
Call for papers:

The 1st AISB Symposium on Re-conceptualizing Mental "Illness": The View from Enactivist Philosophy and Cognitive Science

Part of the AISB Annual Convention 2013

University of Exeter, UK

2-5 April 2013

<http://emps.exeter.ac.uk/computer-science/research/aisb/>

The convention is organized by the Society for the Study of Artificial Intelligence and Simulation of Behaviour (AISB): <http://www.aisb.org.uk>

Chairs:

Joel Parthemore

Centre for Cognitive Semiotics

Lund University, Lund, Sweden

Blay Whitby

Centre for Research in Cognitive Science

University of Sussex, Brighton, UK

Overview

In the late 20th and early 21st Century, the dominant trend in philosophy of psychiatry and mental health has been toward pathologizing a wide range of mental phenomena under the headings of "disease"/"illness", "disorder", or "disability" and treating the ones labeled "illness" on a par with physical illness, to be treated primarily by drug-based interventions.

That said, certain recent trends in cognitive science and philosophy of mind – notably Andy Clark and Dave Chalmers' extended-mind hypothesis and the enactivist school associated with Evan Thompson, Francisco Varela, and others, and the Tartu school of semiotics embedding mental life into a "semiosphere" – have challenged the familiar equating of the boundaries of the physical body with those of the mind. While the various approaches differ at key points, all agree that, although the mind must be physically realized, it extends in substantive ways into the environment, its boundaries subject to constant negotiation and re-negotiation.

As such extended-mind critics as Robert Rupert point out, re-conceptualizing the boundaries of mind and world in this way can only be justified if there is some empirical payoff. A small but increasingly vocal group within the extended-mind/enactive community believe that one of the best places to look for such payoff is in the field of mental health. They suggest moving away from a model based on physical illness towards one that emphasizes each person's history and embedding in a social

context: such identified conditions as Asperger Syndrome and high-functioning autism may be better understood as instances of cognitive diversity rather than impairment; while conditions such as schizophrenia or manic-depressive disorder must be understood, and treated, as problems of the patient's immediate community and not just the patient herself. Furthermore, they must be understood, and treated, in light of the patient's history of interactions with her environment and not just the presenting symptoms. The risk of much contemporary treatment is that, like aspirin, it treats the symptoms and does not address the underlying issues.

As an emerging community and not just a scattered collection of "lone voices", the field is brand new, and it is cutting edge. It touches on such key themes as the nature of mind and its relationship to environment; the possibilities for computer models of mind that draw on exciting new paradigms; and the breadth of cognitive science, from theoretical explorations in philosophy of mind to concrete applications and new directions in treatment.

Call for papers

The preferred form of submission is by paper. Papers should be kept to not more than 5,000 words and intended for presentation in a 25-minute format. Alternatively, one may submit a 500-word extended abstract; however, priority consideration will be given to full papers. Submission is via the EasyChair website:

<https://www.easychair.org/conferences/?conf=aisb2013rmi>

https://www.easychair.org/conferences/conference_dir.cgi?a=3276605

Topics may include but need not be limited to:

- philosophy of psychiatry
- computational models of mental health diversities and disorders
- conceptual schemes and re-conceptualization as they relate to mental health
- semiotic perspectives on mental health
- extended-mind hypothesis and mental health
- empirical philosophy and mental health
- cognitive science and mental health
- movement away from pathologizing mental health issues
- ethical and political consequences of an extended/enactive approach to mental health issues

Proceedings

There will be separate proceedings for each symposium, produced before the convention. Each delegate will receive a memory stick containing the proceedings of all symposia. It is expected that selected papers from the symposium will be published in a special issue of a major journal.

Important dates:

14 January - deadline for submissions

11 February - notification of acceptance

4 March - final versions of papers for inclusion in proceedings