

## Reading Guide Parts of the Soul II

Readings for 20 January 2011

### REQUIRED READINGS/WATCHINGS

[A] Watch Daniel Kahneman's Nobel Prize Lecture – “Maps of Bounded Rationality” at [http://nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/economics/laureates/2002/kahneman-lecture.html](http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/economics/laureates/2002/kahneman-lecture.html) (38 minutes)

AND/OR: Read the article based on this lecture: Daniel Kahneman, “A Perspective on Judgment and Choice: Mapping Bounded Rationality.” (2003), pp. 697-720. (V\*2)

[B] Tamar Szabó Gendler, “Alief and Belief,” *Journal of Philosophy* (2008), pp. 634-663 (V\*2)

[A] **Daniel Kahneman, “Maps of Bounded Rationality”**

[http://nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/economics/laureates/2002/kahneman-lecture.html](http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/economics/laureates/2002/kahneman-lecture.html)

and/or

**Daniel Kahneman, “A Perspective on Judgment and Choice: Mapping Bounded Rationality.” (2003), pp. 697-720**

### Background

Israeli-American psychologist Daniel Kahneman (born 1934), together with his collaborator Amos Tversky (1937-1996), is renowned for his work on the psychology of human judgment and decision-making, his contributions to hedonic psychology (the study of what makes people happy) and his foundational contributions to behavioral economics (a discipline that seeks to bring psychological research about systematic features of the human reasoning process to bear on questions of economic decision-making.) Kahneman and Tversky's seminal psychological work was central in inspiring the dual-processing accounts about which we read on Tuesday.

In 2002, Kahneman was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economics for his work in Prospect Theory (a theory that describes how people make decisions in situations where the outcomes of their choices are uncertain.) Kahneman emphasized that the Prize was in recognition of the collaborative work that he had done with Tversky, who would certainly have shared the Prize had he still been alive. (There is a lovely picture of Tversky at the 35-second mark Kahneman's Nobel Prize lecture.)

In the lecture Kahneman provides an overview of the work that he and Tversky did attempting to “map departures from rational models and the mechanisms that explain” these departures (1:01).

If you find discussion in the lecture confusing at any point, you may want to consult the written text, which includes significantly more detail.

## Terms, Concepts, and Examples

Be sure that you understand and are able to distinguish among the following terms, concepts and examples:

Terms and Concepts: bounded rationality; perception/intuitive thinking/rationality; expected value/expected utility; adaptation; reference point; loss-aversion; representativeness heuristic

Examples: deck of cards case (lecture) or blocks case (paper); line case (both); colored screen case (lecture) or contrasting squares case (paper); warm/cool water case (both); risk-aversion gamble cases (both); large/small plate-set cases; red/white urn cases; Linda the bankteller case; short/long colonoscopy case (all in both)

## Reading/Listening Questions

As you read/listen, pay special attention to the following issues and questions:

- (1) At 1:59, Kahneman articulates three goals for his talk: make sure that you understand what these three goals are. As you listen to the remainder of the talk, be sure you understand which of these three tasks he is engaged in, and how the discussion supports that aim. [In order to do so, you may find it helpful to read the section of the written version entitled “The Two-System View” (pp. 698-9.)]
- (2) What does Kahneman mean when he says that “perceptual representations are selective” (3:16.) How do the examples that he goes on to adduce (the card case and the line case) provide evidence for this claim? (Kahneman returns to a discussion of these issues at 22:23.) What are some implications for human judgment and decision making of the fact that whereas averages are easily perceived, sums are not, as exemplified in the four cases that Kahneman goes on to discuss beginning at 23:49? [Discussion of these issues in the written version can be found on pp. 697-702.]
- (3) What do the examples of the grey/red screen (8:24) and the three bowls of water (9:04) tell us about perception? How is this phenomenon reflected in human processes of judgment and choice, as exemplified in the gambling case (10:41)? How does Kahneman make use of the ideas of adaptation and reference points to explain people’s reactions to such cases? [Discussion of these issues in the written version can be found on pp. 703-717.]

## **[B] Tamar Szabó Gendler, “Alief and Belief,” *Journal of Philosophy* (2008), pp. 634-663**

### Background

Tamar Szabó Gendler (Yale class of 1987) is your instructor for this course. At Yale, she did a double major in Humanities, and Math-and-Philosophy; as a graduate student at Harvard (PhD 1996), she studied Philosophy. She then taught Philosophy and Cognitive Science at Yale (1996-97), Syracuse (1997-2003), Cornell (2003-06) and Yale again (2006-present.) In 2009-10, she did a full year of graduate coursework in Psychology and related fields at Yale.

“Alief and Belief” was published in a professional philosophy journal, and at times the discussion may be somewhat technical. Feel free to skim sections that you find difficult. You may certainly skim (or even skip) the footnotes.

## Terms, Concepts, and Examples

Be sure that you understand and are able to distinguish among the following terms, concepts and examples:

*Terms and Concepts:* alief (belief-discordant and belief-concordant); belief-behavior mismatch; automaticity

*Examples:* Grand Canyon skywalk case; feces-shaped fudge case; forgotten ID case; Charles and the green slime case; watch-set-fast case; sugar/cyanide labeling case

## Reading Questions

As you read, pay special attention to the following issues and questions:

- (1) How is each of the four opening examples (pp. 634-637) an instance of belief-behavior mismatch? On what grounds does Gendler argue that these cases of belief-behavior mismatch are not instances of deliberate deception, self-deception, doubt, or forgetting?
- (2) How does Gendler characterize alief? On what grounds does she argue that alief cannot be assimilated to belief or mere imagining? (Section 2)
- (3) What role does the discussion of automaticity (section 3) play in the larger argument? How does Gendler make use of the notion of alief to explain these cases?
- (4) What role does the discussion of Hume’s story of Themistocles (section 4) play in the larger argument? How does Gendler make use of the notion of alief to explain this case?

Posted 1/17/2011