Joel Smith’s definition of empathy VII: faith in yourself

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Abstract. I present an attempted counterexample to Joel Smith’s definition inspired by a popular music song, which gives rise to two issues.


Three conditions, Joel Smith tells us, person A must meet to empathize with B:

(1) A is consciously aware that B is ψ.

(2) A is consciously aware of what being ψ feels like.

(3) On the basis of (1) and (2), A is consciously aware of how B feels.

I wish to present a counterexample, though perhaps it does not strictly add anything new. It seems fun though!

You have faith in yourself. Someone else has faith in you as well. They are aware that you have faith in yourself and aware of what having faith in you is like, because they have faith in you. It seems they can count as empathizing then, by Smith’s definition. Two issues here: can they count if they don’t have faith in themselves and never have had? There is some counterintuitive about allowing this. And what if their faith in you somehow bothers you, so there is a lack of the fellow-feeling we associate with empathy? A song appeared on Youtube yesterday which prompted this paper.

References


Furtado, N. 2009. I’m like a bird. Available at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=roPQ_M3yJTA