

Embodied and Situated Cognition: from Phenomenology to Neuroscience and Artificial Intelligence

IS THE INTEGRATION BETWEEN THE PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE AND THE SCIENTIFIC VIEWS POSSIBLE?

The post-Wittgensteinian need for theoretical re-formulations

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If we agree that there is a visible tension between various personal experiences and the way in which science treats them, we can also assume that we would like to find a perspective which would link what is first-personally individual with scientific methods and the results of research. If we additionally consent to the claim that vital changes are needed to the mode in which we describe and analyze the human subject and human cognition, we would have to face questions which are not only difficult but temporarily without complete answers. Some of them could be expressed in the following way: What is the role of philosophy in looking for a common methodology capable of uniting both human personal experience and scientific descriptions? Is it possible to find a commonly grounded vocabulary useful for describing events from both points of view mentioned above? Or, rather, from a new, unified perspective which would include contributions from all areas helpful in grasping the human subject and human cognition in their complexity? How would it change the view of science and the view of philosophy we have got used to? Is it possible for a philosopher to offer tools for such a change? What would be socially, politically and culturally needed to make those changes real? What exactly makes such steps worth undertaking?

I am not going to answer these and similar questions in my paper. Rather, I am going to sketch the theoretical background which has to be embedded in philosophy if we want to put them in a comprehensible form. I am going to consider the role of philosophy in reformulating the ways in which the basic and important philosophical notions like subject, cognition, body, mind etc. are treated. I argue that we should take some Wittgensteinian methodological advice seriously. We should make philosophy the intellectual area in which we can re-flect upon, re-define and re-formulate the assumptions we usually tacitly take for granted in our theories, and in our final vocabularies. The change of views on the subject and its embodiment and on the possibility of marrying personal experience with scientific statements can be done only through the changes in understanding certain ideas which lie behind them. Wittgenstein has initially showed us how to do it by means of the power of language.