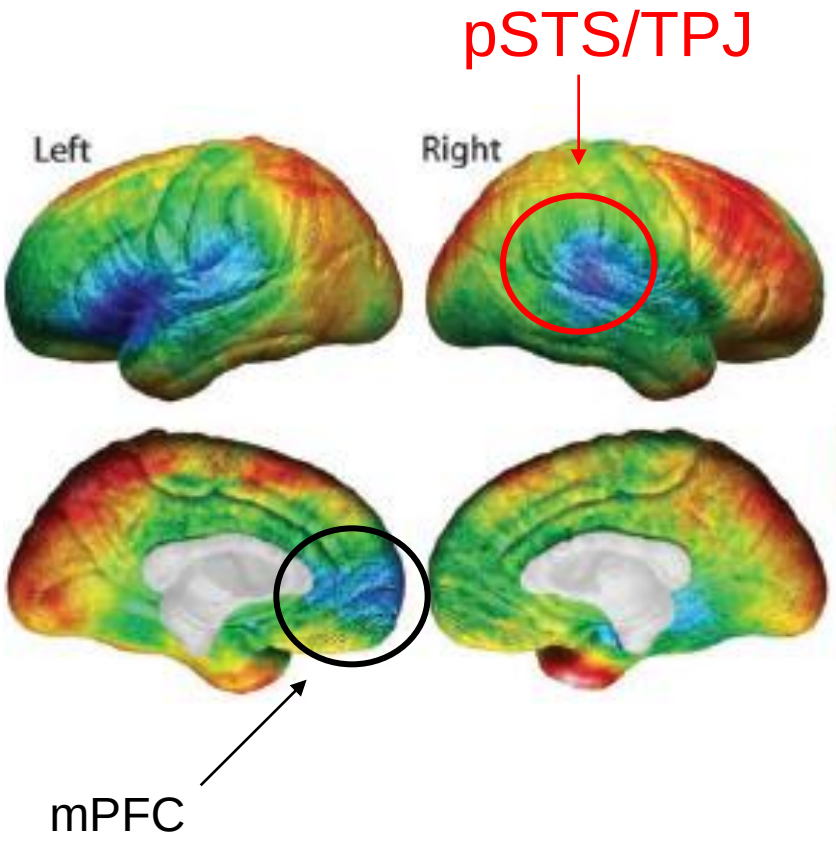


The two key conditions in Smurf Study: Infant of 7 months considers what agent (Smurf) believes about the status of ball

Á M Kovács et al. Science 2010, 330:1830-1834

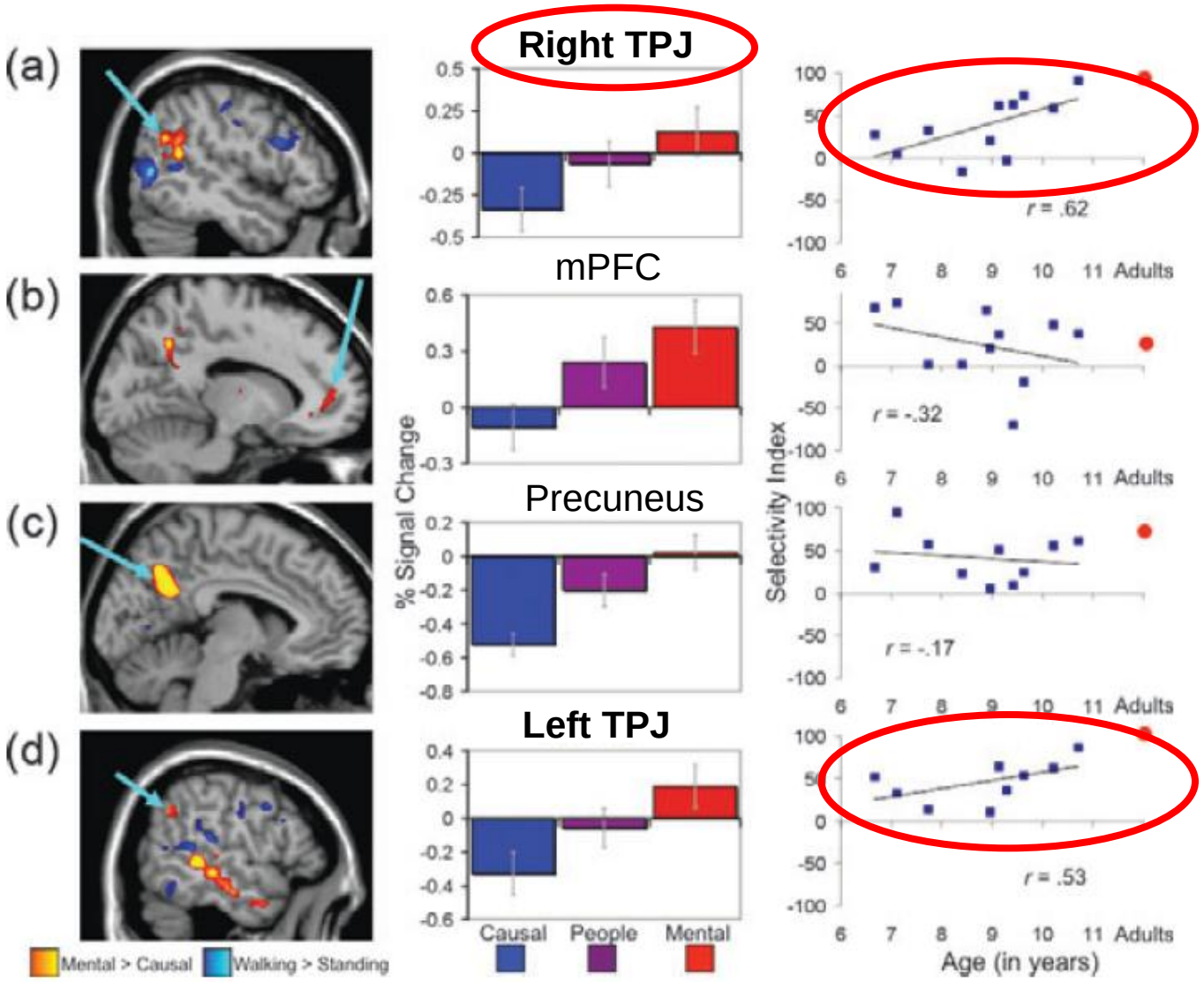
The social brain: pSTS/TPJ

- Seeing the other's point of view
  - Prediction
    - Biological motion, eye gaze
    - Predicting complex movements
  - Perspective-taking
    - Joint attention
    - Different physical points of view

