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The lazy mindreader : a humanities perspective on mindreading and multiple-order intentionality

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The Lazy Mindreader. A Humanities Perspective on Mindreading and Multiple-Order Intentionality

van Max J. van Duijn

1. Mindreading complexity underlying human interaction should be conceptualised as networks of interconnected intentional states rather than as linear strings suggesting recursive embedding of such states (this thesis).
2. Syntactic embedding is good for representing two or three intentional states at the most—when higher numbers are involved, narrative takes over (this thesis; Van Duijn, Sluiter, and Verhagen, 2015).
3. The upper boundary to handling intentional state complexity is not given by (the population-average of) individual cognitive limits, but instead dynamically produced by an interplay between individual cognitive factors and group-level cultural phenomena of language and narrative (this thesis).
4. Just as you cannot do much carpentry with your bare hands, there is not much thinking you can do with your bare brain (Dahlbom and Janlert in Dennett, 2000). The conventional symbols of a language are the thinking tools that enable at once the richness and detail of our interaction system, as well as its economy and expediency (this thesis).
5. Linguistic and narrative abilities, cultural-linguistic communities, and increasingly sophisticated mindreading skills have co-evolved; sophisticated mindreading skills are not a prerequisite for the evolutionary emergence of language (this thesis; cf. also Clark, 2006; Tomasello, 2014).
6. Human mindreaders can afford to be lazy most of the time (this thesis).
7. Betje Wolff, Aagje Deken and Virginia Woolf were cognitive literary scholars *avant la lettre*: they deeply understood and made explicit that both reading and writing fiction comes down to a sophisticated exercise in mindreading.
8. The importance of recursion has been overestimated in several domains of the cognitive sciences.

9. Alfred Issendorf heeft Arne Jordal vermoord (Van Duijn, *De Gids*, 2012).
10. Student fraternities are a feast of cultural learning and a feet-in-the-mud demonstration that Dunbar's layers are real. Everyone who has the chance should join one.
11. Verhalen vormen zowel de grootste zegening, als de gevaarlijkste Kafkaiaanse machine ooit door de mens vervaardigd (Van Duijn, BA thesis, 2005).
12. De Katwijkse haringvangst stond aan de basis van de Gouden Eeuw.
13. So wie du in die Welt hinein schaust, so schaut sie auch zu dir zurück.