

Interactions Between the Fast and Slow Mental Processes

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Abstract: Our actions seem to be controlled by two separate types of mental processes: one fast, automatic, and unconscious and one slow, deliberate, and conscious. With the attention in the literature focused on the characteristics of the two processes and whether to include emotions, we do not find any discussion of how they interact. We present evidence that the slower process is not able to perceive the operation of faster process, but it can perceive the environmental stimulus common to both processes and the response of the faster process. It can then generate its own more deliberate response, possibly contrary to the faster process's response. We also provide evidence that the slower process is sometimes able to inhibit the fast process's response, but with effort. We present common experiences as well as cognitive theory and neurological studies in support of our description theory of the interactions of the two processes.