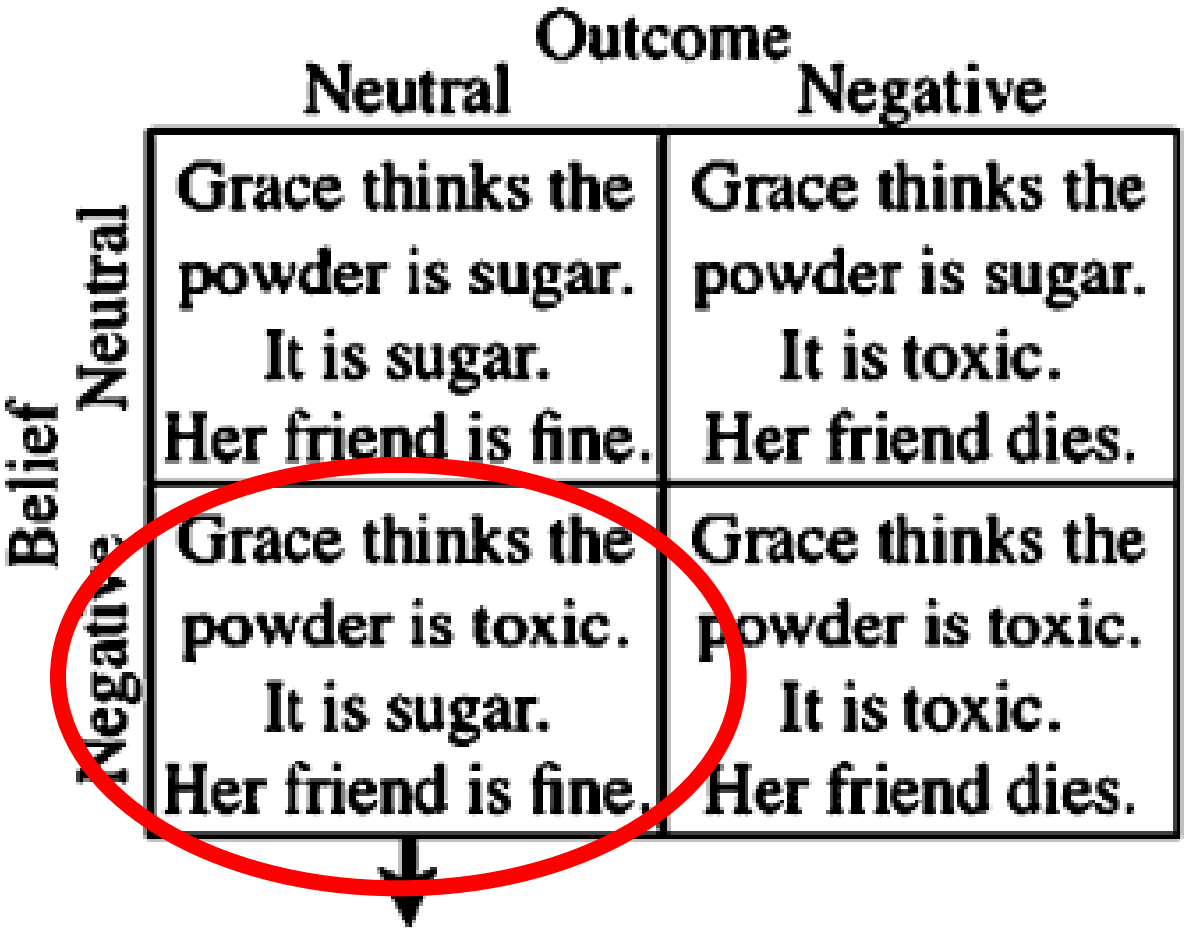


Pelphrey et al., 2004a,b; Kawawaki et al., 2012 (review); Mitchell 2013

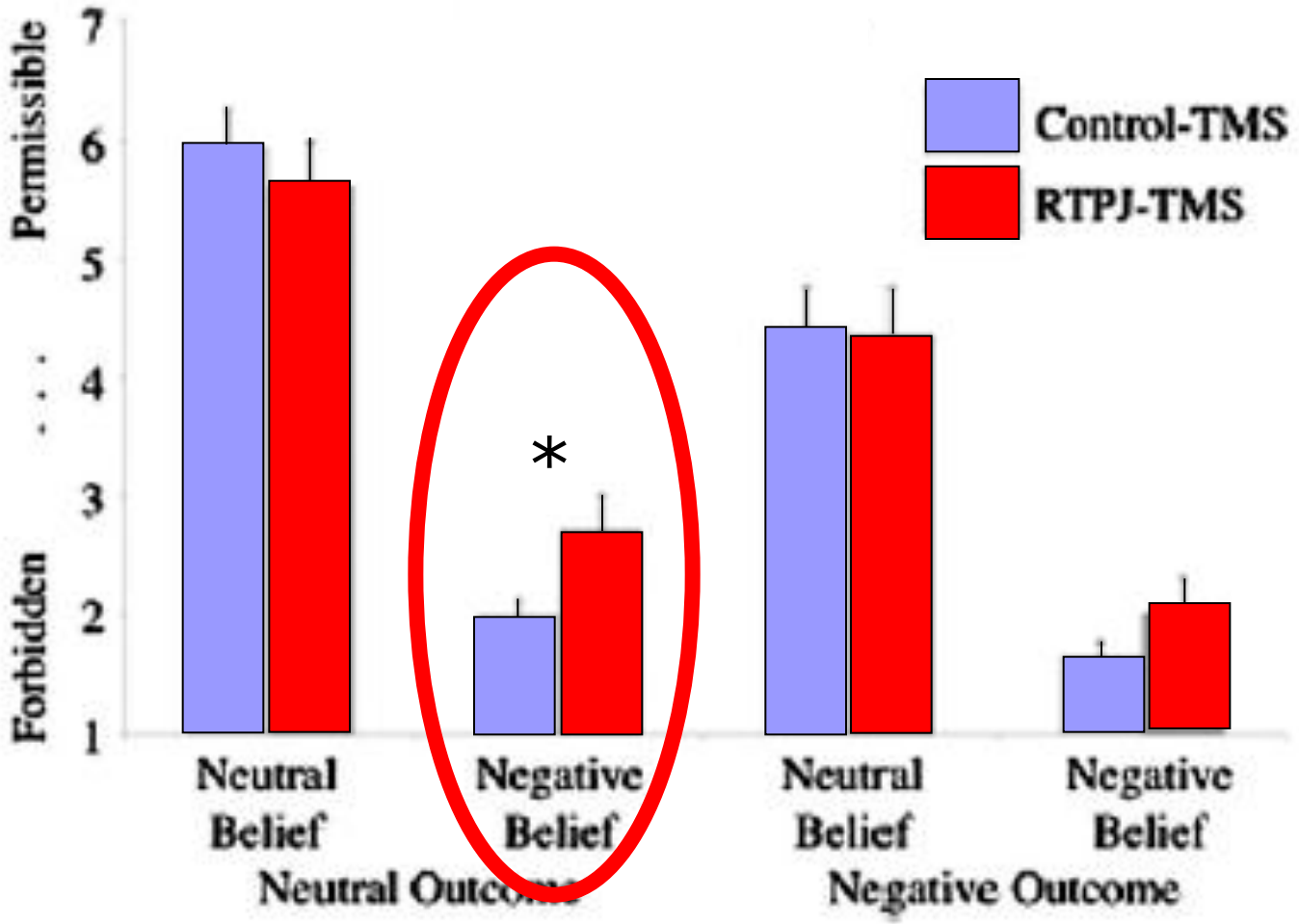
Brain Regions for **Perceiving and Reasoning About Other People** in School-Aged Children (Saxe et al.)



Grace and her friend are taking a tour of a chemical plant. When Grace goes over to the coffee machine to our some coffee, Grace's friend asks for some sugar in hers. There is a white powder next to the coffee in a container marked "toxic" and Grace gives two spoonfuls to her friend.



Disruption of the right temporoparietal junction with transcranial magnetic stimulation reduces the role of beliefs in moral judgments (Young et al., PNAS)



Mentalizing can be taught

- **Prosocial behaviors** in children emerge around the 2 years of age and are largely **non-heritable** (Deater-Deckard, 2003; Brownell, 2013)
  - They are linked with **positivity** in the relationship **with parents** (Spinrad, 2009)
  - **Maternal responsiveness** at child's **9 months** of age **predicts** child's **empathy** at **22 moths** of age (Kochanska, 1999)
  - **Mothers** with **negative preconceptions** about parenting have children who **show less empathy** towards their mothers (Kiang, Moreno & Robinson, 2004)
  - **Punitive and harsh parenting** is negatively related to prosocial behaviors (Asbury et al., 2003)

Warm and sensitive **attachment** relationship **encourages empathy** and **perspective taking**(Farrant et al, 2012)

Empathy and Attachment

- Avoidant attachment shows a characteristic way of **detachment** that **impedes mentalization** and therefore empathy:
  - **Avoidant** children aged 4-5 years in **play** with peers, are either **manipulative** and **exploitative** or victims of a manipulative relationship. They oscillate between being **victims** and **victimizers**

- Empathy requires regulation of negative emotions:
  - Fearful and **insecurely attached** 16 and 22 months old girls show progressively **less empathy for strangers in distress**
  - During that time span, empathic **concern for** their **mother's** distress **increased**

Van Der Mark, Van Ijzendoorn & Bakermans-Kranenburg, 2002; Troy & Sroufe, 1987

Empathy and Attachment

The development of empathy **requires** an early attachment relation with a **warm and responsive adult**

Reactivity to stress is present in young children, but **only some can regulate** it and **react empathically**

Children of **responsive mums** show more **concerned attention** and **lower** personal **distress** when confronted to **distress** of the **mother** and of a **stranger**

