
Cabanis's Living Systems

Tobias Cheung*^{†1}

¹Max-Planck-Institute for the History of Science (MPIWG) – Germany

Abstract

Session: **Holism and organicism: conceptual consensus or historical typologies?**
(Georg Toepfer, Matteo Mossio, Charles Wolfe, Tobias Cheung)

Cabanis's *Rapports du physique et du moral de l'homme* (1802) was a treatise on the systemic relations between, first, organic units, second, organs and intellectual operations, and, third, the entire organized body and its outer world. Within this conceptual framework, I will focus on the role of "reaction centers (*centres de réaction*) and the order of their interactions. For Cabanis, there were multiple "reaction centers within one "living system, like organs or nerve nets. Through stimuli-reaction-schemes, "reaction centers interacted with each other and with the regions or worlds that surrounded them. "Living systems thus maintained their inner order through complex interactions between different inner and outer inside-outside-interfaces. Further on, "reaction centers were agents within processual hierarchies that determine the influence of each "center. Finally, the acts of "reaction centers did not only maintain and reproduce the "living systems in which they occur, but also modify their inner organization.

*Speaker

[†]Corresponding author: t.cheung@gmx.net