

CONCEPTUAL ENGINEERING

Online Seminar 2021

#01 | Patricia Churchland (UC San Diego)

Social Conscience: Evolutionary Origins and Brain Mechanisms

Abstract

One tradition in moral philosophy depicts human moral behavior as unrelated to social behavior in nonhuman animals. Morality, on this view, emerges from a uniquely human capacity to reason. By contrast, recent developments in the neuroscience of social bonding suggest instead an approach to morality that meshes with ethology and evolutionary biology. According to the hypothesis on offer, the basic platform for morality is attachment and bonding, and the caring behavior motivated by such attachment. Oxytocin, a neurohormone, is at the hub of attachment behavior in social mammals and birds. Although all social mammals learn local conventions, humans are particularly adept social learners and imitators. Learning local social practices depends on the reward system because in social animals, approval brings pleasure and disapproval brings pain. Problem-solving in the social domain gives rise to ecologically relevant practices for resolving conflicts and restricting within-group competition. Contrary to the conventional wisdom that explicit rules are essential to moral behavior, norms are often implicit and picked up by imitation.

The **Conceptual Engineering Online Seminar** series is co-organized by the Department of Philosophy of the University of Zurich and the Arché Philosophical Research Centre at the University of St Andrews. The meetings take place on zoom every Tuesday at 4-6pm Swiss Time/3-5pm British Time, from September 14 to December 14, 2021 (with 14 sessions in total).

Organizers

Manuel Gustavo Isaac
& Kevin Scharp



WEB DETAILS

Zoom meeting ID: 848 9652 7438

Password: CEOS21 (invite link)

YouTube channel: www.youtube.com/c/ConceptualEngineering