

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.

Post by “Cassius” of July 19, 2023 at 10:48 PM

I have not heard of that but sounds interesting.

Post by “HsiehKW” of July 19, 2023 at 11:47 PM

scanning thorough this new file you posted:
<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/wcf/filebase/download/93/>

It does seem that Aristotelian perception is closest to ecological psychology in terms of mechanistic/algorithmic/process theory. Gibson's concept of information refers to the ambient energy arrays detected by sensitized agents that specify affordances (i.e., things/actions afforded by the environment). Interesting stuff. I know I have encountered this in philosophy coursework but I've never really paid much attention to ancient philosophy as compared to current academic research philosophy. I think I will start to! Will read through it today. Thanks for posting.

Post by “Joshua” of July 20, 2023 at 10:44 AM

I don't have any familiarity with this, perhaps we should make a table for the four 'e's so we have a better sense of what we're looking at. I'll read up more on the subject. At a glance I think I agree with the embodied part, if I understand it rightly. I haven't looked at the other three yet. Happy twentieth!

Post by “Cassius” of July 20, 2023 at 10:46 AM

HsiehKW I haven't had as chance to read up either but do you have a web link you recommend for the basics?

Post by “Joshua” of July 20, 2023 at 10:47 AM

Also, we have a few articles by prof. David Glidden as to the relationship between Epicurean canonic or epistemology and cognitive science. We also interviewed Dr. Glidden on the podcast, that episode is [Here](#).

Edit; I apologize, [HsiehKW](#), I see you already linked to one of Dr. Glidden's articles!

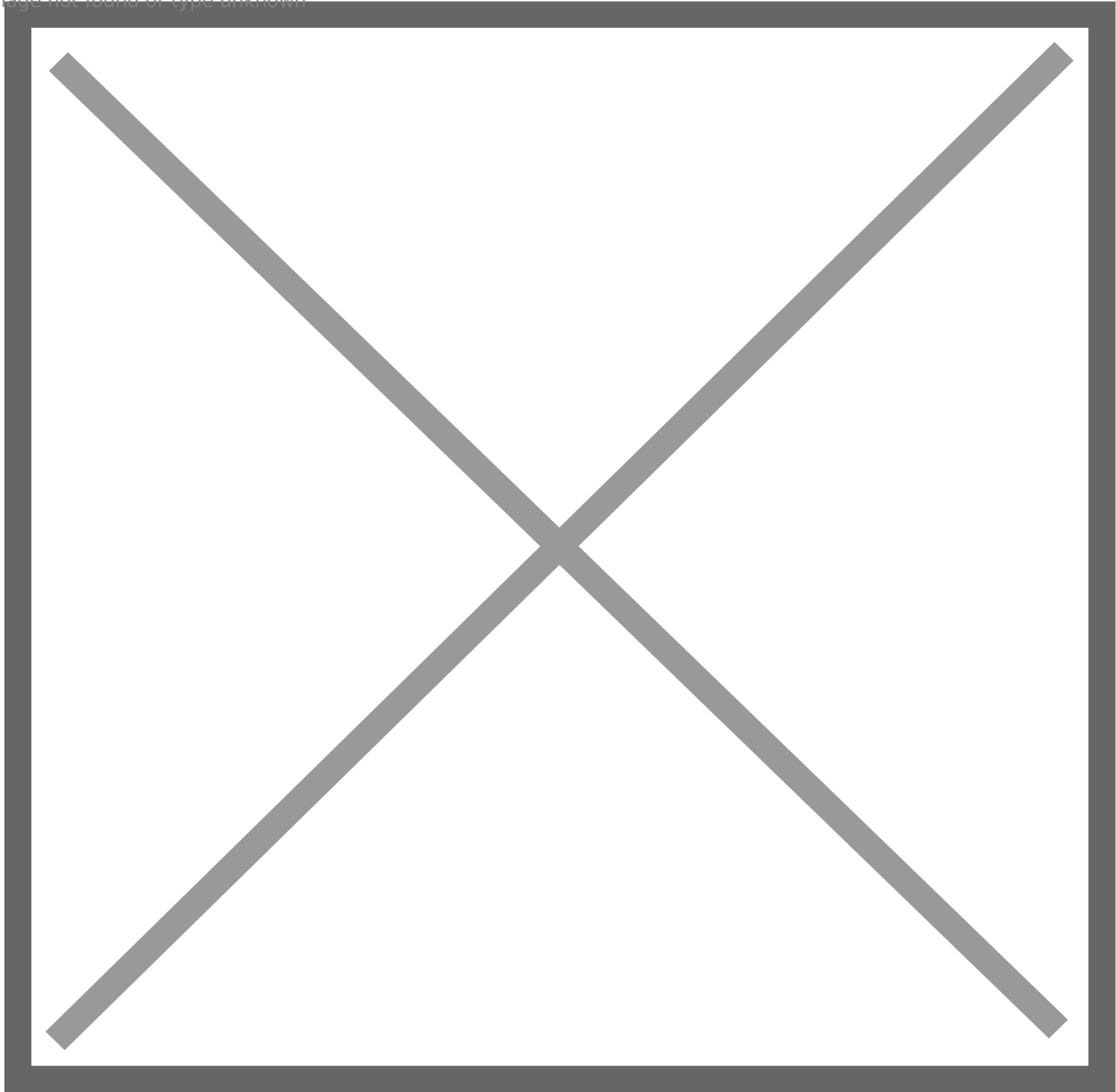
Post by "Onenski" of July 20, 2023 at 9:31 PM

