

Special seminar of

**RESEARCH CENTER FOR
THEORY AND HISTORY OF SCIENCE**

with

Heleen J. Pott & Dirk L. Couprie

7th October 2013
Sedláčkova 19, 306 14 Pilsen
room RJ-209

14:30–15:30

**Blood, Sweat, and Tears:
Are Emotions Perceptions of the Body?**
Heleen J. Pott

15:30–16:30

Anaximander's Cosmology
Dirk L. Couprie

Research Center for Theory and History of Science – CZ.1.07/2.3.00/20.0138



INVESTMENTS IN EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT

BLOOD, SWEAT, AND TEARS: ARE EMOTIONS PERCEPTIONS OF THE BODY?

Heleen J. Pott
Erasmus University Rotterdam | Maastricht University
e-mail: pott@eshcc.eur.nl | pott@maastrichtuniversity.nl

What is an Emotion? Emotions are ‘feelings of bodily changes’, according to William James in a groundbreaking paper in *Mind* (1884). James’s claim would start one of the most animated debates in the history of psychology; over the past hundred years, the discussion on emotions has been a running commentary to his ‘feeling theory’. During most of the 20th century, the theory was strongly criticized for its inability to account for the intentionality and rationality of emotions. However, somehow the idea that emotions essentially involve the body, managed to survive. In a modified version, it gained new popularity with the rise of neuroscience (Antonio Damasio 1999, 2003, 2010). Recently, Jesse Prinz proposed a philosophical upgrade of James’s theory, defining emotions as ‘gut reactions’ (Prinz 2004). In my talk, I explore the return of the body in the philosophy of emotions; I will argue that Prinz’s proposal suffers from some serious drawbacks, i.e. it cannot account for the normative dimension of emotions, and it mischaracterizes the phenomenology of emotions. I will suggest that a return to James’s pragmatist approach of emotional feelings, as well as to the monism of Spinoza’s *conatus*, would overcome the shortcomings of Prinz’s version.

ANAXIMANDER’S COSMOLOGY

Dirk L. Couprie
retired independent scholar
e-mail: dirkcouprie@dirkcouprie.nl

Dirk L. Couprie will talk about Anaximander’s cosmology. He will show how Anaximander broke with the archaic world-picture and put a new one in its place, which we can recognize as in principle our own Western world-picture. Additionally he will recreate Anaximander’s map of the earth and tell something about the use of the gnomon, an instrument introduced in Greece by Anaximander.