

What is Reasoning Good For?

It is possible to have beliefs that are reliably correlated with the world without being able to talk informatively about this fact. In perception this may be the rule rather than the exception. Why then should we have an ability to reason about our beliefs, and convince ourselves that we are right about them? I argue that this reasoning has a function that is also carried out at the basic perceptual level through self-monitoring that does not use reasoning or consciousness. This function is calibration, the attunement of one's degree of belief in p to one's track record of reliability in making judgments about p -like matters. I argue that the function of calibration, in turn, is pre-emptive self-correction, the adjustment of your belief-states before the world punishes you for being wrong.

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