

DESCARTES' ERROR

Antonio Damasio

Extended Programs

Philosophical Psychology

5th Handout

CASE HISTORIES

- *Phineas Gage*
- *Elliot*
- *Common pathology*
- ▶ *Breakdown in social reasoning*
- ▶ *Decision-making defect*
- ▶ *Lack of emotion*
- *Neuroanatomy*
- *Neural functions*

EMOTION & REASON

- *Other case histories*
- *Ventromedial lesions*
- *Emotional flatness*
- *Breakdown in social reasoning*
- *What is the connection?*

SURVIVAL & REGULATION

- ***Evolutionary history of the brain***
- ***Biological regulation***
- ***Connection to emotions and feelings***
- ***Biological drives and instincts***
- ***Neurological connection to entire body***
- ***Brain plasticity and culture***

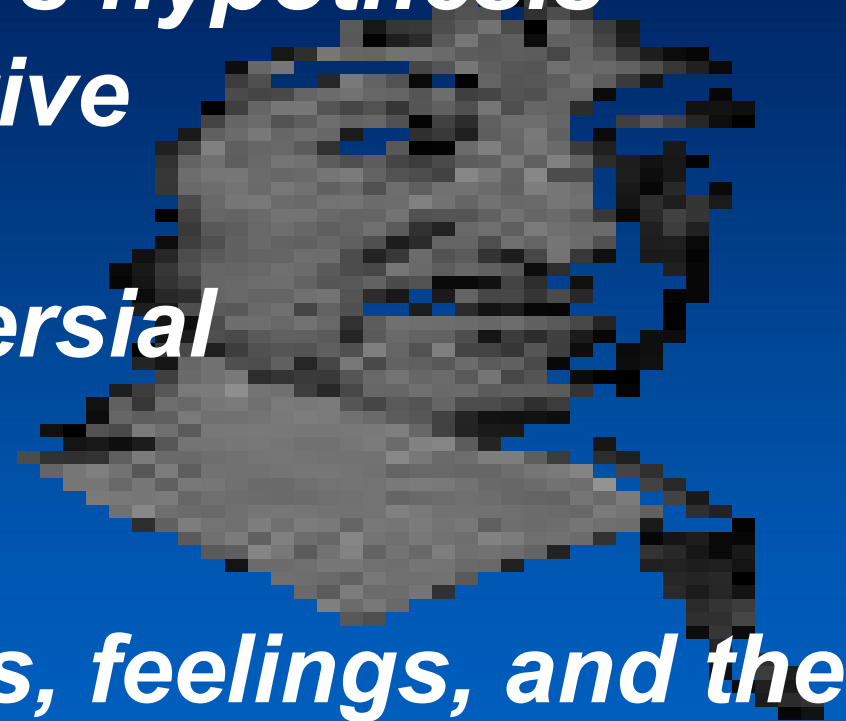
EMOTIONS

- *“Upstairs” and “downstairs” – p. 128*
- *Purely biological theories – W. James*
- *Primary emotions*
- *Secondary emotions*
 - ▶ *Meeting friend*
 - ▶ *Death of colleague*
- *Neurology of an emotion*
 - ▶ *Images*
 - ▶ *Acquired dispositional representations*
 - ▶ *Output to the rest of body*

FEELINGS

- *Feelings and emotions*
- *Background feelings*
- *“As if” feelings*
- *“Upstairs” and “downstairs”*
- *Privileged status*
- *Immense influence on behavior*

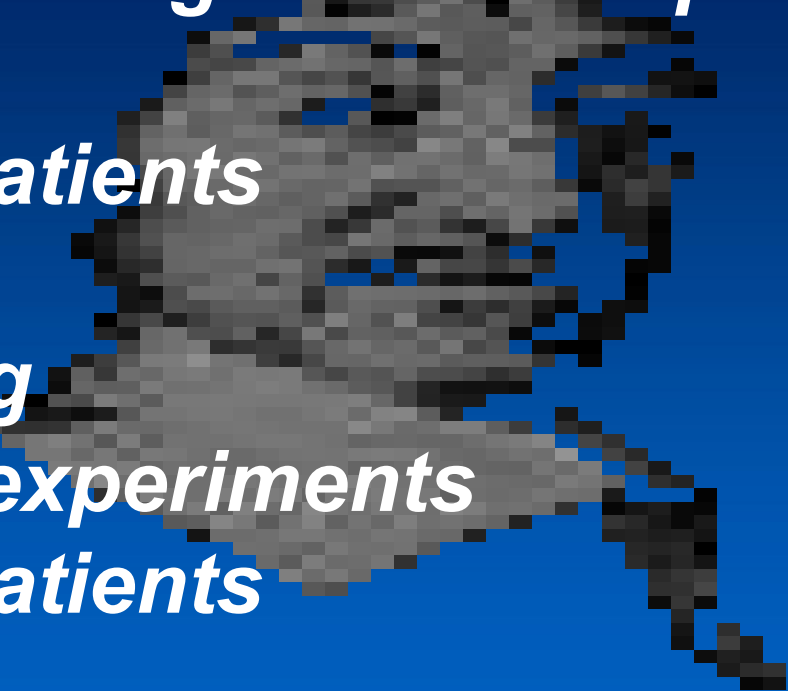
SOMATIC-MARKER HYPOTHESIS

- ***Damasio's hypothesis***
 - ▶ ***Speculative***
 - ▶ ***Testable***
 - ▶ ***Controversial***
 - ***Somatic***
 - ▶ ***Soma***
 - ▶ ***Emotions, feelings, and the body***
 - ***"High reason" decision making***
 - ***Somatic-marking – emotional feelings***
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SOMATIC-MARKER DECISION- MAKING

- ***Reasoning and deciding***
- ***Descartes' error – p. 168***
- ***Weeding out bad possibilities***
- ***“Beacons of incentive”***
- ***Secondary emotions, learning, culture***
- ***Prefrontal cortices & somatic-markers***
- ***Damasio's patient***
 - ▶ ***Driving on the ice and reporting it***
 - ▶ ***Making the appointment***

LABORATORY CONFIRMATION?

- ***Polygraph experiment***
 - ▶ ***Patient could generate response***
 - ▶ ***Slides***
 - ▶ ***Control patients***
 - ▶ ***Elliot***
 - ▶ ***Debriefing***
 - ***Gambling experiments***
 - ▶ ***Control patients***
 - ▶ ***Elliot***
 - ***Polygraph with gambling***
 - ▶ ***Control patients***
 - ▶ ***Gambling patients***
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LARGER IMPLICATIONS

- *False dichotomies*
 - ▶ *Brain/body*
 - ▶ *Emotion/reason*
 - ▶ *Mind/body*
 - ▶ *Descartes' error*
 - *Damasio's materialism*
 - *Implications for a theory of consciousness?*
 - *Understanding and still appreciating the beauty and mystery of humanity*
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