

The Philosophy of Predictive Processing: Self, Representations and Virtuality

In recent years one of the most daring and innovative ways to think about the brain and the mind is in terms of Predictive Coding or Predictive Processing (Clark, 2015; Friston, 2010; Hohwy, 2013). This framework basically turns traditional approaches to cognition and perception upside down. While traditional views assume that e.g. perceptual information travels up the cognitive hierarchy, where it is centrally integrated to form a representation about the world, Predictive Processing argues that information flow is primarily top-down. This means the brain is essentially a large prediction machine, which tests its postulated models against incoming (perceptual) information. For some this means perception is now to have a virtualist character, even that it is to be considered as a sort of “online hallucination”.

This workshop aims to discuss recent developments and problems raised by the endorsement of Predictive Processing in both Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science. The main focus will lay on how the ideas about how the Predictive Processing framework engages with, and attempts to explain ideas of the self, representations and the metaphor of virtuality which is used in order to explain perception in the context of predictive processing. Particularly relevant questions include the following: Is the virtuality metaphor about conscious perception appropriate? How should we interpret it? Do similar models imply the self is also virtual? What (if any) is the role of representations in explaining mind in the context of Predictive Processing? Does Predictive Processing allow us to postulate new models of content? Why does a Predictive Processing system believe it has a self? Can Predictive Processing accommodate privileged self-knowledge? What other old philosophical issues might Predictive Processing shed new light upon?

Clark, A. (2015). *Surfing Uncertainty: Prediction, Action, and the Embodied Mind*: Oxford University Press.

Friston, K. (2010). The free-energy principle: a unified brain theory? *Nature Reviews Neuroscience*, 11(2), 127-138.

Hohwy, J. (2013). *The predictive mind*: Oxford University Press.