Kiang, Moreno & Robinson, 2004; Novartis Foundation, 2007; Spinrad & Stifter, 2009

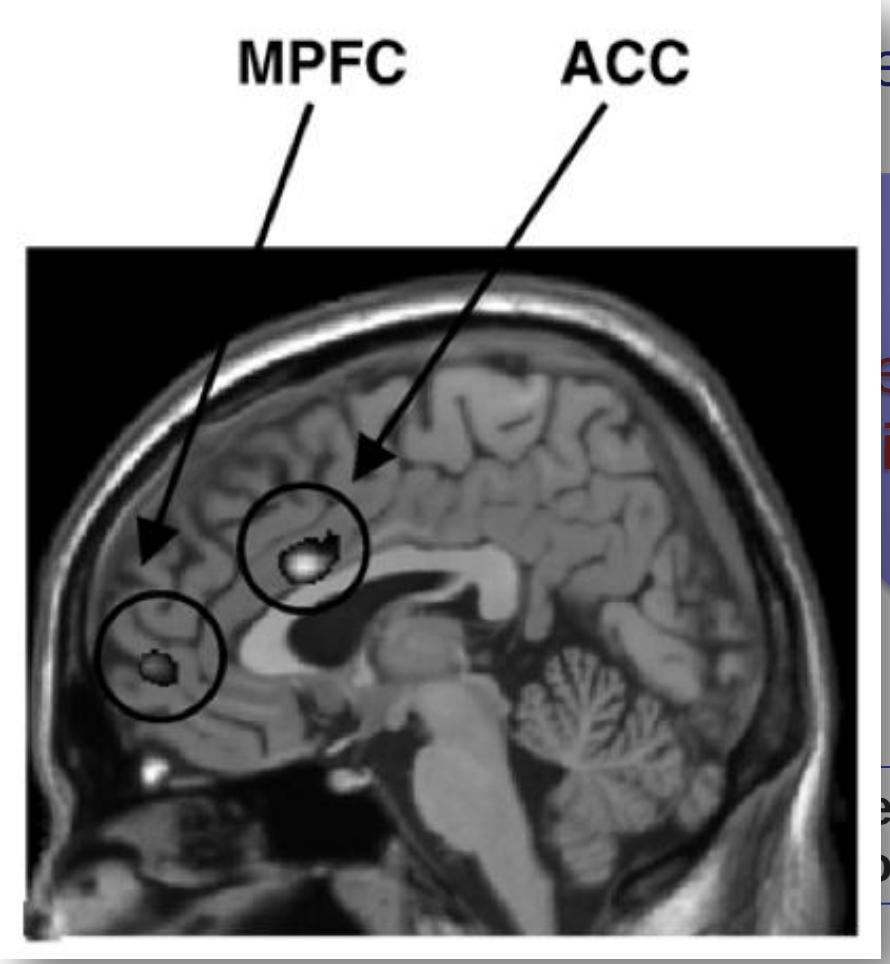
The Development of Affect Regulation

- Closeness of the infant to another human being who via **contingent marked mirroring** actions facilitates the emergence of a symbolic representational system of affective states and assists in developing affect regulation (and selective attention) ➔ secure attachment
- For normal development the child needs to experience a mind that has his mind in mind
  - Able to reflect on his intentions accurately
  - Does not overwhelm him
  - Not accessible to neglected children

High congruent & marked mirroring

Empathy and Attachment

This effect of pos ed in adults:



Priming attachme
security in adults

ersonal
istress

Attachment **avoidance** a
anxiety are **inversely** re
empathy

ty is positively
nal distress

When perceiving distress, **insecurely attached** people **fail to** recruit cortical brain areas normally used to **down-regulate negative emotions** (ACC and MPFC), which **hinders empathic behaviors** of help and comfort

Gillath, 2005; Mikulincer et al., 2001; 2005

Empathy and Attachment

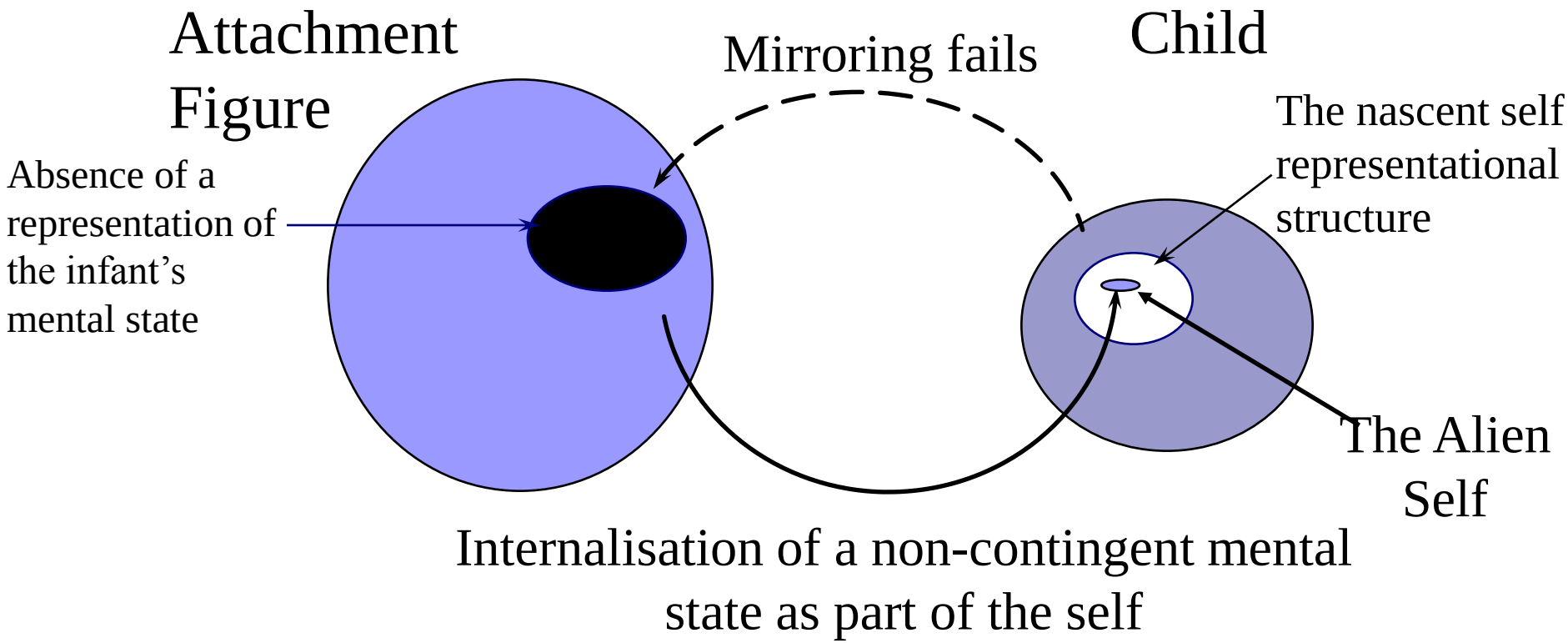
- **Dismissively attached** women **when empathizing**:
  - Show **more activation** in motor, **limbic**, and **mirror** systems
    - Implies *implicit and* ***unmodulated*** emotional **involvement**
    - **Impairment** in **self-other differentiation**
  - **Deactivation of fronto-medial** areas: **ACC** and medial pre-frontal cortex
    - Implies emotional **disinvestment** towards **social emotions**, typical of **dismissive subjects**
    - It **compensates** the **overactivated** implicit **involvement**

Emotional overactivation *in dismissive subjects does* ***not*** *result in* ***empathy***, ***but*** *in the retrieval of* ***autobiographical memories*** *of* ***painful attachment experiences***, *which* ***trigger avoidance strategies*** *when observing pain*

