

UC Merced

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society

Title

Great Apes and Human Children Rationally Monitor their Decisions

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6256j1d6>

Journal

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, 44(44)

Authors

O'Madagain, Cathal
Helming, Katharina
Schmidt, Marco
et al.

Publication Date

2022

Peer reviewed

Great Apes and Human Children Rationally Monitor their Decisions

Cathal O'Madagain

Université Mohammed VI Polytechnique, Benguerir, Morocco

Katharina Helming

University of Warwick, Warwick, United Kingdom

Marco Schmidt

University of Konstanz, Konstanz, Germany

Eli Shupe

University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington, Texas, United States

Josep Call

St. Andrews University, St. Andrews, Scotland, United Kingdom

Michael Tomasello

Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, United States

Abstract

Central to rationality is the ability to think about our beliefs, and make sure they are based on good reasons. If we have several conflicting reasons to believe something, we wait for more information before making a decision, perhaps rechecking our original reasons before proceeding. In these studies, we presented great apes and young children with conflicting evidence about the location of a reward. We found that apes double-checked the evidence for their original choice before making a final decision, revealing an awareness of their own beliefs and reasoning not hitherto documented. Young children, in contrast, were more sensitive to peer disagreement than conflicting physical evidence, illustrating the distinctively social nature of human rationality.