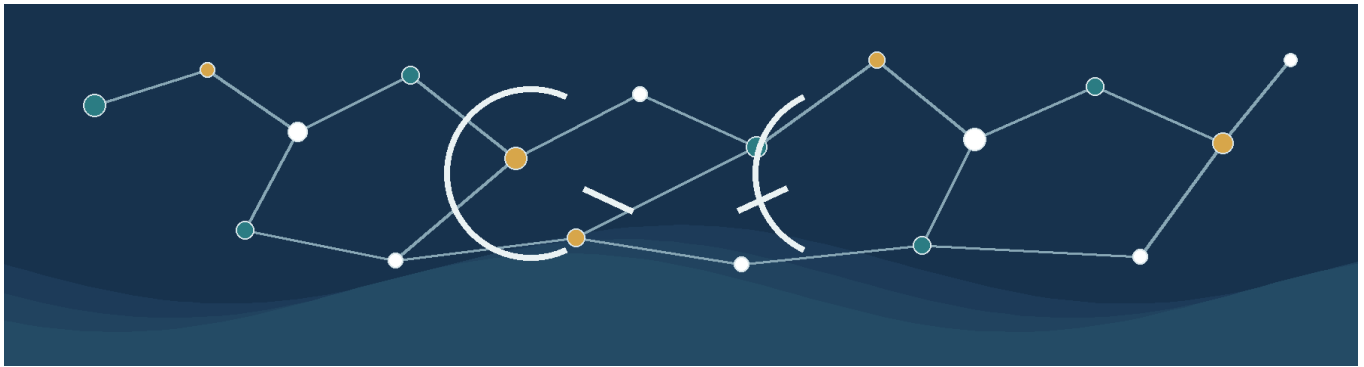




CALL FOR PAPERS

Beyond Diagnostic Boundaries

Mentalizing, Theory of Mind, and Cognitive Heterogeneity in Neurodevelopmental Conditions

Special Issue of *Reti, saperi, linguaggi* - Italian Journal of Cognitive Sciences

What can neurodevelopmental diversity teach us about the architecture of social cognition?

How do people understand minds, and why can individuals who share the same diagnosis show very different social-cognitive profiles? Mentalizing and Theory of Mind have been central to accounts of autism and other neurodevelopmental conditions, yet current evidence challenges any simple, unitary, or exclusively deficit-based model.

This special issue invites empirical and theoretical work that uses neurodevelopmental diversity to rethink social cognition. Autism is a central, but not exclusive, focus. Contributions may also address ADHD, developmental language disorder, intellectual disability, developmental coordination disorder, dyslexia, tic disorders, genetic syndromes, and related profiles. Comparative, dimensional, developmental, and transdiagnostic approaches are especially welcome.

The questions at the centre of the issue

- Is mentalizing a unified ability or a family of partly dissociable processes?
- How do explicit, implicit, spontaneous, cognitive, and affective forms of Theory of Mind relate?
- Why can laboratory performance diverge from social understanding in everyday life?
- How do language, pragmatics, executive functions, perception, affect, and motivation shape mentalizing?
- What can neurodevelopmental diversity reveal about the architecture and development of human social cognition?

Suggested themes

Mentalizing and Theory of Mind False-belief understanding; advanced, implicit, spontaneous, cognitive and affective Theory of Mind; empathy, perspective-taking, metacognition, social prediction, under- and overmentalizing.	Heterogeneity and development Within-diagnosis variation; overlap across conditions; developmental trajectories; lifespan change; strengths, compensation, masking, camouflaging, and alternative strategies.
Language and interaction Pragmatics, narrative, irony, figurative language, communicative intentions, embodied and non-verbal interaction, interpersonal mismatch, and reciprocal	Methods and ecological validity Naturalistic, interactive, virtual, neuropsychological, neuroimaging, computational, longitudinal, comparative, and transdiagnostic approaches; task

misunderstanding.	validity and measurement.
Underrepresented perspectives Girls and women, older adults, late-diagnosed and minimally speaking people, individuals with intellectual disability, cross-cultural research, lived experience, and participatory methods.	Conceptual foundations The status of diagnostic categories; competence versus performance; cognitive difference, impairment, disability, adaptation, support needs, and neurodiversity.

What we welcome

We welcome original empirical studies, theoretical and conceptual papers, critical or systematic reviews, and methodological contributions. Empirical papers should clarify their implications for broader models of cognition and neurodevelopment; theoretical papers should engage closely with relevant evidence.

WHY RETI, SAPERI, LINGUAGGI?

An international forum for the cognitive sciences

Reti, saperi, linguaggi is an international, interdisciplinary, peer-reviewed journal published by Il Mulino and the official journal of CoDISCo, the Italian network of doctoral programmes in cognitive science. It connects empirical and theoretical research across cognitive psychology, neuroscience, philosophy of mind and language, linguistics and pragmatics, evolutionary and developmental studies, artificial intelligence, and embodied and enactive cognition.

The journal is indexed in Scopus, Web of Science - Emerging Sources Citation Index, The Philosopher's Index, and ERIH Plus, and is classified as a Class A journal by ANVUR in the relevant philosophical areas.

A conversation already shaped by leading figures in cognitive science

Past contributors include Ian Tattersall, Michael A. Arbib, Shaun Gallagher, Vittorio Gallese, David Freedberg, Mark Turner, Giorgio Vallortigara, Louise Cummings, Penny M. Pexman, Anna M. Borghi, Istvan Kecskes, Vincent C. Müller, Marcin Miłkowski, Roman V. Yampolskiy, David J. Gunkel, Lesley J. Rogers, Gisela Kaplan, Telmo Pievani, Felice Cimatti, Riccardo Manzotti, and Massimo Leone.

A worldwide scientific network

The international scientific network includes Lisa Bortolotti, Louise Cummings, David Freedberg, Shaun Gallagher, Vittorio Gallese, Lambros Malafouris, Nathan Salmon, Jock Onn Wong, Daniel D. Hutto, Philip Johnson-Laird, Yael Sharvit, Richard Schechner, Ian Tattersall, Mark Turner, and Anna Wierzbicka.

Submission and key dates

SUBMISSION To express interest, please email Guest Editor Paola Pennisi directly at paola.pennisi@unime.it , including only a provisional title and a 300-400 word abstract. No keywords or author biography are required at this stage. English-language manuscripts are especially encouraged; all full papers undergo peer review. GUEST EDITOR Paola Pennisi Associate Professor of Philosophy and Theory of Language Department of Human Pathology in Adulthood and Childhood “Gaetano Barresi” - University of Messina, Italy paola.pennisi@unime.it	KEY DATES <table> <tr> <td>Expression of interest</td><td>18 October 2026</td></tr> <tr> <td>Preliminary decision</td><td>2 November 2026</td></tr> <tr> <td>Full manuscript</td><td>30 May 2027</td></tr> <tr> <td>Expected publication</td><td>July 2027</td></tr> </table>	Expression of interest	18 October 2026	Preliminary decision	2 November 2026	Full manuscript	30 May 2027	Expected publication	July 2027
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