Lenzi, et al., 2012

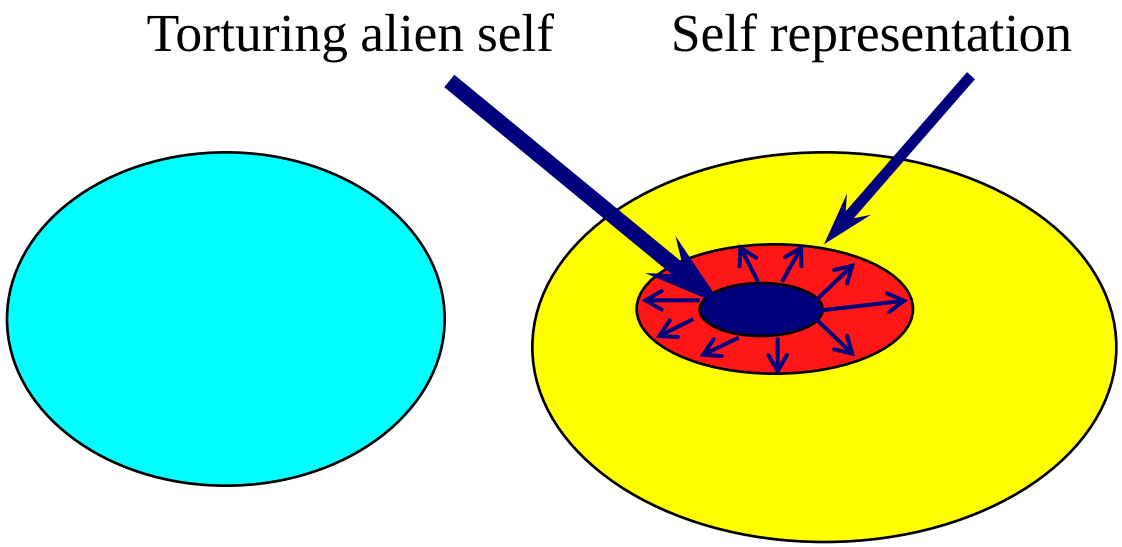
Theory: Birth of the "Alien" Self in Disorganized Attachment

The caregiver's perception is inaccurate or unmarked or both



The child, unable to "find" himself as an intentional being, internalizes a representation of the other into the self with distorted agentive characteristics which disorganizes the self creating splits within the self structure

Theory: Self-destructiveness and Externalisation Following Trauma



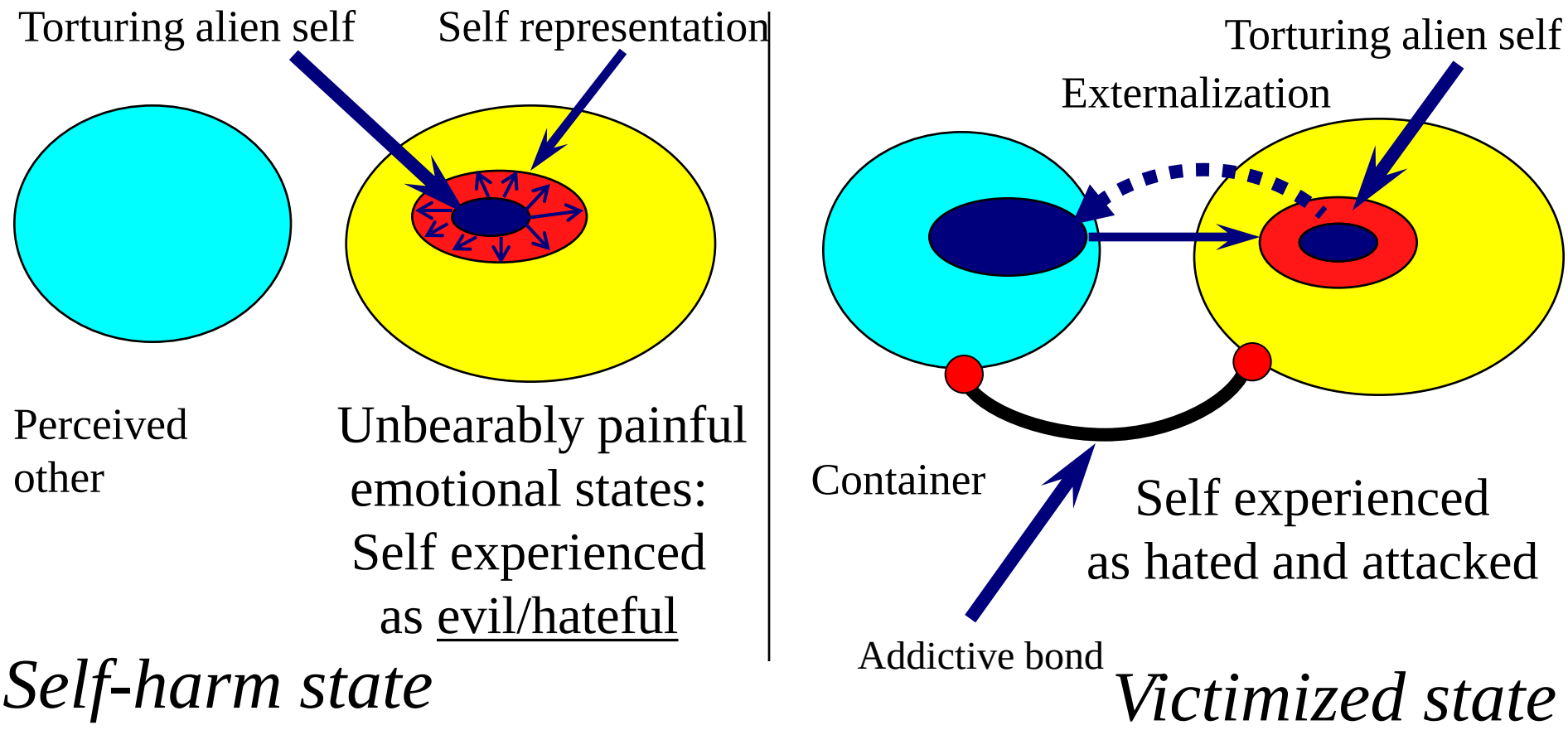
Perceived other

Unbearably painful emotional states: Self experienced as <u>evil/hateful</u>

Self-harm state

Attack from within is turned against body and/or mind.

