

## BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

### KEYNOTES

**Julian KIVERSTEIN**

*University of Amsterdam*

#### **Naturalised Phenomenology in Enactive Psychiatry**

People suffering from severe psychiatric illnesses live in a different world, a world that is threatening, meaningless, chaotic, unreal, and so on. The kinds of illness treated in psychiatry – what I will call ‘psychiatric illness’ – disturb and transform a person’s everyday lived experience of being at home in the world. My talk will start from an understanding of mental illness as changing the phenomenological structure of lived experience. In short, psychiatric illness changes how a person’s lived body situates them in the world.

The dominant understanding of illness within psychiatry today is biomedical. Psychiatric illnesses are understood as disorders whose causes can be traced back to dysfunctional brain mechanisms. Other psychiatrists make no reference to the brain focusing instead on the person’s thoughts and feelings, such the person’s excessive worrying or their traumatic experiences. Others highlight the importance of the social environment and the values that are brought to bear in the treatment of psychiatric illness. How are these very different, perhaps incompatible, ways of understanding psychiatric illness (phenomenological, biomedical, psychotherapeutic and social) related?

Varela, Thompson and Rosch (1991) introduced the concept of enaction in an effort to find an alternative to a dualism of the mind as an object of scientific study, and the mind as experienced by a subject. This dualism is very much alive in how psychiatric illness is understood within psychiatry today. Paraphrasing Francisco Varela lived experience is where psychiatry starts from and it is where it must also link back, like a guiding thread (Varela 1996, p.334). Varela, Thompson and Rosch coined the concept of enaction in order to avoid setting the subjective and objective in opposition to one another. It was the living body that they targeted as connecting subjectivity to phenomena described in the objective terms of the natural sciences. The living body is both a subject of experience and a material thing describable in naturalistic terminology.

How could the concept of enaction be used to understand psychiatric illness? I will discuss a recent proposal of Sanneke de Haan to understand psychiatric illnesses as what she calls “disorders of sense-making” (de Haan 2020). Sense-making, in its most basic form, refers to the viable sensorimotor conduct of an organism that is oriented towards a meaningful environment.

A living body, by virtue of its autonomy, produces an individual organism with its own perspective on its environment. The organism's environment is a place of significance the organism depends upon to meet its needs. De Haan introduces a new type of sense-making she takes to be uniquely human, which she calls "existential sense-making". It is existential sense-making she takes to be disordered in psychiatric illness. But what she means by disorders of sense-making and how such disorders result in subjects living in a different world is left somewhat unclear in de Haan's book. The aim of my talk will be to provide answers to these two questions. In answering these questions I will seek to show how enactive psychiatry could make a contribution to the naturalisation of phenomenology.

### **Raymond TALLIS**

*University of Manchester*

#### **Freedom. Seemingly Impossible Actually Real**

Free will seems impossible in theory and yet it is real in practice: there is an undeniable and fundamental difference between things that merely happen to us and things we do.

After rehearsing the standard argument for determinism – that actions are material events in a law-governed, causally closed universe - I will argue for the reality of free will rooted in the distinctive nature of human consciousness. The intentionality of perceptions, reasons, intentions, beliefs, and knowledge, the entertaining of explicit possibility, and tensed time, are the keys to the distinction between genuine actions and other events in the natural world, underpinning the virtual outside from which we act.

Our undeniable capacity to discover 'how things work' at level of science and common sense, and to exploit our understanding of laws and causes to deliver our ends, are clear evidence of our privileged position in the order of things and of the gap between human agents and nature that permits them their margin of freedom. Far from being the mere effects of causes and the expression of physical laws, agents requisition events as causes of effects they seek and exploit the habits of nature (revealed in the form of the laws of science) to bring about certain goals.

The talk will also examine the distinctive character of actions. They are actualizations of envisaged possibilities and involved propositional attitudes – intentions, beliefs, knowledge, and plans – that prompt and justify them.

It will become evident that actions – as the particular realisations of general possibilities involving the stitching together of disparate items – are unlike any other sequences of events in the material world. The ability freely to perform such actions is compatible with determinism in the natural world.

