



PARTICIPANT FORM for the SUMMER SCHOOL

Constructivism and Enaction

A new paradigm for Cognitive Science

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I. – SITUATION

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III. – RESEARCH THEME

At present (in my nearly-finished DPhil thesis) I investigate social cognition within the broader question what cognition is. The question I investigate is: How do people understand each other in their everyday encounters with each other? Traditional approaches to social cognition (such as Theory of Mind (ToM) theory), have not been able to *connect* participants of social encounters because they are methodologically individualistic. I criticise these approaches, and then investigate alternatives. I have found that even embodied and interactional approaches remain unsatisfactory: either coupling between interaction partners is not taken up as an issue (e.g. in ToMtheory and in simulation accounts), or it is taken for granted (in some embodied approaches), or it is too exclusively emphasised (in some dynamic approaches). What is needed therefore, is an investigation of the coupling between interaction partners that takes into account both the interaction as a process and the individuals as they are involved in the interaction. This entails both an investigation of the timing of the interaction as a process, and of the capacity for social interactional timing that is generated in each interaction. Social cognition is thus not conceived as primarily an individual capacity, based in reasoning or in bodily capacities, but as an emergent process in interaction, determined by the interaction, the interactors (with their histories, experience and so on) and the situation.

Keywords: Cognition, social understanding, intersubjectivity, embodiedness/situatedness, rhythm, dynamical systems.