Theory: Self-destructiveness and Self-destructive relationships

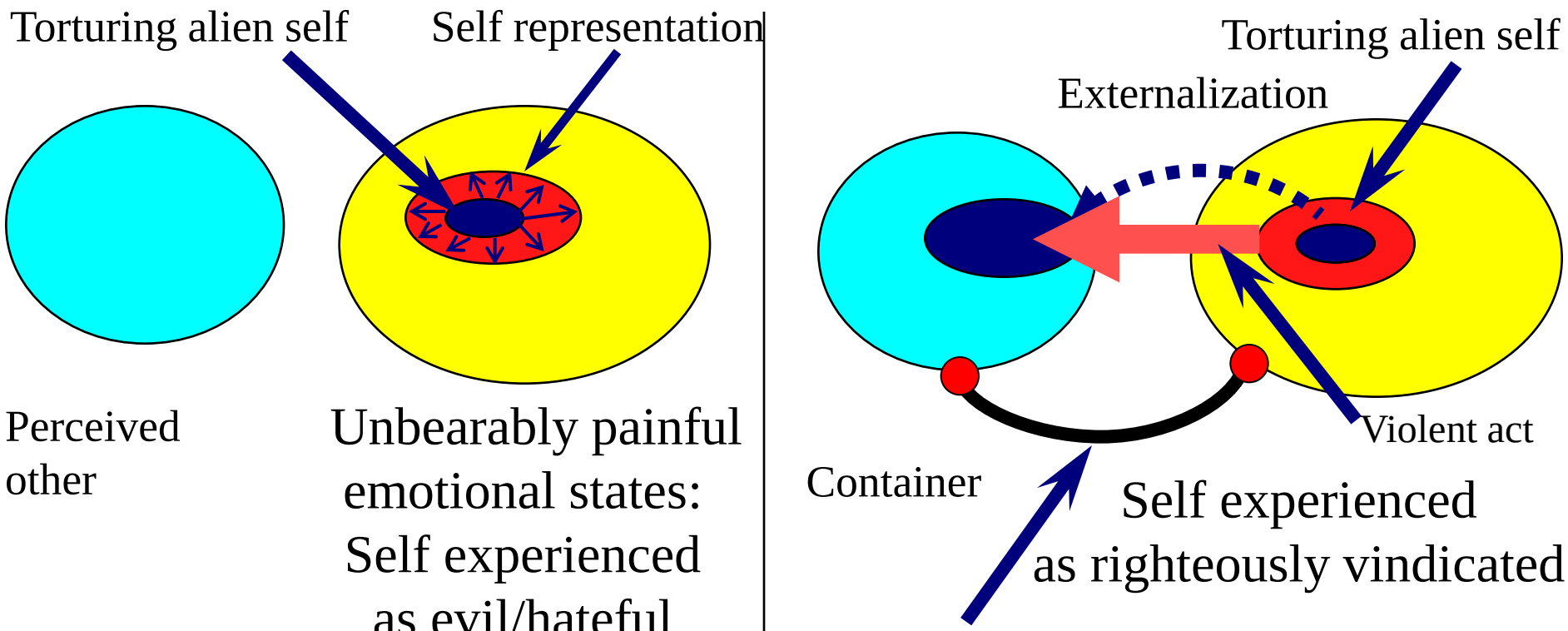


Self-harm state

Victimized state

Projective identification is used to reduce the experience of unbearably painful emotional state of attack from within – externalisation becomes a matter of life and death and addictive bond and terror of loss of (abusing) object develops

Externalisation & Violence Following Trauma



Self-harm state

Violent state

Projective identification is used to reduce the experience of unbearably painful emotional state of attack from within – externalisation becomes a matter of life and death, the violent act protects against experience of intrusion and addictive bond and terror of loss of abused object can develop

Empathy deficits and attachment

In children with disruptive behavior disorders

Children with higher levels of **callous/unemotional** traits are more likely to show ***disorganized*** attachment

In line with **impairments** in attending to, **recognizing** and responding to other **people's emotions**

Early **attachment disturbances impair** children's ability to **reflect** on and respond to **other people's emotional** states

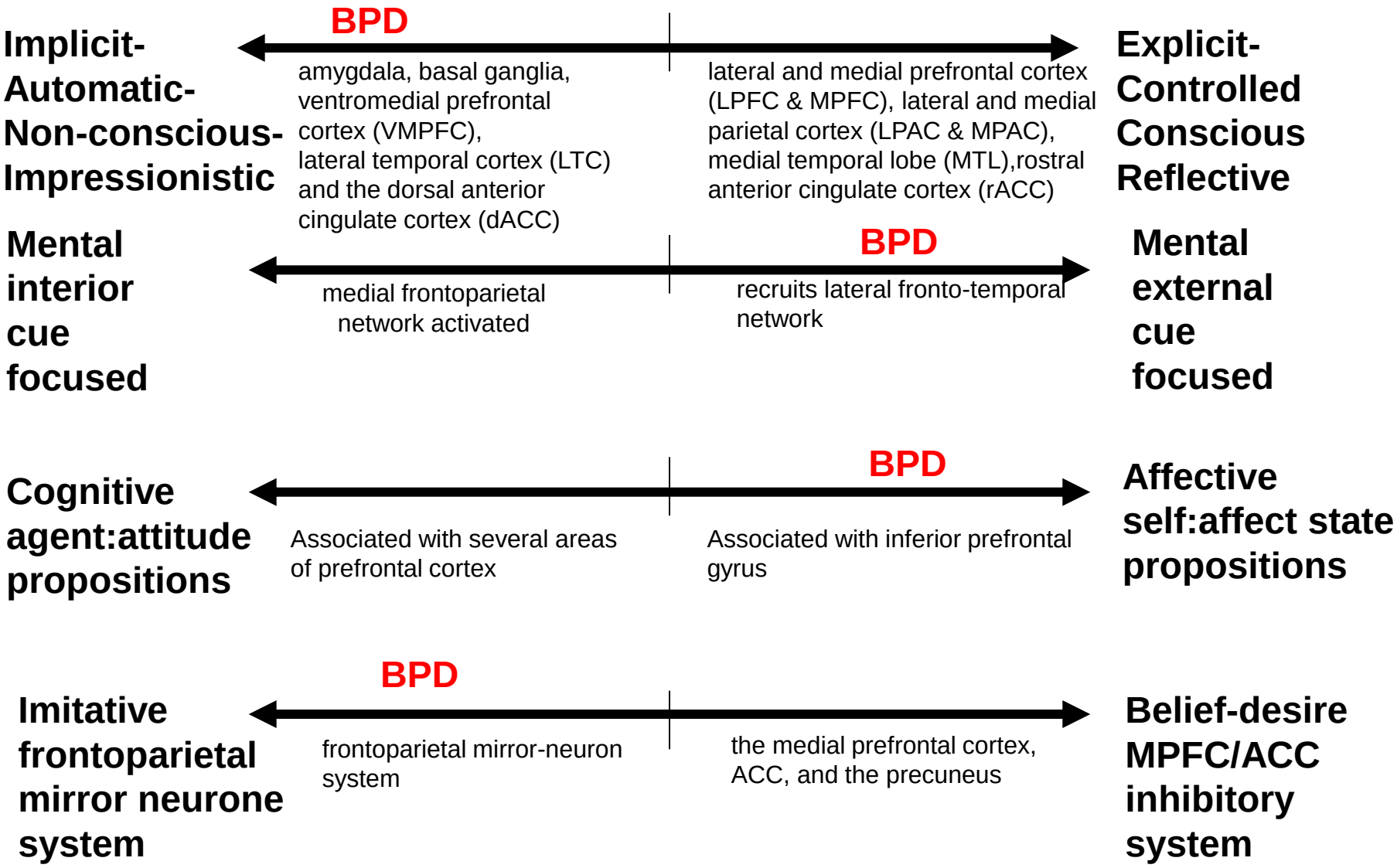
Disrupted attachment **amplify negative effects of temperamental aspects** on callous/unemotional traits

These traits are associated with **emotional recognition deficits** and ***low*** *levels of* ***prosocial behavior***

Pasalich et al., 2012

Mentalizing Profile of Prototypical BPD patient

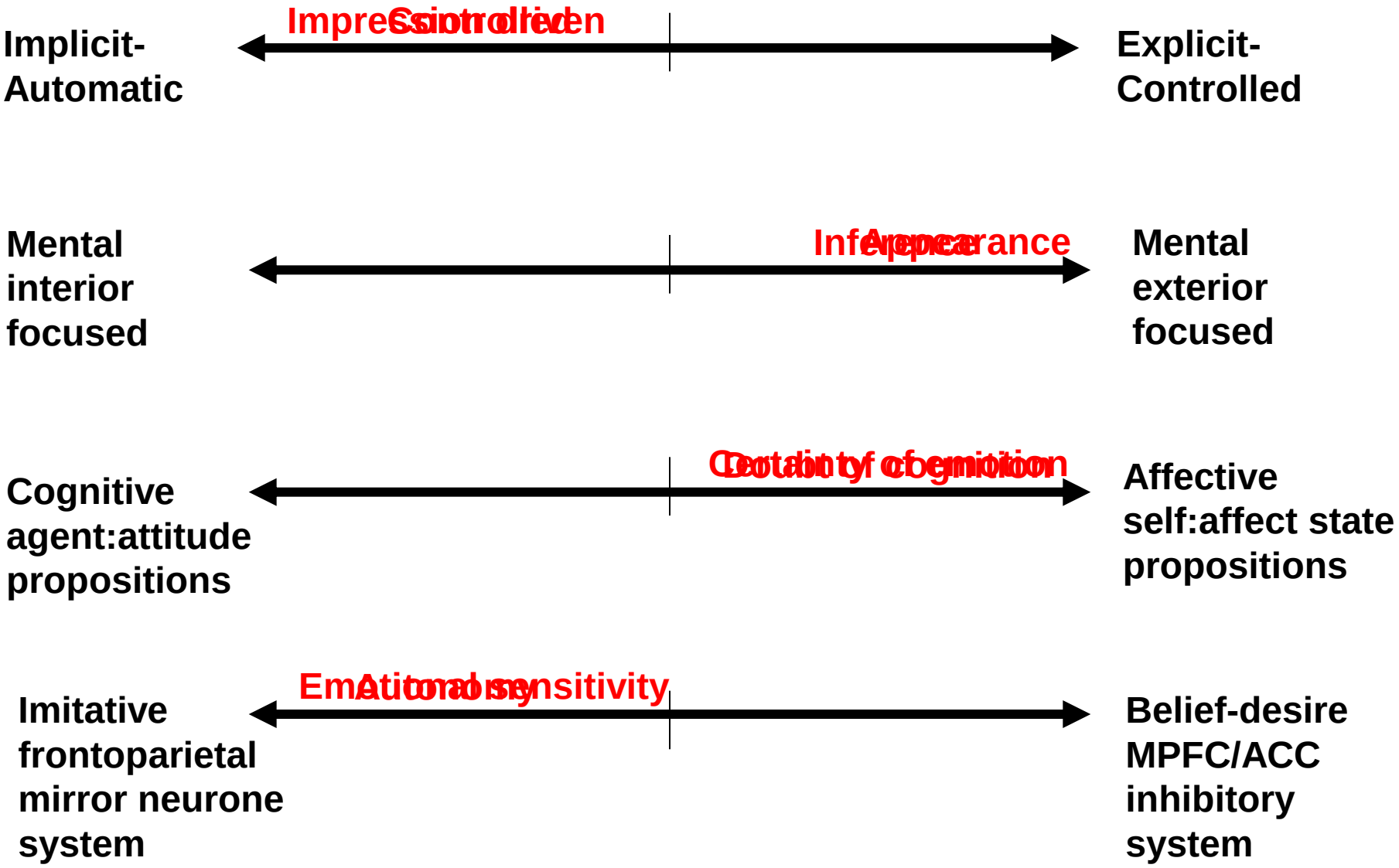
Fonagy, P., & Luyten, P. (2009). *Development and Psychopathology, 21*, 1355-1381.



