

Quand la Théorie Morale rencontre les Sciences Cognitives

Moral Theory Meets Cognitive Science:

How the Cognitive Science Can Transform Traditional Debates

Stephen Stich

Mercredi 9 mai de 14h à 16h
THE DEFINITION OF MORALITY

ECOLE NORMALE SUPÉRIEURE, SALLE DES ACTES
45, RUE D'ULM, 75005 PARIS

Remise du prix Jean-Nicod et cocktail après la conférence

Vendredi 11 mai de 14h à 16h
THE PERSISTENCE OF MORAL DISAGREEMENT

ECOLE NORMALE SUPÉRIEURE, IMMEUBLE RATAUD,
AMPHITHÉÂTRE,
45, RUE D'ULM, 75005 PARIS

Mardi 15 mai de 14h à 16h
EGOISM VS. ALTRUISM: DECONSTRUCTING THE DEBATE

ECOLE NORMALE SUPÉRIEURE, SALLE DES ACTES
45, RUE D'ULM, 75005 PARIS

Mercredi 16 mai de 14h à 16h
**DEBUNKING MORALITY: A HODGEPODGE OF
MULTIPURPOSE KLUDGES**

ECOLE NORMALE SUPÉRIEURE, SALLE DES ACTES
45, RUE D'ULM, 75005 PARIS

RENSEIGNEMENTS

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philosophie cognitive

Conférences Jean-Nicod de

L'esprit humain, son organisation, sa nature, ses relations avec le corps et avec le monde sont depuis toujours parmi les thèmes centraux de la philosophie. La psychologie contemporaine elle-même a pris naissance au sein de la philosophie. Elle s'est émancipée, mais l'émergence des sciences cognitives consacre d'une certaine façon le retour de la philosophie dans ce champ de recherche. Les développements de l'informatique et des neurosciences, en jetant une nouvelle lumière sur les phénomènes mentaux, ont eu pour effet de relancer le débat philosophique. La « philosophie de l'esprit » est ainsi plus florissante que jamais. Ce retour n'a rien d'une régression, car la philosophie dont il est question est en phase avec la recherche scientifique, informée par elle et en constante interaction avec elle.

Les Conférences Jean-Nicod visent à promouvoir les recherches philosophiques se rapportant à la cognition et à faire connaître en France les travaux réalisés à l'étranger dans ce domaine. Le conférencier, sélectionné par le comité Jean-Nicod, présente ses recherches au cours d'un cycle de conférences qu'il rassemble ensuite en un livre.

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Centre national de la recherche scientifique
(Département des sciences de l'homme et de la société)

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École normale supérieure
École des hautes études en sciences sociales

STEPHEN STICH

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TRADITIONAL DEBATES**

LA SOURCE: 01 45 21 09 61



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Stephen Stich

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Également professeur honoraire de philosophie à l'Université de Sheffield, il a participé activement au projet sur la « Structure de l'Esprit et l'Innéisme » et il est actuellement membre du comité d'organisation du projet « Esprit et Culture ». Ses domaines de recherche sont la philosophie de l'esprit, les fondements des sciences cognitives, l'épistémologie naturalisée, la théorie de l'esprit et la psychologie morale.

Outre son enseignement à l'Université de Rutgers et de Sheffield, Stephen Stich a enseigné à l'Université du Michigan, à l'Université de Californie et à l'Université de San Diego après avoir obtenu son doctorat à l'Université de Princeton en 1968. Il a également été professeur invité d'universités américaines, britanniques, australiennes et néo-zélandaises.

Ouvrages de S. Stich

- 1975. (ED.) INNATE IDEAS. BERKELEY AND LONDON: UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS ■ 1979. THE RECOMBINANT DNA DEBATE. ENGLEWOOD (ED. AVEC D.A. JACKSON) CLIFFS, NJ: PRENTICE-HALL, INC ■ 1983. FROM FOLK PSYCHOLOGY TO COGNITIVE SCIENCE: THE CASE AGAINST BELIEF. CAMBRIDGE, MA: BRADFORD BOOKS/MIT PRESS ■ 1990. THE FRAGMENTATION OF REASON: PREFACE TO A PRAGMATIC THEORY OF COGNITIVE EVALUATION. CAMBRIDGE, MA: BRADFORD BOOKS/MIT PRESS ■ 1991. PHILOSOPHY AND CONNECTIONIST THEORY (ED. AVEC W. RAMSEY & D.E. RUMELHART). HILLSDALE, N.J.: LAWRENCE ERLBAUM ASSOCIATES ■ 1994. MENTAL REPRESENTATION (ED. AVEC T.A. WARFIELD). OXFORD: BLACKWELL ■ 1996. DECONSTRUCTING THE MIND. NEW YORK: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS ■ 1996. BENACCERRAF AND HIS CRITICS (ED. AVEC A. MORTON). OXFORD: BLACKWELL ■ 2002. THE COGNITIVE BASIS OF SCIENCE (ED. AVEC P. CARRUTHERS ET M. SIEGAL). CAMBRIDGE: CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS ■ 2003. THE BLACKWELL GUIDE TO PHILOSOPHY OF MIND (ED. AVEC T.A. WARFIELD). OXFORD: BLACKWELL ■ 2003. MINDREADING (AVEC S. NICHOLS). OXFORD: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS ■ 2005. THE INNATE MIND: STRUCTURE AND CONTENTS (ED. AVEC P. CARRUTHERS ET S. LAURENCE). OXFORD: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS ■ 2006. THE INNATE MIND: CULTURE AND COGNITION (ED. AVEC P. CARRUTHERS ET S. LAURENCE). NEW YORK: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS ■ 2007. THE INNATE MIND: FOUNDATIONS AND THE FUTURE (ED. AVEC P. CARRUTHERS ET S. LAURENCE). NEW YORK: OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Conférences Jean-Nicod 2007

