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Category: Academic Meeting

Title: Pragmatism, 4E cognitive science, and the sociality of human conduct

Description: Call for participants

Pragmatism is receiving sustained attention in the cognitive science. Recent works have emphasized the proximities between embodied, enactive, extended, and embedded accounts of cognition and classical pragmatist theories, such as Peirce's, James', Dewey's and Mead's. Since ten years now, Jerry Fodor, one of the main proponents of classical (symbolic-computational) cognitive science, also considers what he loosely calls "pragmatism" as being the main alternative to classical cognitive science.

Still, it would be reductive to limit the relevance of pragmatism for contemporary cognitive science to its criticism of representationalism and internalism, and to its insights on the constitutive role of action in cognition, on the need to consider perception as a sensorimotor phenomenon, or on the primacy of organism-environment transactions for understanding experience and knowledge. Indeed, for classical pragmatists, human conduct was social through and through. Sociality is not made up of interactions between preexisting individuals; it is a pervasive component of how we perceive, act, reason and think.

The aim of this conference is to tackle the topic of the proximities (or differences) between pragmatism and post-cognitivist cognitive science from this very issue of sociality. How much can and/or should Dewey's or Mead's social psychologies and, more broadly, pragmatist ideas on situated interactions, meaning, institutions, normativity, democracy and culture be imported in current debates regarding the scope and the challenges faced by 4E cognition, notably in the field of social cognition (joint action, shared attention, collective behaviour, empathy,...)? More broadly, can the rediscovery of pragmatism in cognitive science act as an opportunity for reconsidering the relations between cognitive sciences and social sciences? This conference will gather philosophers, cognitive scientists and social scientists for addressing these questions.

The conference is part of a joint research program organized in partnership with the University of Parma, aimed at exploring the viability of pragmatism as an alternative to classical cognitive science, and the prospects of an interdisciplinary pragmatist approach for the renewal of social theory. A second international conference will take place in Parma, Italy, in the Spring 2017.

Confirmed speakers:

Vittorio Gallese (Università di Parma)

Mark Johnson (University of Oregon)

Matthias Jung (Universität Koblenz)

Charles Lenay (Université de Compiègne)

Roman Mazdia (Universität Koblenz)

Jean-Michel Roy (ENS Lyon)

Tybor Solymosi (Mercyhurst University)

Italo Testa (Università di Parma)

Organizers: Roberto Frega (IMM-CNRS), Pierre Steiner (COSTECH/UTC).

We invite proposals for oral communications (45 minutes, including discussion). Abstracts of 400-500 words should be sent to organizers no later than July 31, 2016. Acceptance will be notified before September 15th 2016. There are no registration fees; but selected participants will have to cover their travel and staying costs by themselves.

The conference is organized with the financial support of CNRS.

Any question should be addressed to one of the two organizers, Roberto Frega (fregarob [at] gmail.com) or Pierre Steiner (pfcsteiner [at] gmail.com)

Place: EHESS, Paris

Keywords: Cognitive Science, Pragmatism, Social Science