[Quote from Cassius](#)

HsiehKW I haven't had as chance to read up either but do you have a web link you recommend for the basics?

I found this:

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[A Brief Guide to Embodied Cognition: Why You Are Not Your Brain](#)

blogs.scientificamerican.com

And a more detailed source is this:

[Embodied Cognition \(Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy\)](#)

Post by “HsiehKW” of July 20, 2023 at 9:49 PM

I'll upload stuff on Google Drive and will post the link here. Got done with the first chapter of DeWitt's book yesterday over some bread, cheese, and wine (and sausages). Great resource! Thanks for sharing and I love the podcast. Will upload resources after work.

Post by “HsiehKW” of July 22, 2023 at 5:46 AM

Hi! The internet went down yesterday. Still down today. Something wrong with the entire area. Anyways, here's the GDrive folder, as promised:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/..._89WSTI9mo9fxoE

I'll update it from time to time. For now, I've included:

1. Handbook Cognitive Science: An Embodied Approach

...and influential Ecological Psychology and Enactivist books. These embodied approaches are, roughly, the two main strands of embodied cognitive science. They are, however, tensions between these approaches as well. Getting them to work together is something that a good number of researchers are trying to do.

2. Mind in Life by Evan Thompson, 2007 (Enactivist)

3. Direct Perception by Claire F. Michaels & Claudia Carello, 1981 (Ecological Psychology)

P.S. There are a lot of annotations there. So, they're kind of colorful.

Post by “Little Rocker” of July 25, 2023 at 3:59 PM

<https://www.epicureanfriends.com/thread/3215-embodied-cognitive-science/>

Yeah, I think this approach is fascinating and likely correct, though it is still sort of niche by contrast to the old-guard 'computational' model of the mind. You find more extended mind folks among evolutionary biologists. I hadn't really thought about it with respect to Epicurus, but it would be cool to look at the text. It's possible that his views about living together outside of town are in some sense indicative of how he thinks the environs affect thought, for example.

Post by “Pacatus” of July 25, 2023 at 8:09 PM

I looked up George Lakoff and realized that I read his book (with Mark Johnson), *Metaphors We Live By*, years ago. (Sadly, don't have it anymore. 😞)

Post by “HsiehKW” of July 25, 2023 at 9:45 PM

[Little Rocker](#) I feel the same. It's getting eclectic though today with "computational" approaches merging with embodied cognitive science. And the embodied folks are pretty loud in terms of prolific research. One framework that's getting a lot of steam right now is Active Inference or [Free Energy Principle](#), it draws inspiration from many things including embodied approaches. I think it's work checking out for anyone interested in the philosophy of mind or cognitive science in general.

On extended cognition and a general survey of research programs and views today, Michael Wheeler I think did a great job in his chapter [Revolution, Reform, or Business as Usual?](#) Maybe [Pacatus](#) you'd find it interesting.

Post by “Pacatus” of July 26, 2023 at 5:59 PM

[HsiehKW](#)

I think you are very much into something here (though I am no scholar of either Epicurean philosophy or psychology) – especially relating to Epicurus' reliance on aesthesis, pathé and prolpsis as the empirical basis for cognition (as I understand it).

BTW, have you read Lakoff and Marshall's Philosophy in the Flesh? I put it in my Amazon wish list, but I hesitate that it might be too deep of a dive - and the usual free sample read is not available. Any thoughts?

Post by "HsiehKW" of July 26, 2023 at 7:11 PM

Thanks!

Unfortunately, I just heard of [the book](#) from you (seems it's available online). Scanning that version, I think it's not that much of a deep dive. Downloading it now. Hopefully, I'll have time to read it. Seems like a comprehensive yet very accessible book. Nice find!

Post by "Pacatus" of July 27, 2023 at 12:31 PM

Thanks [HsiehKW](#). I'll take a look at it.

But first, I have to assuage my poetic embarrassment by finishing Lucretius. 😊