

Embodied Cognitive Science

Post by “HsiehKW” of July 19, 2023 at 7:59 PM

Is anybody familiar with embodied cognitive science? The 4Es (embodied, embedded, enactive, and extended) account of the mind, to me, has similarities with Epicurean philosophy, specifically in terms of epistemology. And I think they can enrich a contemporary view of how the Epicurean concepts of pleasure and the senses direct the activities of cognitive agents.

Roughly, the movement is anti-representationalist which can be read as anti-Platonist, eschewing mental representations for some sort of direct perception or sensorimotor basis for cognition and subjective experience. What 4E approaches purport, put simply, is that cognitive agents are firstly sensitized to the things/events that are biologically significant and, secondly, these serve as attractor states for cognitive activities. As such, agents seek these states via action-perception or sensorimotor loops and in the process build skillful know-how in maintaining biological integrity amidst precarious conditions.

Correct me if I'm wrong but I find that this premise is quite similar to the Epicurean epistemology. Personally, researching embodied cognitive science has made Epicureanism more attractive to me. Much like how Epicurus foreshadowed the modern atomistic view, he also seemed to champion an ancient embodied approach to cognition and carried the same "hostility" that proponents of embodied cognitive science today have against orthodox representationalism directed towards the representationalists of his day. With things like this, I can't help but feel more affinity for/with the sect. I'm still early in my readings on Epicureanism but I feel I have a good fit because of my temperament and academic leanings. Just started on the Lucretius Today Podcast and DeWitt's book. I hope to learn more about Epicureanism and, for my pleasure, seek a contemporary understanding of its tenets. And, of course, carry on an Epicurean philosophy of life. Thanks for having this forum!

Happy Twentieth! Peace and Safety.