Moral Theory Meets Cognitive Science: How the Cognitive Science Can Transform Traditional Debates

Conférence du 9 mai

The Definition of Morality

Debates about the definition of “moral judgment” and “moral rule” have a venerable history in philosophy. In addition to debating the merits of various proposed definitions, philosophers have also disagreed about what the definition is supposed to do: What counts as getting the definition right? One proposal is that moral rules or moral judgments are a psychological natural kind, and that the correct definition should specify the essential features of this kind. Recently, a number of philosophers and psychologists have suggested that research using the moral/conventional task, first introduced by Elliot Turiel, has uncovered some of the essential properties of this natural kind. If the empirical generalizations drawn from this work were correct, it would be reasonable to conclude that we have indeed discovered the essence of morality. However, a growing body of evidence indicates that those generalizations are not correct, and thus that the moral/conventional task tells us nothing of interest about the definition of morality. Another proposal is that the correct definition of morality should capture the concept underlying people's ordinary use of terms like “moral rule”. However, there is reason to suspect that there may be no coherent concept in this area.

Conférence du 11 mai

The Persistence of Moral Disagreement

Moral disagreement is widespread. But would that disagreement persist even under hypothetical idealized conditions in which all parties to a moral debate are rational, impartial and fully informed about the relevant non-moral facts? The answer is important for many moral theories. On some versions of theories in the “ideal observer” tradition, a positive answer entails either moral relativism or moral skepticism, and many contemporary moral realists hold that a negative answer would show that moral realism is false. A number of recent empirical studies of moral judgments in different cultural groups suggest that moral disagreement would indeed persist under idealized circumstances, though much turns on exactly how the idealized circumstances are characterized. The persistence of moral disagreement is also suggested by an empirically motivated account of the psychological mechanisms underlying the acquisition and implementation of moral norms, and by theoretical work on how those mechanisms might have evolved. The model proposed for the psychology of norms leaves abundant room for reasoning in moral deliberation, but does not support the idea that rational deliberation will lead to convergence.

Conférence du 15 mai

Egoism vs. Altruism: Deconstructing the Debate

Psychological egoism maintains that all human motivation is ultimately selfish. Though people often desire to help others, egoists maintain that these desires are always instrumental, caused or sustained by the belief that helping will lead to the satisfaction of some self-interested desire. By contrast, psychological altruism maintains that some of our ultimate or non-instrumental desires are not self-interested; their object is the well-being of others. Philosophers from Hobbes to the present have worried that if egoism is true, moral behavior may be threatened, and drastic steps have been proposed to counter this threat. Recently both psychologists and evolutionary biologists lavished a great deal of attention on the egoism vs. altruism debate. However, neither the psychologists nor the biologists have taken adequate account of the range of cognitive states and processes invoked in contemporary cognitive science. When these options are made explicit, they undermine the best psychological and evolutionary arguments for altruism. They also undermine most of the reasons philosophers have offered for thinking that psychological egoism would be morally problematic.

Conférence du 16 mai

Debunking Morality: a Hodgepodge of Multipurpose Kludges

A venerable view, still very much alive in contemporary debates, urges that our spontaneous moral judgments reflect a deep wisdom, except when the processes underlying those judgments are interfered with by morally problematic forces. However, much recent work suggests that we should have a very different view of our spontaneous moral judgments. This work indicates that there is no one psychological system underlying moral judgments. Rather, there is a hodgepodge of different systems that pull in different directions. Moreover, some of these systems were designed to perform cognitive functions that have little to do with morality. When they are co-opted to play a role in moral judgment they often reflect aspects of these other functions. One example that illustrates this phenomenon is the intertwining of moral and causal judgments revealed by the work of Joshua Knobe. Other examples depend on the role of emotion in moral judgment. If the mechanisms underlying moral judgment are indeed a bricolage—a hodgepodge of multipurpose kludges—it poses a major challenge to those who believe that the pronouncements of those systems should be relied upon.