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Philosophy & Predictive Processing – an online open access collection of publications on the mind, brain, and consciousness

MIND Group continues its pioneering work in the autonomous publication of academic articles – 28 authors contribute to the *Philosophy & Predictive Processing* collection of texts

Mainz-based Professor of Philosophy Thomas Metzinger sets another example for ethically responsible publishing in the digital age. After successfully publishing the Open MIND Project in 2015 (www.open-mind.net), Professor Thomas Metzinger is now releasing the collection *Philosophy & Predictive Processing (PPP)* in cooperation with Dr. Wanja Wiese. The PPP project comprises 26 original contributions written specifically for this volume by 28 international authors. The anthology will be freely available online at www.predictive-mind.net and will also be later published in print form. Unlike the Open MIND Project, this time all the contributions have a thematic focus: the philosophical discussion of Predictive Processing.

Predictive Processing is an approach that has become an independent research category in the fields of cognitive science and neuroscience. On the technical side, the theory is ambitious. It unifies numerous ideas and concepts from cognitive science for the purpose of assessing the proposition that the main function of the human brain is to generate predictions on the basis of sensory signals and to minimize the mistakes it makes when doing so. Unexpected signals, such as an incorrect note in a known melody, lead to large errors in prediction and are thus perceived with particular intensity. From a philosophical point of view, Predictive Processing is relevant because, among other things, it delivers very general and standardized formal descriptions of the neural operations which form the basis for our perception, thought, and actions while also delivering material that makes it possible to generate concrete hypotheses about how these operations shape the functioning of our conscious perception. The collection at hand provides an entry level introduction to the current debate, and is specifically designed for use by scholars of philosophy.

Press Release

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Following the publication of two major philosophical monographs on the subject, increasing numbers of philosophers have come to recognize the relevance of the development of Predictive Processing theory to their own research. In 2013, philosopher Jakob Hohwy of Monash University in Melbourne published *The Predictive Mind*, which introduced the theoretical foundations of Predictive Processing to a broad audience. By applying the Predictive Processing approach to classic philosophical problems, he also showed how useful the method can be for a variety of other disciplines. Then in 2016, philosopher Andy Clark of the University of Edinburgh further galvanized the systematic philosophical discussion of Predictive Processing through his monograph *Surfing Uncertainty*. Aiming to extend the philosophical discussion on Predictive Processing and make it more systematic, the PPP Project is the first collection of works dedicated exclusively to the philosophical implications of Predictive Processing. The volume also contains a short introduction to the subject tailored specifically to those working in the humanities.

Professor Thomas Metzinger, who is receiving support for his activities through a Fellowship of the Gutenberg Research College of Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz (JGU), is also using the project to promote young academics. Most of the authors who have contributed to the anthology are in the early stages of their academic careers. Furthermore, as in the case of the Open MIND Project, some of the articles were written by researchers affiliated with the MIND Group. Metzinger founded this group in 2003 to provide young German philosophers with a platform to help them liaise with the international research community and gain access to the latest developments in contemporary philosophy. Through this group, an ever-changing group of higher semester students, doctoral candidates, and young researchers from many countries meet with prominent guests twice a year in Frankfurt am Main at the Frankfurt Institute for Advanced Studies (FIAS). FIAS has provided the group with organizational support for many years now, and the Barbara Wengeler Foundation in Munich provides financial support for the meeting and also awards an annual prize worth EUR 10,000.

"I was looking for an innovative way to promote young researchers," said Metzinger, Director of the Theoretical Philosophy Group and the Neuroethics Research Group at Mainz University, explaining his reasons for establishing the MIND Group. In the MIND Group, not only do junior members have the opportunity to meet leading academics, but

both junior members and leading analytic philosophers of mind can meet scientists conducting empirical research in the areas of cognitive science and neuroscience, thus fostering the pursuit of pioneering theories and the formation of a network that can experiment with new forms of interdisciplinary collaboration.

One result of this productive cooperation is the *Open MIND* online collection, which is now being supplemented by the PPP Project. "Each of the 26 original articles was reviewed four times, proofread by the authors and the editorial team, and made available with professional help in three different digital formats online," explained Metzinger. The group was also once again able to keep the processing times very short: the whole collection was ready for publication in a mere ten months.

The website www.predictive-mind.net will go live on March 8, 2017.

Further information:

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Related links:

- <http://open-mind.net> – *Open MIND* collection, ed. Professor Thomas Metzinger and Dr. Jennifer Windt
- http://www.uni-mainz.de/presse/17997_ENG_HTML.php – press release "'Open MIND' open access collection of original research publications on the mind, brain, and consciousness freely available online", 21 January 2015
- <http://fias.uni-frankfurt.de/mindgroup/> – MIND group
- <http://www.gfk.uni-mainz.de/eng/index.php> – Gutenberg Research College