**Sebastjan VÖRÖS**

*University of Ljubljana*

**Neither Beast nor Angel: The Reflective Scientist and the Life-Mind Problem**

In my paper, I address the ‘problem of reflexivity,’ i.e., the problem of what it means to reflexively apply the notion of enaction to the scientist him/herself. In more narrow terms: if cognition does not primarily consist in representing a self-subsisting external world, but rather in bringing forth, or enacting, an organism-related domain of meaning (*umwelt*), what implications does this have for the status of human cognition in general and scientific knowledge in particular? Since human beings are themselves living beings, does this imply that their cognition is confined to their unique human *umwelt(en)*? In more general terms: what is the relationship between mind (thought, knowledge) and life (vitality, experientiality)? Is mind something over and above life, or is it ultimately but a complexification of vital dynamics?

The enactive tradition has often broached these issues (e.g., in the so-called ‘life-mind continuity thesis’), but it has never systematically investigated them. In my presentation, I try to steer the middle ground between two extreme views on the topic: the subsumption of life under knowledge (human being as an ‘angelic intellect’), and the subsumption of knowledge under life (human being as a ‘feeling brute’). By drawing on Canguilhem, Merleau-Ponty, and Plessner, I will argue that, while there are structural continuities between vital and mental dynamics, they ultimately stand for two qualitatively different structures of behaviour, or forms of existence. In this view, mind is not a mere supplement of life, but a wholesale trans-formation or re-structuration (*Umgestaltung*), which means that, in the human being, a *living* body is, ultimately, a *minded* body.

## SPEAKERS

(Ordered alphabetically)

### **Jacob BELL**

*University of Wales - Trinity Saint David*

#### **Phenomenology in Science: Making Explicit the Implicit**

Whether or not it is recognized as such, phenomenology serves as a necessary component for (at least some) scientific activity. More specifically, neuroscience and cognitive science seem to employ experiential descriptions in studies that attempt to reveal the neurobiological correlates of subjective experience. These studies further depend on participants who are familiar with the experiential descriptions *as experienced*, and these participants must be capable of identifying such experiences with precision during these studies. As such, experiential (phenomenological) description serves as an implicit point of departure for the correlative studies in question. By making the phenomenological presence in science explicit, it may be possible to increase the quality of experiential descriptions being employed. Replacing deficient experiential descriptions with robust, vivid, and comprehensive ones could lead to higher quality studies by strengthening the neurobiological correlates of subjective experience.

I will begin my defense of these claims by briefly identifying how phenomenology is being used in the context of this paper, I will proceed by providing examples of contemporary scientific studies which make use of experiential descriptions of subjective experience as a necessary component of their point of departure. Once it has been made both clear and explicit that phenomenology figures into (at least some) scientific practice, I will draw out some of the implications of these claims before concluding with a brief summary and suggestions for further research.

### **Cristian BODEA**

*Department of Social and Human Sciences, Romanian Academy - Cluj-Napoca Branch*

#### **A Phenomenological Acceptance of the Enactivist Sense-making**

Following Marc Richir's phenomenological analysis on Freud's famous "Wolf Man" case, I will substantiate the idea that embodiment is a variable process of sense-making named in cognitive science literature "participatory sense-making" (de Jaegher). I will focus my investigation towards the passive attribute of the process of sense-making in order to demonstrate the hypothesis of an unconscious phenomenological substratum allowing the very process to take

place. Thus, using the phenomenological approach, my paper contributes to the enlargement of the concept of “participatory sense-making”. By “breaking the barrier of intentionality” (Richir) “to participate” will presuppose the “active” involvement of passive non-intentional objects identified by Richir as being Merleau-Ponty’s *Wesen sauvages*. The case of Wolf Man illustrates these *Wesen sauvages* at work.

At the same time, “to participate” equals the willingness to be subjected to such unregulated, uncontrolled and meaningless elements of sense-making. This will mean the acceptance of *Wesen sauvages* as taking part in the process of sense-making and not trying to cognitively filter their significance for the process as a whole. To do otherwise will result in stops and turns at the level of understanding translated in an endless repetition of the same.

