

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

SOME BENEFITS OF EMBODIMENT OF “I” AND “ME”

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George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (1999) show that there is in the English language the general metaphor of Subject and Self which describes our inner life: the Subject is the center of consciousness, reasoning and will and exists only in the present, the Self consists of body, needs, desires, social roles and the past states and activities of man. Similarly, in the Polish language literature, Henryk Gasiul (1992) after analysis of self theories in psychology from its beginning until the 1980's, concluded that despite the variety of formulations, the differentiation of the following can be seen in all theories: the Subject, i.e. the I, the Ego, the pure Ego, and the Object, i.e. the Me, the Self. The division described above appears especially in two areas: 1/ consciousness, in which the I is the knower and the Me is known (James, 1892/2002), and 2/ self regulation, in which the I controls the Self (the Me), i.e. it can resist temptation, change one's mood, alter one's own behavior etc. (e.g. Baumeister & Vohs, 2003). We can explain neither subjectivity of consciousness nor self regulation. But I think embodiment of the I and the Me by Antonio Damasio (1999) and especially his hypothesis that the I is a kind of feeling let us make an important step towards the understanding of these phenomena. So firstly, the paper presents how (according to the theory of Damasio) the whole body participates in the creation both the I and the Me and how the I and the Me co-originate the consciousness. Afterwards, the paper shows the way in which the embodiment of the I and the Me and in particular the idea of the I as the feeling help to explain self regulation. Namely it argues that if the I is the feeling, the activity of the I during the self regulation is the changing (fluctuation) of this feeling's valence, i.e. the I can add, or vice versa - take away some valence from each object in the consciousness and in this way form states of mind and behavior.