

Are we truly mirrors of emotion? Studies of embodied emotion perception of outgroups.

Steven Sherrin

Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, USA

Eliot Smith

Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, USA

Abstract: Current ‘embodied simulation’ approaches to emotion perception suggest that individuals classify another person’s emotions in a three-step process: (i) observers automatically mimic a target’s facial expression, (ii) this motor activation generates the corresponding emotion in the observer, and (iii) the observer attributes his or her current emotional state to the target. In this study, we argue that this ‘observer as mirror’ model is either currently incomplete or misleading. Results in an ingroup-outgroup emotion perception task suggest that embodied states can lead to ‘convergent’, ‘divergent’, or no changes to emotion recognition at all.