In cognitive science literature “participatory sense-making” is part of the enactivism movement. Enaction defines cognition as sense-making i.e. the way cognitive agents meaningfully connect with their world based on their needs and goals as self-organizing, self-maintaining, embodied agents. The enactive approach provides new concepts to overcome the problems of traditional functionalist accounts, which can only give a piecemeal and disintegrated view because they consider cognition, communication and perception separately, do not take embodiment into account, and are methodologically individualistic (de Jaegher).

As an alternative to functionalism, enactivism proves to be a holistic approach that very much resonates to the phenomenological method. However, its shortcomings are shown in the way it deals with the problem of modulation. Following the Husserlian account on *Paarung* filtered through the lenses of “participatory sense-making”, enactivism “assumes the capacity of agents to integrate disruptions, opacity and misunderstandings in mutual modulations” (de Jaegher). I consider this assumption to be tributary to cognitivism and having as a result the stoppage in synchronicity of the variable (i.e. modulating) process of sense-making. That is why, in order to overcome this limitation, I recommend the new phenomenological approach promoted by Marc Richir (non-standard phenomenology). Going beyond the standard of intentionality, it opens up the meaning with less focus on consciousness and conscious acts and more on acts regarded as nonregulated and meaningless. Far from being just exceptional cases, these acts are the very phenomenological basis allowing for the sense to be instituted (i.e. enacted).

From this perspective, enactivism should stress more the role of *embodiment* not as an external way of gaining cognitive data for processing, but as a way of “passive”, stand alone and non-reflexive sense-making. Enaction should involve the body not as a tool whose usefulness dissolves in synchronicity but as a constant source for differentiation without which thinking (i.e. *cognition*) would be impossible.

**Irene BREUER**

*Bergische Universität Wuppertal*

**Bodily self-awareness: Bodily intentionality in the sphere of feelings and for the constitution of values**

Drawing on Husserl's writings, this paper will be concerned with the relationship between pre-reflective awareness and the lived body. In particular, it will delve on the notion of self-affection, focusing on the one hand, on receptivity and activity at the sphere of bodily sensations and sensings and on the other hand, on the intentionality of affective feelings and the intentionality for the constitution of values. It sustains that our innermost capacity is the affective awareness of my own body-self is immediately given as acts of an originally, pre-reflective proto-consciousness. What affective consciousness experiences is its own acts understood as a continuous activity, i.e. as *energeia*. It further suggests the unity of body and consciousness in its totality is made possible by the force of the bodily consciousness that, on the grounds of an awareness of both the reflexive process of touch and of the kinaesthetic freedom of the body, grants the subject a non-predicative self-knowledge or experiential knowledge. Sensations and feelings also provide the material for basic objectivations, so that the positing of value begins at this very early genetic stage, i.e. a stage governed by bodily consciousness. It will further suggest that this dynamic process of evolving consciousness leads in a continuous manner from the proto-stream of lived experience to the sphere of transcendent experience. This continuity is ensured by a bodily proto-intentionality, which is here conceived of as a system of forces or motility vectors with varying degrees of intensity, that by correlating our immanent feelings and sensations to parts or places of the lived body enables its self-constitution as a unity. This minimal form of self-awareness is made possible by the constitutive force of the sensitive feelings.

**Berke CAN**

*Boğaziçi University, İstanbul*

**Sneaking Theory into Practice: Action Schemas as Units of Cognition**

Phenomenology has been a great influence on alternative approaches to the study of the mind such as enactivism, especially in its emphasis on the process-based nature of life and mentality, the role of continuous interactions with the environment, and the active nature of cognition. However, a phenomenological and introspective *method* is not necessarily tied to such a view of the mind, as demonstrated by the existence of non-phenomenologically inspired perspectives such as interactivism or ecological psychology that nonetheless share these insights. As such, scientists studying the mind need not adopt a phenomenological method to apply these insights into research practices. In this talk, I will suggest that a potentially effective way of influencing