Prementalizing Modes of Subjectivity

- Psychic equivalence:
  - Mind-world **isomorphism**; **mental** reality **=** outer **reality**; internal has power of external
  - **Intolerance** of alternative perspectives ➔concrete understanding
  - Reflects domination of **self:affect state** thinking with **limited internal focus**
- Pretend mode:
  - Ideas form no bridge between inner and outer reality; **mental** world **decoupled** from external reality
  - "**dissociation**" of thought, **hyper-mentalizing** or **pseudo-mentalizing**
  - Reflects explicit mentalizing being dominated by **implicit**, **inadequate internal** focus, **poor belief-desire reasoning** and vulnerabilty to **fusion with others**
- Teleological stance:
  - A focus on understanding actions in terms of their **physical** as opposed to mental **constraints**
  - Cannot accept anything other than a modification in the realm of the **physical** as a true index of the intentions of the other.
  - Extreme **exterior focus**, momentary **loss of controlled** mentalizing
  - **Misuse** of mentalization for teleological ends (harming others) becomes possible because of lack of **implicit as well as explicit** mentalizing

Treatment vectors in re-establishing mentalizing in borderline personality disorder



■*Mentalizing and the pedagogic stance and a general theory for psychotherapy?*

The need for human natural pedagogy

- We are born into a world populated with man-made tools whose functional properties, appropriate manner of application or method of (re)production often remain in many respects epistemically opaque
- The cognitive opacity of kind or category-relevant aspects of human-made functional artifacts raises a learnability problem (of relevance-selection) for the naïve juvenile observational learner

The Theory of Natural Pedagogy (Csibra & Gergely, 2006; 2009, in press)

- A human-specific, cue-driven social cognitive adaptation of mutual design dedicated to ensure efficient **transfer of** relevant **cultural knowledge**
- Humans are predisposed to **'teach' and 'learn'** new and relevant cultural information from each other
- Human **communication** is specifically adapted to allow the transmission of
- a) cognitively **opaque** cultural knowledge
- b) kind-**generalizable** generic knowledge
- c) **shared** cultural knowledge

Definition of Ostensive Stimuli (Sperber & Wilson, 1995)

- The signals whereby an agent **makes manifest** to an addressee her **communicative intention**: to manifest some new **relevant information** for the addressee (i.e. her informative intention).
- Infants display **species-specific sensitivity** to, and preference for, some **non-verbal ostensive** behavioral **signals** (see Csibra, 2010, Csibra & Gergely, 2009 for reviews)
- Examples of **ostensive communication cues**
  - **eye-contact**
  - turn-taking **contingent reactivity**
  - special **tone** (‘motherese’)

The Pedagogical Stance is triggered by Ostensive-Communicative cues

- Ostensive cues have **in common**
  - Infant **recognized as a self**
  - Paid special attention to (**noticed as** an **agent**)
- Ostensive cues function to trigger:
  - Open channel to knowledge about social and personally relevant world (CULTURE)
  - Go beyond the specific experience and acquire knowledge relevant in many settings
  - Triggers opening of an epistemic superhighway for knowledge acquisition

Ostensive cues → referential expectation in infant

- 6-month-olds **followed** an agent's **gaze-shift** to one of two objects but only **when** it had been preceded by either **eye contact** or **infant-directed speech** (ostensive signals) addressed to the infant (Senju and Csibra, 2008).

- An automated eye-tracker based study used an infant-induced **contingent reactivity paradigm** to demonstrate that **8-month-olds gaze follow** an unfamiliar object's bodily orientation response towards one of two targets, but only **when** the **object** had been **reacting contingently** before (producing self-propelled body movements such as tilting) to being looked at by the infant (Deligianni et al., 2011).

Experimental illustration of ostensive cues Gergely, Egyed et al. (in press)

Subjects : 4 groups of 18-month-olds

Stimuli: Two unfamiliar objects

1: Baseline – control group
No object-directed attitude demonstration

Simple Object Request by Experimenter A

Subjects: n= 20 Age: 18-month-olds

Ostensive Communicative Demonstration Requester: OTHER person (Condition 1)

Learning from Attitude Expressions

18-month-olds

Ostensive Expression - Generalization

Non-Ostensive (Non-Communicative) Demonstration Requester: OTHER person (Condition 2)

Learning from Attitude Expressions

18-month-olds

Ostensive Expression - Generalization

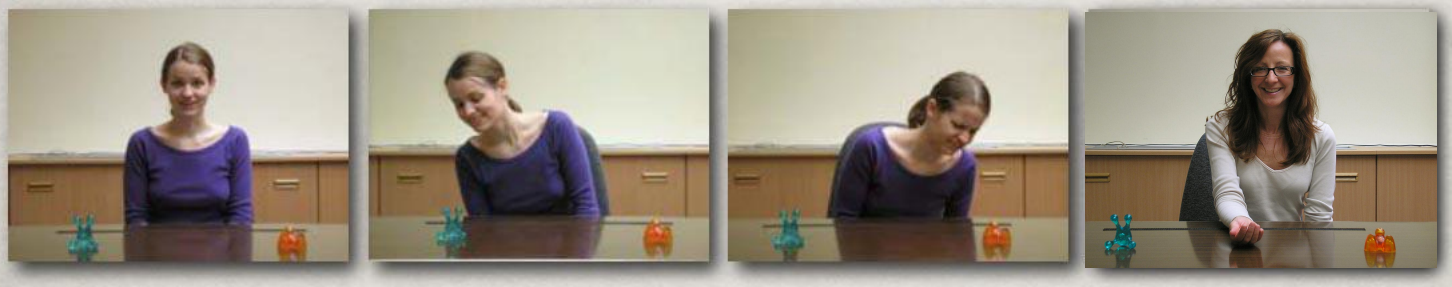
Non-Ostensive Expression - No Generalization

Condition 4: Non-Ostensive (Non-Communicative) Demonstration Requester: SAME person

Learning from Attitude Expressions

18-month-olds

Ostensive Expression - Generalization



Non-Ostensive Expression - No Generalization

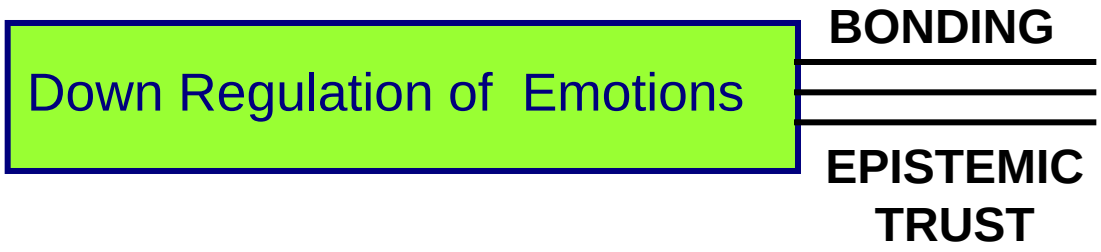
Non-Ostensive Expression - Person-Specific Attribution

Egyed et al., in prep.

