

Experience, Attention and the Ontology of Mind

April 17, 2014
Campus Biotech, conference room

PROGRAMME

09:00 – 10:15

Emile Thalabard (Université Paris-Sorbonne)

'Attention, Emotions and Overflow'

10:30 – 11:45

David Jolidon (Université de Fribourg)

'Diachronic Unity of Experience and Mereology'

12:00 – 13:15

Michele Ombrato (Université de Genève - CISA)

'Emotion, Attention and Affective Dynamics'

13:30: Lunch

14:45 – 16:00

Matthew Soteriou (University of Warwick)

'Attention, Agency and the Ontology of Emotion'

16:15 – 17:45

Discussion on Soteriou's *The Mind's Construction*

(1.2) 'Occurrence, State, Content and Character'

19:00: Dinner

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The workshop is organized by *THUMOS*, the genevan research group of emotions, values and norms and is sponsored by *CUSO*

Attention, emotions and overflow

Dr Emile Thalabard (Université Paris-Sorbonne)

A long lasting debate in the literature on emotions concerns the existence of unconscious emotions. Many authors rule out the existence of such unconscious emotions by pointing out that it is a matter of definition that an emotion be felt. However, Block's overflow hypothesis provides another challenge for a theory of emotions: applying the phenomenal overflow theory to emotions would allow some emotions not to be noticed by a subject, while granting that they are, indeed, phenomenally felt. Most of Block's objectors have focused their efforts on perceptual consciousness, leaving emotions on the side. One major objection to the overflow hypothesis comes from the global workspace theory of consciousness, according to which there is no experience without cognitive access, and which makes attention responsible for gating the access to consciousness. In my presentation, I will examine the relationship between attention and emotion and discuss how emotions fit in a GWS model of consciousness. I hope to motivate an attention-dependent account of emotional consciousness and to clarify some of the relationships between attention, emotions and feelings.

Diachronic Unity of Experience and Mereology

David Jolidon (Université de Fribourg)

Imagine that you are seeing a tree during a certain amount of time. You will experience the tree under different aspects, or it will appear differently to you (the light might change, you might move and change your perspective etc.) You will have different experiences of the same tree and not just different experiences. How is this possible? What unifies these experiences? My aim is to see how mereology can help us answer this question. More specifically, I will try to see if unrestricted mereology can be applied to experiences. My inspirations are Husserl, Russell, Simons and Lewis.

Emotion, Attention and Affective Dynamics

Michele D. Ombrato (Université de Genève / CISA)

Arguably, an appealing theory of the emotions must yield an account of the '*causal structure*' of emotions experience specifying not only its eliciting cause, but also its sustaining cause – i.e., what allows it to *last* or *persist* the way it does. Such an account has yet to be provided. Accordingly, various ontological issues related to the persistence of emotion experience remain largely underexplored. The broad aim of this talk is to address some of these issues. In order to do so, firstly I shall outline a proposal regarding the causal structure of emotion according to which emotions are what I shall call 'attention-dependent' phenomena. Secondly, I shall draw the main ontological implications of such a proposal. Finally, I shall argue that such implications allow us to provide an account of the 'dynamic aspect' of emotion which does *not* require construing the emotion itself as a kind of *process* (Goldie, 2011) as opposed to a kind of *event*.