research practices is defining conceptual tools that capture these dynamic insights and are useful for practical research. To this end, I define the notion of action schemas (inspired by but not identical to Piaget's use of the term) as potential units of mentality. An action schema, as I define it, is a *repeatable, anticipative process of interaction between the organism and the environment*, that can range from drinking from a glass of water to more abstract skills like understanding the knowledge state of another person. Such processes can combine with one another to make up larger schemas, such as the distinct movements for reaching for a glass and taking it towards the mouth making up for the larger drinking schema. All mental events, such as motor behaviors, perceptions, and emotional processes can be understood as schemas, and can combine with each other to form more complex mental events. In addition to combining with one another, schemas anticipate the environment. For the process flow of holding a glass to actually occur and successfully continue with the rest of the schema, there needs to be an external object that resists the pressure I apply with my grasping and allows me to hold it in my hand. We can imagine this as a schema having a *gap* in it that needs to be filled by events in the world, which the schema anticipates. Armed with this general definition, we can approach various areas of the study of mentality differently. I will argue that a repeatable process that can change across occurrences can provide a way into development that can go beyond the nativist-empiricist dichotomy and helps us understand phenomena like “attunement” in a way that is relevant for understanding other findings such as the social-cognitive skills of adults. Understanding gap-filling as a new way of combination between schemas can provide us with a way to imagine metacognition as enabled by language. Overall, by simply changing the explanatory unit of mental life, we can make the process-based and interactive nature of mentality relevant for research on cognition. Such an approach can be more influential on the scientific study of the mind than an emphasis on the phenomenological method itself as something that should be adopted by scientists.

**Ion COPOERU**

*Babes-Bolyai University of Cluj*

**The structure of the engagement: an interactionist methodology for the investigation of skilled performance**

Contrary to influential views that skills are performed largely automatically, cognitive processes make an important contribution to almost all skilled actions. Cognitive and non-cognitive processes operate together in the form of an interplay which have been recently framed conceptually as “*meshed arrangement*” or “*meshed architecture*.” (Gallagher & Varga, 2020) These type of models are successfully integrating an array of phenomena involved in skill, such as: proceduralization, dynamical constraints, non-analytic pattern recognition, schematization, efficient memory organization, situation awareness, and action planning. (Christensen, Sutton, & McIlwain 2016) However, it remains to be explained the transformation in cognitive control that

leads to more efficient forms of embodied performance. My hypothesis is that this transformation involves substantial non-linguistic structures), which are detectable in the production and the transfer of practical knowledge.

Therefore, I propose a methodology, which promises to better describe skills and knowing-how as co-produced by agents in a specific physical context and intertwined with observable (inter)action. This method – a combination of interactions analysis and phenomenology ( Katila & Raudaskoski, 2020) - would enable us not only to identify somatic sequences of the interaction and locate knowing-how in a specific moment of it, but to uncover the ways in which the (embodied-interactive) meaning is constituted in that type of interactive situation. With that, we hope we open access to a micro-analytic level.

A few examples will be provided, in order to examine the phenomenon of the inter-play of cognitive and non-cognitive aspects and processes in the context of (situated) skilled action. In doing so I intend to underline how the practical level (the accomplishment of the action) is a non-reducible dimension in explaining the skilled performance.

## References

- Gallagher S and Varga S (2020). Meshed Architecture of Performance as a Model of Situated Cognition. *Front. Psychol.* 11:2140. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.02140
- Christensen, W., Sutton, J., & McIlwain, D. J. F. (2016). Cognition in Skilled Action: Meshed Control and the Varieties of Skill Experience. *Mind & Language*, 31(1), 37–66. <https://doi.org/10.1111/MILA.12094>
- Katila, J & Raudaskoski, S (2020), "Interaction Analysis as an Embodied and Interactive Process: Multimodal, Co-operative, and Intercorporeal Ways of Seeing Video Data as Complementary Professional Visions", *Human Studies*, vol. 43, no. 3, pp. 445–470.