Epistemic trust and secure attachment

- **Secure attachment** is created by a system that also induces a sense of **epistemic trust** ➔ that the information relayed by the teacher may be trusted (i.e. learnt from)
- Evidence
  - Cognitive **advantage** of secure attachment
  - **Contingent** responsiveness to the infant's own (at first, automatic) expressive displays in secure attachment
  - During **"mirroring" interactions**, the other will "mark" her referential emotion displays in a 'manifestative' manner to instruct the infant

How Attachment Links to Affect Regulation



The forming of an attachment bond

Social Cues that Create Epistemic Trust

- **Attachment** is **special condition** for generating epistemic trust
- Generally any **communication** marked by **recognition** of the listener as **intentional agent** will increase **epistemic trust and** likelihood of **communication** being **coded** as
  - **Relevant**
  - **Generalizable**
  - To be retained in **semantic memory**
- **Influential** communicators
  - use ostensive **cues** to **maximum**
  - create '**illusion**' of **recognizing** agentiveness of listener
    - **Looking** at audience
    - Addressing current **concern**
    - Communicating that they see problem from **agent's perspective**
    - Seeing Recognizing individual **struggle in understanding**
- Massive **difference in ability** of individuals to influence (teachers, politicians, managers) explicable in terms of varying capacity to **generate epistemic trust**

Meta-analytic studies of teacher effectiveness

- John Hattie is Professor of Education at the University of Auckland, New Zealand.
- 15 years research and synthesises over 800 meta-analyses relating to the influences on achievement in school-aged students.
- Builds a story about the power of teachers and of feedback, and constructs a model of learning and understanding.
- Is there a set of predictors to good teaching outcomes based on:
  - The child?
  - The home?
  - The school?
  - The curricula?
  - The teacher?
  - The approaches to teaching?

Meta-analytic studies of teacher effectiveness

- Things that do not work:
  - Mobility (shifting schools) -0.34
  - Television -0.14
  - Summer vacation -.09
  - Ability grouping 0.10
  - Ability grouping .10
  - Individualized instruction .20
  - Homework .30

Meta-analytic studies of teacher effectiveness

- What makes a teacher most effective?
  - It is teachers **seeing learning through the eyes of students**; and students seeing teaching as the key to their ongoing learning
- The key ingredients are:
  - **Awareness of** the learning **intentions**
  - Knowing **when** a **student** is (**feels**) **successful**
  - Having sufficient **understanding of** the student's **understanding**
  - **Know enough** about the content to provide meaningful and challenging experiences
- **Passion** that reflects the **thrills** as well as awareness of the **frustrations** of learning.

Implications: A mechanism of change

- *Mentalizing* (seeing behavior in terms of mental states) entails **collaboration**
  - Seeing from **other's perspective**
  - Treating the **other as** a **person**
  - **Recognizing** them as an **agent**
  - **Assuming they** have things to **teach you** – since mental states are opaque

Implications: The nature of psychopathology

- Social adversity (most deeply **trauma)** is the **destruction of trust in social knowledge** of all kinds ➔**rigidity**, being **hard to reach**
- Cannot change because **cannot accept** new information **as relevant** (to generalize) to other social contexts
- **Personality disorder** is not disorder of personality (except by old definition of being enduring) but **inaccessibility to cultural communication** from
  - Partner
  - Therapist
  - Teacher

} **Epistemic Mistrust**

Implications: The nature of psychopathology

- **Epistemic mistrust follows** experiences of **maltreatment** or abuse
  - Therapists ignore this knowledge at their peril
- Personality disorder is a **failure of communication**
  - It is not a failure of the individual but a **failure of a relationship**
  - It is associated with an **unbearable sense of isolation** in the client generated by epistemic mistrust
  - Our inability to communicate with client causes **frustration in us** and a tendency to **blame the victim**
  - We feel they are not listening but actually it is that they find it **hard to trust** the truth of what they hear

Implications: The nature of psychotherapy

- *Mentalizing* patients may be **a common factor** to psychotherapy **not** because we need **to learn about** our **minds** to learn about those of others
- **Mentalizing is** a generic way of establishing **epistemic trust and achieving change**
  - Our subjectivity being understood is necessary **key to open up** wish to learn about world including social world
  - Open a key biological route to information transmission and possibility of change **epistemic super-highway**
  - Experience of **feeling thought** about makes us feel **safe** enough to **think about social world**

Implications: The nature of psychotherapy

- Therapy is not just about the **what** but the **how of learning:**
  - **Opening the person's mind** via establishing **epistemic trust** (**collaboration**) so he/she can once again trust the social world by changing expectations
  - It is **not just what is taught** in therapy that teaches, but the evolutionary **capacity for learning from social situation** is rekindled
  - CAMHS interventions are effective because they open the child to **social learning experience** which then feed back in virtuous cycle

Psychotherapy may be effective for two reasons

- Learning **content** → by focusing on **trustworthy aspects of context**
  - We may have some **wisdom** that is worth communicating
  - Once epistemic superhighway is open the client can **learn from us**
- Learning about **sources of knowledge** → by providing a clear **social illustration of trust** we undo epistemic isolation
  - By using **ostensive cues** and establishing a sense that we are concerned to see the **world from the client's standpoint** we model a situation of interpersonal trust
  - **Improved understanding** of social situation → Leads to better understanding of attachment figure → more trusting (less paranoid) interpersonal relationships → it opens up the potential to feeling sensitively responded to in **virtuous cycle**

