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UJ Philosophy Colloquium in Collaboration with ACEPS

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Es'kia Mpahlele Room, UJ APK Library

The Extended Cuckoo

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Abstract

Arguments that cognition or minds can be extended regularly invoke an analogy with Dawkins' argument that phenotypes can be extended. I argue that there are two neglected ways in which those two boundary-breaking theses are complementary. Much of the argument of *The Extended Phenotype* concerns parasite phenotypes expressed in the behaviour of host organisms. But the options Dawkins considers for this extended manipulation are cognitively internalist. If we view cognition as extended, we can recognise a wider range of vulnerabilities for exploitation. On the other hand, the analogies drawn with Dawkins almost always emphasise the benefit to the individual agent in being cognitively extended. Taking Dawkins' concerns about manipulation and exploitation more seriously leads to a more contested, less optimistic picture of extended cognition and minds. This second line of thinking follows Sterelny's (2003) lead, but I argue that hostility presents worse and more pervasive problems than he allows.



David Spurrett studied philosophy at the former University of Natal, and at King's College London, and has lectured philosophy since 1991. He graduated with his PhD in metaphysics in 2000, and since then has co-edited and co-written several books, and many papers, mostly on topics in the philosophy of science, cognitive science and metaphysics. His research has involved collaborations with linguists, psychologists, economists, psychiatrists, legal scholars, anaesthetists and even other philosophers. His current research is largely focused on questions about agency, including human agency, at the intersection of philosophy of biology and philosophy of cognitive science. His recent publications give a sense of his current interests. Among the awards and honours he has received are the Vice Chancellor's Research Award (University of Natal, 2003), the Distinguished Teacher's Award (University of Natal, 2003), the Colenso Scholarship at St John's College, Cambridge (2003), a President's Award from the National Research Foundation (2002), and an NRF 'B' rating (2010 and 2016). He's had many years of experience in University administration, including membership of the Council and Senate of UKZN, and formerly serving as a Head of School. His term as Dean of SRPC commenced in mid 2017.



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