**Caterina DI FAZIO**

*Palacky University Olomouc*

## **An Introduction to Political Phenomenology**

This paper aims to provide the theoretical foundations of political phenomenology, based on the encounter between enactivism and applied phenomenology. It does so by focusing on Jan Patočka's concepts of movement and the community, in relation to recent findings in cognitive neurosciences. More specifically, I analyze Patočka's dynamic concept of human movement and political action, and his critique of science and representation, together with Maurice Merleau-Ponty's understanding of corporeal intersubjectivity (intercorporeality), on the one hand, and the theory of mirror-neurons proposed by neurophysiologist Giacomo Rizzolatti on comprehension of comprehension, on the other. It is precisely the figure of the mirror, and the relevant theories



on reflex and reflections, that constitutes the key to bridge together phenomenological understandings of body, movement and empathy with neuroscientific approaches on these same issues. The concept of mirror is essential to understand the mirror neurons functioning as well as the basis of empathy, which has to be understood as embodied comprehension and imitation. I thereby provide, following both phenomenological and neuroscientific theories, proof that there is indeed an intercorporeal communication happening between me and others, that can serve as the basis to develop an account of intersubjectivity as shared bodily intentionality.

In the second part of the paper I focus on Patočka's critique of science and his understanding of public space. Indeed, applied phenomenology intrinsically entails a reflection on social interaction and political engagement, based on a conception of intersubjectivity as shared bodily intentionality, and thereby the question of the community (we). In *Conferences of Leuven* (1965) Patočka claims that just as finitude characterizes the body proper, history itself is also characterized by a movement of decadence. The alternative that looms in history is the choice between subjugation to bodily and biological life as such, and the desire for a life in freedom. Thus, political life coincides with the history of the conflict between those who remain in the circle of biological needs and those who engage themselves in the struggle of "opposition to decline", the struggle for freedom. Freedom is achieved on the background of the vulnerability that characterizes our private relationships with others, that is, as a countermovement against the violence of others and against a natural life determined by a surrendering to biological necessities. This struggle must be intended as the creation of wider and wider spheres of freedom, as well as responsibility. Living for each other is therefore revealed as the sense, or even the direction of all human action. In other words, meaning must be sought in the actual reality of human affairs, that Niccolò Machiavelli named the "*verità effettuale della cosa*", i.e. in political life. As the polis, the space of the community in Ancient Greece, is the ground of history, and as the institution of political space is the veritable heritage of the polis, the rising above decadence can be achieved only within the political space, that is, via political agency and the institution of a community committed to the expansion of inclusion and hospitality. The paper ends by providing a preliminary description of political movement.

**Roy DINGS**

*Ruhr-University Bochum*

**Meaningful experience and the importance of self-imposed norms**

A crucial element of the enactivist approach is the acknowledgement that the social and material environment is fundamentally *meaningful*. Such meaning emerges in the interaction of a concerned agent with its surroundings. That is, agents have particular goals, needs or preferences, and objects may be relevant to those concerns, resulting in a meaningful environment. Many enactivists have focused on biological needs as the domain of origin for

much of that meaning. More recently, there has been substantial interest in sociocultural norms and conventions and their impact on the experience and interactions of an agent.

In this talk I will argue that most enactivists so far have neglected a uniquely *human* form of normativity, namely, self-imposed normativity. That is: human beings are fundamentally active agents who may reflect on their interactions and formulate different courses of actions. In other words, through self-narration and deliberation human beings may develop values and norms that are uniquely personal. If enactivism wants to do justice to the lived experience of *human* agents (which most enactivist theorists explicitly claim), then it is crucial that such self-imposed normativity is incorporated into enactivist research.

I will outline an account that I have developed in recent years that aims to provide precisely this. It is an affordance-based framework which integrates insights from ecological and cognitive science with hermeneutical and existential phenomenology. It elucidates how uniquely personal forms of meaning are experienced. It starts by acknowledging that our ‘concerns’ are not homogenous: given the human ability for self-interpretation and reflexivity, some concerns are identified with or committed to over time. We take an existential stance towards such concerns (De Haan 2020). Relevance to those concerns results in a uniquely human form of meaning that I have elsewhere labelled ‘mineness’. Crucially however, this mineness is not to be understood in a minimal sense (as in e.g. Zahavi 2015 and others). Rather, it refers to “what it is like for me to experience the world”, where the “me” refers not merely to a first-person perspective on the world, but to a full multidimensional self, including values, self-narratives and social roles (Gallagher 2013). I aim to further elucidate this form of mineness by embedding it in a Heideggerian analysis of agency, which foregrounds not only the in-order-to character of objects (which fits nicely with the concept of affordances) but also the for-the-sake-of-which character of objects (which is more closely connected to the uniquely human lifeworld).

