

Situating and Emoting the Embodied Mind

Lecture and Workshop with Erik Rietveld (Amsterdam), December 12 & 13, 2013

Organizers: Jan Slaby & David Löwenstein

Organizing Institutions: FU Berlin, Cluster LoE & HU Berlin, The Collegium for the Advanced Study of Picture Act and Embodiment

General Description

It is constitutive of our nature as rational individuals that our embodied minds are situated in specific, but changing environments. How do we act in and interact with these situations? How is it that competent actors are able to grasp and take advantage of more and more nuanced options in a given context than laypeople? Which role does the affective dimension of our embodied minds play in guiding these performances?

In a unique combination of philosophical argument, practical expertise and interdisciplinary inquiry, Erik Rietveld has developed a conception of the embodied mind which is extraordinarily rich in its interconnections with specific professional practices such as architecture and design. Our workshop will offer a discussion of Rietveld's general outlook and of its specific consequences for the notion of extended and social cognition, aesthetic affection, practical skill, mental illness and further issues.

Departmental Colloquium Lecture

December 12, 2013 Lecture Room, Department of Philosophy (downstairs)
Freie Universität Berlin, Habelschwerdter Allee 30, 14195 Berlin

18:00 – 20:00 **Situating and Emoting the Embodied Mind**
Erik Rietveld (Universiteit van Amsterdam)

Abstract

One of the crucial notions in the early work of the philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1942, 1945) is the tendency towards an *optimal grip* (Dreyfus, 2008). This phenomenon is important for understanding our adequate, situated interactions with the material and social environment (Rietveld, 2008, *Mind*). I have argued that the function of skilled intentionality is the tendency towards an optimal grip on the field of affordances (Rietveld, 2012; Rietveld, De Haan & Denys, 2013, *BBS*). Affordances are the possibilities for action provided to us by the environment (Gibson, 1979). In the first part of this paper I will discuss the relationship between the tendency towards an

optimal grip, the emotive character of the embodied mind (Colombetti, 2007) and *relevant* affordances. I will also compare the notion of skilled intentionality to Jan Slaby's (2008) concept of affective intentionality. In the second part of the talk I will present the results of an ethnographic pilot study at the architecture studio Rietveld Landscape (www.rietveldlandscape.nl). Using the method of participant observation, expert architects and visual artists were studied at work in order to develop these ideas on skilled intentionality (Brouwers & Rietveld, in preparation). We will see that expert architects are selectively and simultaneously responsive to multiple affordances, manifesting what I would like to call 'HyperAffordanceGrip'. This sheds new light on the socially extended mind (Kruger, 2013).

Workshop

- December 13, 2013 Room KL 32/202, Cluster "Languages of Emotion"
Freie Universität Berlin, Habelschwerdter Allee 45, 14195 Berlin
- 9:15 – 10:00 **Welcome, Introduction**
Rietveld on the Embodied Mind – Continuing the Discussion
Jan Slaby (Freie Universität Berlin)
& David Löwenstein (Freie Universität Berlin)
- 10:00 – 11:00 **Situated Normativity and Normative Guidance. Rietveld meets Ryle**
David Löwenstein (Freie Universität Berlin)
- 11:00 – 11:30 Coffee
- 11:30 – 12:30 **Phenomenological effects of Deep Brain Stimulation with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder patients: an enactive affordance-based approach**
Sanneke de Haan (Universiteit van Amsterdam)
- 12:30 – 14:00 Lunch (at Ristorante Galileo)
- 14:00 – 15:00 **Scaffoldings of the Affective Mind**
Giovanna Colombetti (University of Exeter)
- 15:00 – 15:30 Coffee
- 15:30 – 16:30 **Ways to Think about Extended Affect**
Joel Krueger (University of Exeter)
- 16:30 – 17:00 Coffee
- 17:00 – 18:00 **Aesthetic Affordances, Affect, and Architecture**
Joerg Fingerhut (Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin & Universität Stuttgart) & Mog Stapleton (Universität Stuttgart)
- 18:00 – 18:30 Conclusions and Prospects (not open to the public)
- 20:30 Dinner