

## *Analyzing b-formats: some conceptual clarifications of Embodied Cognition*

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### *Abstract*

Over the past few decades, philosophers and cognitive scientists have defended various programmes and positions under the label of “embodied cognition” (EC). Despite the common use of such expression, however, EC supporters have been holding quite different theses on the basis of quite different reasons. Many works have in fact targeted both EC commitments and arguments (e.g. Anderson 2003, Clark 2008, Shapiro 2011, Wilson 2002, Wilson & Foglia 2011). And still, it has been recently pointed out (Shapiro 2014), such analyses do not sufficiently clarify the concept at issue, leaving EC a vague term for an elusive position. Perhaps the only exception to this lack of conceptual precision is represented by the work of Goldman (2012, 2014). Goldman’s idea is that a given cognitive process C is embodied E if and only if it re-uses (Anderson 2010) *bodily-formats* (b-formats), where “re-use” refers to the exploitation of an old cognitive function for a new one, and “b-formats” picks out representational structures of a specific format that code for the body. However, I suspect, Goldman’s proposal is not unproblematic. On the one hand, the very notion of mental representation notoriously doesn’t come free of charge and many think the time has come to abandon it (cf. Ramsey 2016). On the other hand, it is not obvious what exactly “b-format” means: there is a lot of talk about b-formats but, as with EC, not much interest in clarifying the kind of things b-formats are supposed to be. The present paper deals with the second class of concern, i.e. it tries to further sharpen the notion of b-format, while it just takes side on the first one, i.e. it maintains a representational version of EC.

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