**Andrea Pace GIANNOTTA**

*University of Florence*

**Functional and sentient body: the enactive phenomenology of corporeality**

The concept of *embodiment* is central to all forms of enactivism, in contrast to the disembodied views of the mind in classical cognitive science. However, there is an ambiguity in the notion of “body” that comes into play in the field of embodied cognition and, therefore, a need of clarification: what is the body? The answer is not obvious: there are different conceptions of corporeality and, therefore, different forms of embodiment.

These differences stand out when comparing the various strands of enactivism with Husserlian phenomenology. By drawing on the latter, I will distinguish between two different theses regarding the embodied nature of the mind: *weak* and *strong* embodiment. I will do so based on

the phenomenological distinction between *Körper* (the body as object) and *Leib* (the living and lived body), intersecting it with the distinction between *functional* body (the body that moves and acts in the environment) and *sentient* body (the body that *feels*, i.e., that is locus of phenomenal consciousness).

I will argue that *sensorimotor* (O'Regan, Noë) and *radical* (Hutto, Myin) *enactivism* leave aside the sentient dimension of the body by focusing just on the functional body, which is therefore turned into a mere objective body (*Körper*). This account of corporeality depends on the development of the enactive theory of perception into a form of direct and naïve realism that is close to Gibson's ecological theory of perception.

On the contrary, I will argue that the original version of the enactive approach that is developed by Varela, Thompson and Rosch in *The Embodied Mind – autopoietic enactivism* – is closer to Husserl's phenomenology. This is because autopoietic enactivists distance themselves from Gibson's view, criticizing its form of direct and naïve realism and maintaining a conception of knowledge and perception in terms of a process of *constitution* of objectivity that crucially involves phenomenal *contents*.

On this basis, I will stress the closeness between autopoietic enactivism and Husserl's *phenomenology of the flesh* (Bernet) – which is also at the basis of Merleau-Ponty's *ontology of the flesh*. In this view, the living and lived body (*Leib*) is, at the same time, a *functional and sentient body*. In contrast to the weak form of embodiment that is at play in the other versions of enactivism, the enactive phenomenology of corporeality supports a strong version of the embodiment thesis, according to which the mind is grounded in the functional and sentient body.

I conclude by developing the metaphysical consequences of the enactive phenomenology of corporeality, by combining the concept of the fundamental subject-object correlation in phenomenology with the enactivist concept of *codependent arising* – which is at the heart of *The Embodied Mind* – and by grounding this view in a form of *neutral monism*. According to this position, subject and object (knower and known, mind and world) are co-constituted in the cognitive process on the basis of neutral qualities that, under certain circumstances (which can be investigated also through *neurophenomenology*), give rise to a field of manifestation.

**Kaplan HASANOGLU**

*Assumption University*

### **Enactivism, Agency, and the Pursuit of Authenticity**

I argue that a Heideggerian existential phenomenological perspective provides a fruitful framework for developing enactivism. According to existentialists, our existence precedes our essence. As Heidegger put it, “the essence of Dasein lies in its existence.” As a result, whenever

we are conscious we must constantly self-interpret what it means for us to exist. As the subject of such an interpretation, our being is continually “an issue for us.” Heidegger maintained that given that we are unavoidably self-interpreting beings, to exist requires us to be authentic versions of ourselves. For the purposes of clarifying enactivism, this means that typical adult humans exhibit a special kind of agency, apparently unique among living organisms, in that our various evaluations of ourselves, others, and our surroundings are continuously guided by existential values. The pursuit of existential values, I argue, corresponds with a person-specific form of normativity. Generally speaking, we can and should think and act in the name of things like personal integrity, individuality, dignity, a feeling of self-worth, etc. in a way that arguably consequently asymmetrically regulates our brain, body, habits, and social interactions. Existential values are thus not only underdetermined by biological and cultural forms of normativity, but also arguably render such norms subservient to an individual’s pursuit of its own authentic existence. If this is correct, it would mean that adaptively pursuing authenticity is crucial for human viability, and hence crucial for understanding human sense-making. In slogan form, my position is thus: human sense-making is human self-making.