Implications: Learning beyond therapy

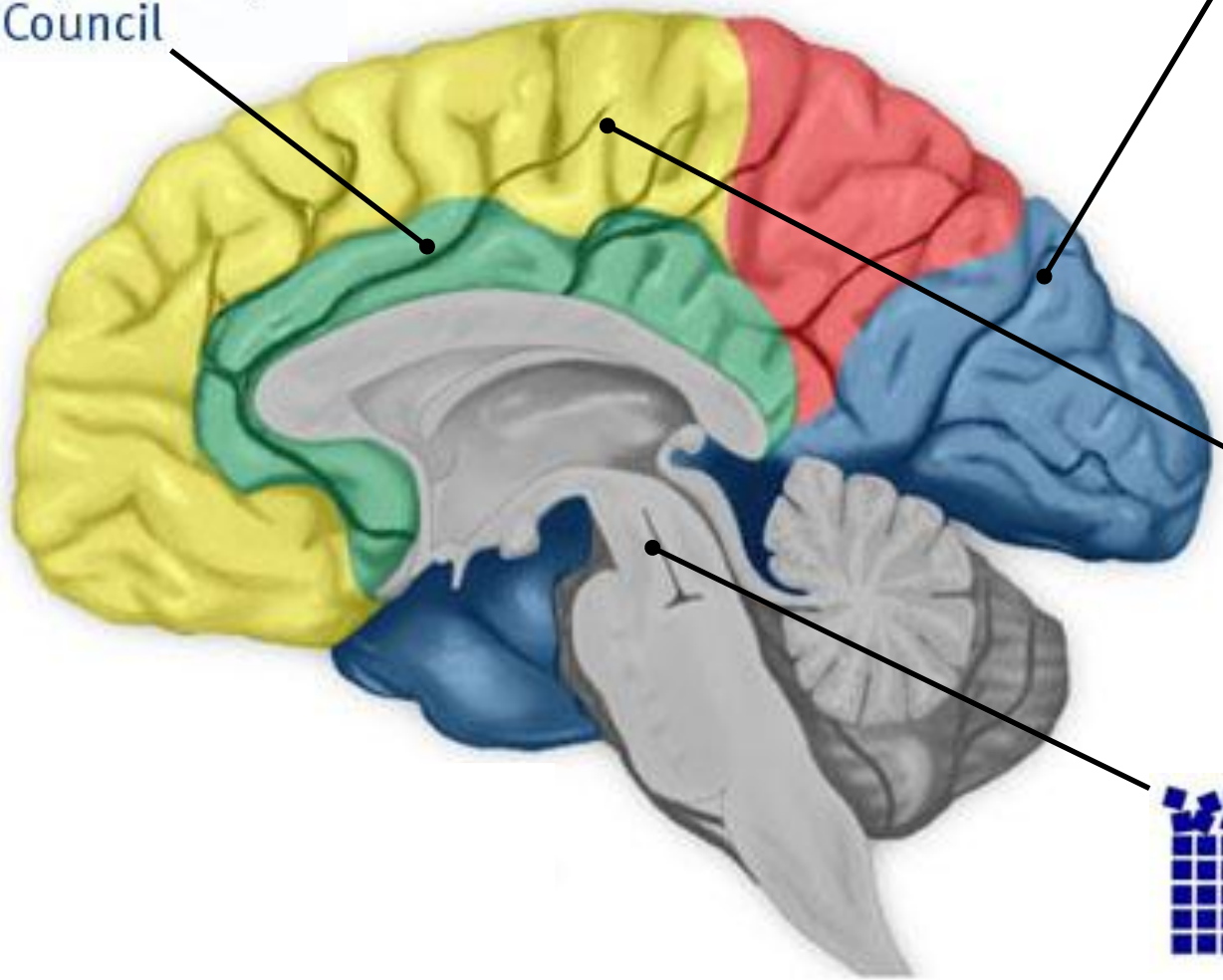
- What is **the process at work:**
  - **Limitless** therapies - 1,246 different ways to understand
  - But each model capable to provide a **content to treatment** that makes person feel understood
  - The **rationale** of the treatment and the **model** of **pathology** and the model of **therapeutic** effect **gives the treatment the content to create the process**
  - Mentalizing by itself is not a realistic therapy – it does not tell the therapist what to focus on, **just focusing** the patient **on** their **thoughts** and those of others around them **will not achieve change**
  - Improvement based on learning from **experience beyond therapy**

Implications: Learning beyond therapy

- The **specific frame of the therapy** around which mentalizing occurs
  - the model of **mind**,
  - the model of **interaction**,
  - the model of **underlying dysfunction**,
  - the model of **therapeutic goals**
- The enhancing of mentalizing is **also** a common factor that achieves **improved social relationships**
- Improved sense of epistemic trust enables **learning from experience** ➔change due to what happens beyond CAMHS
- The **enhancing of epistemic trust** may be **achieved by treatment** but also a **consequence of improved social relationships** and consequent on what happened in the social world.

British Psychoanalytic Council

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy



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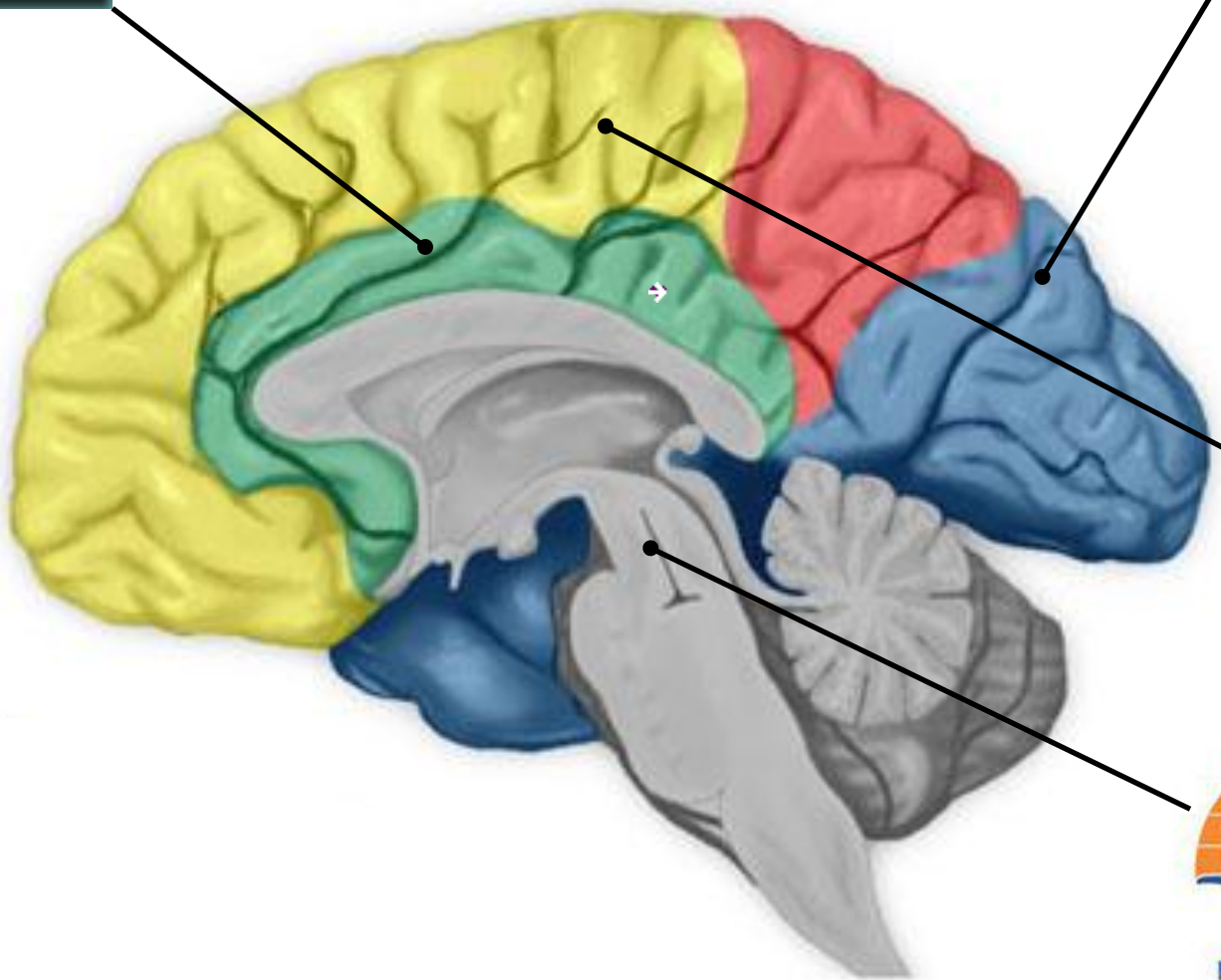
Gaps in Therapy Outcomes Research

- No solid evidence for **who will benefit** from what type of psychotherapy
- ‘**Inexact** therapies’ ➔ partial effectiveness
- ‘Attachment to methods’ ➔ ‘**guildification**’ of interventions

ahp menu



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To Sum Up

Getting comfortable in the social world

Adapting to the social world is a steep learning curve

Getting comfortable in the social world

For example, it is not obvious what is the true function of all the objects we use.

Getting comfortable in the social world

Luckily, humans have evolved to teach and learn from each other quickly and efficiently…

Getting comfortable in the social world

-..quickly and efficiently if certain conditions are met…

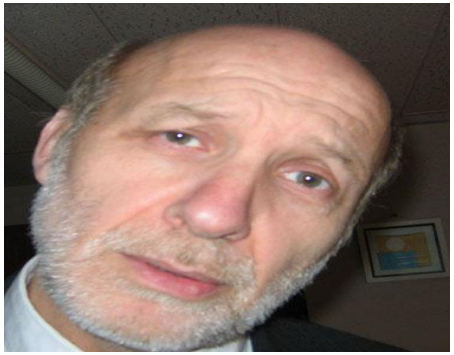
Getting comfortable in the social world

…but this special interpersonal channel for learning about the social world is not always tuned in.

Tuning in to the interpersonal channel

When there is abuse, there is no trust, the mind is blocked and it is impossible to move forward

Tuning in to the interpersonal channel



Win the other person's trust by responding contingently to their feelings and thoughts, showing them that you are hearing and thinking about what's going on in their mind…

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