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Lokendra Shastri, University of Pennsylvania, and Venkat Ajjanagadde, University of Tuebingen

We describe the beginnings of a computational account of humans' remarkably efficient and almost reflexive reasoning ability. Our connectionist system, SHRUTI, can encode a large body of specific and general knowledge and perform inferences within a few hundred msec, solving the dynamic binding problem by propagating rhythmic patterns of activity, representing bindings as synchronous firing of appropriate nodes. A number of psychologically relevant constraints on reflexive reasoning and the capacity of the working memory underlying such reasoning are also suggested.

With Commentary from GW Cottrell; G Dorffner; R Eckhorn; WJ Freeman; S Grossberg; G Hirst & D Wu; S Hölldobler; JE Hummel & KJ Holyoak; S Ohlsson; G Palm; DS Touretzky & SE Fahlman; I Tsuda; and others.

Cultural learning

Michael Tomasello, Emory University, Ann Cale Kruger, Georgia State University, and Hilary Horn Ratner, Wayne State University

In this theory, human cultural learning is social learning in which intersubjectivity or perspective-taking plays a vital role. It takes three forms during human ontogeny: imitative learning, instructed learning, and collaborative learning—in that order. This progression arises from the developmental ordering of the underlying social-cognitive concepts and processes. Further correlations between social cognition and cultural learning comes from comparing normal children, children with autism, and wild and enculturated chimpanzees. Cultural learning is a uniquely human form of social learning, providing the psychological basis for cultural evolution.

With Commentary from S Baron-Cohen; C Boesch; J Bruner; Al Goldman; A Gopnik & A Meltzoff; T Ingold; AS Lillard; DR Olson & JW Astington; C Trevarthen; B van Oers; BM Velichkovsky; A Whiten; and others.

Express saccades and visual attention B Fischer and H Waber, University of Freiburg

A controversial observation in oculomotor research in recent years is the phenomenon of "express" saccades with extremely short reaction times (100 msec in man, 70 msec in monkey). Some regard them as anticipatory reactions, others as visually guided. We hypothesize that they are generated by an optomotor reflex that is controlled by higher brain functions of disengaged visual attention and decision making. We propose a neural network as the basis for a more elaborate theory of the optomotor system.

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RIM Dunbar, "Co-evolution of neocortex size, group size and language in humans"

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Multiple book review of M Donald, Origins of the modern mind: Three stages in the evolution of culture and cognition