The person-specificity of human sense-making has significant implications for cognitive science. If our decisions regarding how to live an authentic existence are indeed crucial for our viability, it follows that the phenomenally conscious agent shapes its own cognition and consciousness, in a way that arguably relegates the brain and body to comparatively passive roles. To help show this, I provide empirical grounds for claiming that the role of the brain in skillful visual behavior is completely characterizable in passive, non-representational terms. The specific findings I cite surround the well-established way in which reflexes account for such behavior—e.g., the vestibulo-ocular and opto-kinetic reflexes. In my view, through addressing its own existence, a phenomenally conscious agent can regulate its own visual cognition and visual phenomenal consciousness by modulating the behavior of these passively and arguably non-computationally unfolding reflexes.

**Garri HOVHANNISYAN & John VERVAEKE**

*Duquesne University*

### **Enactivism and the Phenomenology of Individual Differences**

A defining feature of the enactive approach is its commitment to non-reductionism. Yet popular enactivist strategies employ minimal models of cognition (e.g., adaptive autopoiesis) for understanding cognitive life at the level of human being. The risk of such strategies is a reduction of different kind, namely that of the human mind to the life of an autopoietic cell. This presentation reviews recent efforts at advancing enactivist cognitive science beyond the life of a cell and into the mind of a person by placing enactivism in a back-and-forth circulation with the empirical human sciences. Specifically, by synthesizing core concepts from phenomenological

philosophy, cognitive science, and personality psychology, recent work (Hovhannisyan & Vervaeke, 2021) has produced an Enactivist Big-5 Theory (EB5T) of personality, according to which individual differences in personality are reflective of stylistic differences in how we come to optimally grip our distinctly human worlds. This presentation extends EB5T's phenomenological understanding of traits by elaborating how individual differences in personality traits reflect structural differences in how people come to bring forth and participate in their worlds. It offers broad phenomenological descriptions of individual differences in styles of world-enactment along the five major dimensions of personality articulated by EB5T. As an enactivist theory of personality whose trait structure is arguably universal, EB5T promises to explain the immanent teleology of the autopoietically embodied human mind in a way that embodies the very non-reductionist spirit that originally animated enactivism into being.

**Spencer IVY**

*University of Utah*

**Getting Sophisticated: In Favor of Hybrid Views of Skilled Action in Expertise**

The long history of research and debate surrounding expertise has emphasized the importance of both automaticity and intelligent deliberation in the control of skilled, expert action – and often, their mutual exclusion of one another. To the contrary, recent developments in the cognitive science of skill implicate the likelihood of a third, hybrid line of interpretation and a new path forward. This paper surveys these recent developments, arguing that hybrid models of expertise and skill are the most fruitful way forward in interpreting and conducting research on experts. I categorize a new set of interpretations of skill as ‘sophisticated hybrid models’ owing to the fact that they deny the mutual exclusion of automaticity from intelligent action control. I then argue that this interpretive strategy is the most fruitful way forward to making clear much of the complexity of skilled action and expertise.

**Adam JURKIEWICZ**

*Catholic University of America*

**The Art of Discerning Parts and Wholes:  
Kant's Use of Phenomenology in his Account of Cognitive Development**

In this paper, I discuss one way in which Immanuel Kant, at least in his *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* may plausibly be understood as partially anticipating later phenomenological approaches to embodied cognition. In this text, Kant argues that only a human being who has had tactile interaction with objects could develop the ability to identify physical objects by sight and to understand that the world is composed of stable physical objects distinct

from their appearances in perspectival glimpses. This is because only touch can provide the basis by which to distinguish between the object as a whole and the object's parts. In this paper, I present Kant's argument for this claim about the role of touch in human development in the *Anthropology*. I then argue that at its basis lies a phenomenological account of the necessary relation between perceptual beholding of a physical object and embodied interaction with that object. I do this by comparing Kant's description of the touch in the *Anthropology* with his description of the imagination in *Metaphysics L1*, and his description of bodily movement in *What does it mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?* I conclude that Kant takes certain structural features of our first-person interaction with objects and uses them to extrapolate the conditions for an adequate account of human cognitive development.

