

heuristic to be uncovered which can aid the decision. (“Yes, I’ve seen that same pattern, I can agree that it’s the best indicator we have.”)

Reflection, type 3 thinking

“Being intelligent is not the same thing as being smart” (Manktelow, 2012, p. 259).

Two researchers, Evans and Stanovich, propose a revision to the popular two system model, to explain, among other things, the mysterious phenomenon of very clever people believing and doing very stupid things (Manktelow, 2012). Clearly, it would be useful for us also to understand how to avoid such behaviour.

In brief, type 1 thinking is uniform across individuals. It uses heuristics to quickly generate best guesses which are then handed to type 2 thinking which may or may not decide to analyze these guesses further. Type 1 thinking can also send its decisions directly to our beliefs, to what we say, and to what we do. The trick that distinguishes individuals who get beyond these rapid responses is called the ‘reflective mind’. Stanovich labels this ‘type 3’ thinking. Type 3 thinking enjoys being sceptical of type 1’s output and asks type 2 to wake up and apply its intelligence to the problem. Type 3 thinking is a trait of an individual’s personality; in Manktelow’s words, it is the ability to be “open-minded”.

The elephants in the room

There is a growing literature called “experimental moral philosophy” (Alfano and Loeb, 2016). Two of its major practitioners have recently published accessible books (Haidt, 2013; Greene, 2013) that I think offer several insights into our topic of sharing conservation decisions. It is not trying to build rules or prescriptions about right and wrong, good and bad, it is trying to understand our moral instincts, our gut feelings, usually by thought experiments. For example, five people are trapped on a railway track, one person is trapped on another track. A train is headed towards the five, but you can pull a switch to redirect it towards the one. What do you do?

For type 1 and 2 thinking about morality, Haidt (2013) has adopted the metaphor of ‘the elephant and the rider’ within each of us. Our ‘elephant’ (our type 1 thinking) is fast in providing its ‘gut feelings’ but it is very difficult to change its opinions, its values. Our ‘rider’ (the self-aware, type 2 part of our minds) deludes itself that it controls the elephant. Studies show that much of the time the rider is making up a plausible story after the fact, to justify the elephant’s choices (confabulation). Scientists mistakenly believe that piling up scientific evidence will convert those who don’t believe in climate change. A recent study, i.e. actual evidence, showed that scientific literacy did not predict whether someone in the general population believed in climate change or not. Instead, scientific literacy made opponents on both sides of the debate more certain of their opinion,