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Evaluating the Role of Thought in Sensorimotor Enactivism

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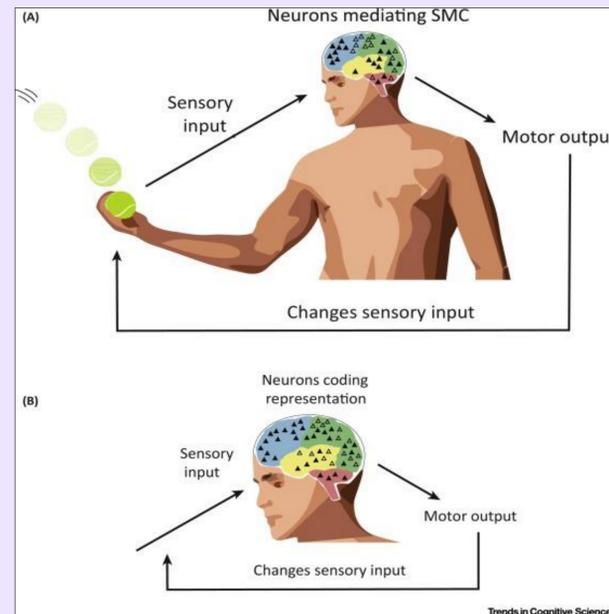
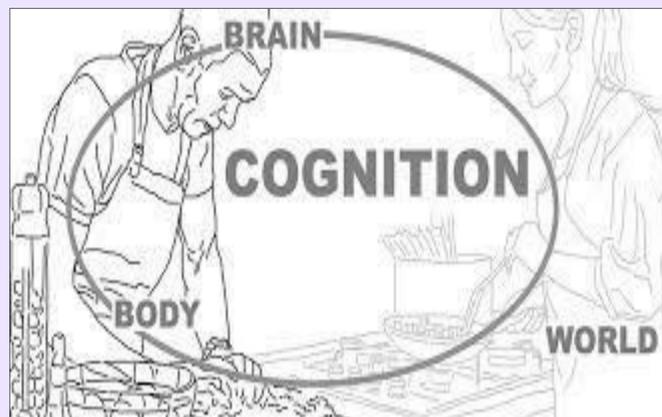
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Research Questions

Within Sensorimotor Enactivism, (1) what is the role of thought, and (2) what is its connection to implicit bodily knowledge?

Basics of Sensorimotor Enactivism (SSM)

- SSM claims that *consciousness is embodied*, meaning that it is constituted by both neural and extra-neural bodily processes.
- When we navigate our environments, *we enact our own conscious experiences*
- Perception and action are directly linked; perception is always guided by potential action
- Unlike most traditional theories of cognition, SSM argues that ‘There is no “re”-presentation of the world inside the brain: the only pictorial or 3D version required is the real outside version’ (O’Regan & Noe, 2001, p. 946)



- **Sensorimotor contingencies (SMCs)** describe the way changes in our body position affect changes in our environment

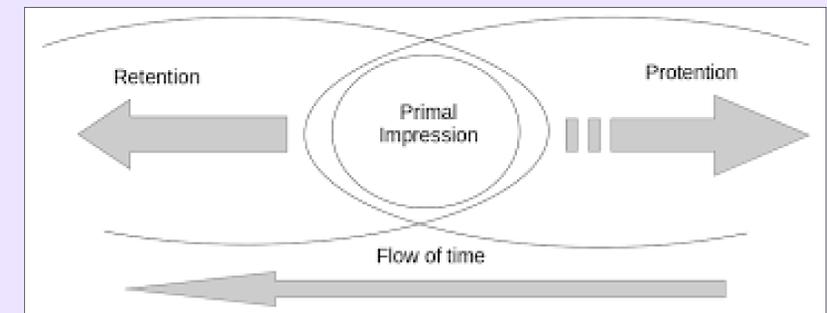
- When we have **implicit knowledge** of these contingencies, our bodies understand how to move in order to successfully navigate our environments

Within sensorimotor enactivism, thought serves to refine our implicit mastery of sensorimotor contingencies.

- Since thinking about our actions involves hesitation, navigation is more efficient when we can rely solely on our mastery of SMCs
- When performing new actions or exploring new environments, our implicit knowledge is more likely to be insufficient
- In these cases, we can rely on thought to regulate implicit tendencies
- Explicit knowledge derived from thought has the potential to become implicit bodily knowledge

Husserl’s Account of Time Consciousness

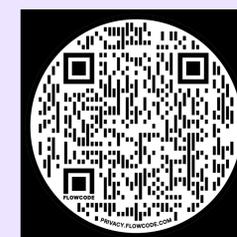
- Our experience of the present moment has temporal duration; it is not a series of snapshots
- The subjective present consists of three parts: **retention** (retaining the past moment), **primal impression** (processing the fleeting present), and **protention** (anticipation of the future)



<https://www.google.com/search?q=protentions%2C+primal+impression%2C+retention&tbm>

Linking SSM, Thought, and Time Consciousness

- protentions reflect our implicit knowledge of SMCs
- When our mastery of SMCs is insufficient, these protentions are unfulfilled
- unfulfilled protentions can initiate thought regarding temporal duration
- Thought is therefore a way for us to recognize temporal duration without (a) internal representations or (b) environmental navigation*



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