

Introduction

Carlos Vara Sánchez

Universidad Complutense Madrid, Spain

For a long time, the ‘theory-theory’ and the ‘simulation-theory’ have been the predominant approaches in the philosophy of mind and psychology for explaining how we understand and interact with others. Proponents of the first set of theories argue that we use ‘folk psychology’ to infer things about other people’s mental states (Baron-Cohen 1995; Leslie 1987). On the other hand, those who endorse the second approach believe that we use our own mental activity to create models of other people’s minds (Gordon 1986; Heal 1986). Despite relevant differences, both frameworks share some basic assumptions, such as the unobservability principle (Krueger 2012) – i.e., we need some extra-perceptual processes to gain knowledge from mental states – and the observational stance – i.e., we need to observe others to explain their behavior.

In recent decades, the situation has undergone significant changes. The conversation has become more nuanced and complex. New frameworks have introduced novel approaches to social cognition. Among the reasons for this shift, we can mention the resurgence of phenomenological (Merleau-Ponty 1962) and pragmatist theories of the mind (Dewey 1922), the consolidation of James Gibson’s ecological psychology (Gibson 1979), and the emergence of enactivism (Varela, Thompson, Rosch 1991). All these circumstances have brought renewed ideas, concepts, and perspectives to the debate. Compared to the theory-theory and the simulation theory, a shared aspect emphasized by these approaches is a focus on non-representational explanations of social cognition. Instead of private events like simulations



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and inferences, we now find dynamic and action-oriented notions that are deeply embodied and embedded in the sociomaterial environment. Mentions of habits, resonance, attunement, constraints, affordances, or coordination are frequently found when discussing social cognition from a non-representational perspective in the work of Shaun Gallagher (2020), Anthony Chemero (2009), Giovanna Colombetti (2014), Dan Zahavi (2014), or Thomas Fuchs (2018). However, there is still much to discuss in this field.

This issue of *JoLMA* reflects the different views in the field by offering four novel contributions that encompass linguistics, aesthetics, and philosophy of mind.

The role of interpersonal imagination in the transformative aspects of performing arts is the topic addressed by Antonio Ianniello and David Habets in their text “Performance art as a dynamic imaginative niche: intersubjective achievement of seeing differently”. This work constitutes a continuation of their previous collaboration. In this case, they incorporate the idea of “intersubjective achievement” into that of “dynamic imaginative niche” to explore the dynamic process of synchronizing perception in interaction. This paper dialogues with relevant bibliography on performative arts, one of the main interests of enactive aesthetics.

In their paper “Why direct social perception theory needs to be more Gibsonian”, Martina Meyer and Edward Baggs focus on one key aspect of ecological psychology: direct social perception. Their goal is to overcome the general view of Gibson’s framework as a response to inferential and mentalist theories of mind. To this end, they identify three positive different strategies – empirical evidence, Anscombe’s account of intentionality, and the Gestalt view of emotions – and argue that each of them is aligned with relevant aspects of Gibsonian ecological psychology. Moreover, they suggest that they could be brought together into James J. Gibson’s ecological approach to perceptual information.

Robert Gordon’s contribution to this journal, “Rethinking the simulation theory”, constitutes an extremely interesting revisitation of the framework that he critically contributed to developing with key publications. On this occasion, Gordon offers a pertinent discussion of some of the Simulation Theory’s key ideas in light of the predictive processing strategy. More specifically, in the paper, he explores the role of perspective-taking and error correction in adapting shared mental representations.

Filippo Batisti and Marcos Vidal, in their paper “Post-Cognitivism and the Indissoluble Bonding of Language, Embodiment, and Thinking”, review philosophical and linguistic approaches to language from the post-cognitivist camp. After noting the strengths and limitations of existing work in this problematic yet essential topic, they open a new pathway for future research based on four thematic

aspects: sociality and interaction, embodiment, ecological validity, and representation-as-*praxis*. They conclude by offering three further recommendations for those working in the field: constant dialogue with linguistics, awareness of the pervasiveness of language, and seeking connections with other post-cognitivist approaches to social cognition.

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