

Review of: "Social context of the brain and law: Is consciousness social?"

Artur Ribeiro¹

¹ Christian-Albrechts-Universität Kiel

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

While the topic is interesting and several references have been put forward, the article does suffer from a very unclear structure and argumentation, poor use of English, and limited dealings with certain literature.

As some other reviewers have pointed out, the topic has been engaged with in philosophy of mind, so this article is not offering as much as it assumes. Take for instance, what I can only assume is a critique of the naturalist theory of mind - there is not enough engagement with the naturalist literature on the subject, such as the work of Dennett, which is completely absent. On the other side, there is also very little mention of the work of those who have critiqued the naturalist theory of mind - Bennett and Hacker are mentioned very briefly, and there is no reference to Raymond Tallis, Vincent Descombes, Charles Taylor, or John Haugeland, to name only a few.

The reference to Brentano is interesting, but too cryptic. In fact, the angle I would have chosen to address the topic would precisely have been through the intentionality concept revived by Brentano. However, Brentano was writing in the 1800s, and it would have been necessary to shine a spotlight on more recent intentionality literature such as that of Elizabeth Anscombe, Charles Taylor, and Vincent Descombes.

The discussion on law is also a bit confusing. There is an interesting overlap between philosophy of mind and law, which remains very underexplored. There are multiple ways to address this, but I don't feel the author did a fantastic job at it. One way would have been to recognize intentionality as normativist, and from there explore the thinkers who engage with both normativism and law, such as Robert Brandom and Jean-François Kervégan.

Overall, the article is a little too ambitious for its own good, aiming to tackle too many philosophical, scientific, and social issues at the same time. Furthermore, it displays ideas and topics that have been broached multiple times by different authors, while failing to cite these. Thus, what we end up with is a very long-winded discussion that does not really explicitly expand upon the statements made in the abstract.