**Guy LOTAN**

*Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

**A Bodily Sense of Ownership**

My body has a unique status for me. I do not experience my body merely as a center of sensations and actions, I also experience my body as *my own*, as something that is mine fundamentally and inherently. This experience of my body as *my own* is normally referred to as a “bodily sense of ownership” (BSO). It seems that BSO does not resemble any other sense of ownership one might have, except maybe the case of one's own thoughts. As such, BSO has a sacred place in our life. But despite its centrality and importance in our lives, BSO is highly elusive and complex. As it will be presented, there are psychopathologies that demonstrate that it is not necessary to have a BSO and that it is possible to develop a BSO that extends beyond the borders of the biological body. Moreover, there are cases where one does not have a BSO, but is still able to *judge* the body to be one's own. Therefore, it is worth asking: what grounds a BSO? What enables it? What is the difference between those who have a BSO and those who have not? It is important to note that these questions refer to the *experience* of bodily ownership, and not to judgments of bodily ownership. In this paper, I will try to provide a preliminary answer to the aforementioned ‘grounding question’ (GQ). Hopefully, in the future, this preliminary answer will evolve and transform into a complete account.

The paper's plan is the following: first, I will present briefly some contemporary competing hypotheses concerning the GQ and explain why they seem unsatisfying. Second, I will discuss the “dual-aspect” of bodily awareness. Then, I will argue that this phenomenon has the potential of explaining BSO, and therefore can be considered as its ground. I will end with a short suggestion according to which our sense of ownership over our *thoughts* could be similarly explained.

**Janko NEŠIĆ**

*University of Belgrade*

**Enactivism, phenomenology, autism**

In my talk, I will focus on the enactive-phenomenological approach to the understanding of impairments in autism spectrum disorder. I will use the case of autism to show how phenomenology drives the progress of enactivism, which in turn exerted an influence on neuroscience, leading towards an integrative approach to (impairments of) social and shared cognition.

Gallagher and Allen (2016) distinguished three views on the neuroscience of prediction: predictive coding, predictive processing, and predictive engagement. Neuroscience of predictive coding should recognize that “the brain is part of a system that attunes to and responds to its environment” (Gallagher and Bower, 2017). This leads to the enactive account of “predictive coding” involving the whole brain–body–environment system. The enactive version moves away from the internalist vocabulary of “inference” and “representation” in favor of “attunement” and “affordance”. Fuchs suggests that instead of postulating “hypotheses” and “prediction errors” of the brain, a “better notion would be the match or mismatch of neural forward models or *open loops* with the current environment” (Fuchs, 2018, p. 152). Perceptual and motor capacities of embodied subjects form open loops with the environment. Dialectical misattunement theory of autism (Bolis et al., 2017), explains that the “communication misalignments and weak interpersonal coupling in social interactions might be the result of increasingly divergent predictive and (inter-)action styles across individuals” (p. 366). It provides an enactive-predictive processing account and, in terms of phenomenology, relates to Merleau-Ponty’s notions of intercorporeity and style.

Enactive theories assert the significance of dynamic coupling. Walsh (2020) argued that the very process of dynamic coupling is constitutive of the We on Merleau-Ponty’s “systemic whole” account. Interaction theories of social cognition, as part of the enactivist approach, could be interpreted as picking out a basic form of shared cognition, emergent coordination (León, 2016). Nonetheless, different forms of the We have not been worked out yet by the enactivists. Spelling this out in detail would be important for the understanding of disturbances in autism. Turning to phenomenology once more would lead to new improvements.

**References**

- Bolis D, Balsters J, Wenderoth N, Becchio C, Schilbach L (2017). Beyond autism: introducing the dialectical misattunement hypothesis and a bayesian account of intersubjectivity. *Psychopathology*.
- Fuchs, T. (2018). *Ecology of the Brain. The Phenomenology And Biology Of The Embodied Mind*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

- Gallagher, S., Allen, M. (2016). Active inference, enactivism and the hermeneutics of social cognition. *Synthese*, 1, 1-22.
- Gallagher, S., Bower, M. (2017). Making enactivism even more embodied. In Gallagher, S. (Ed.). *Enactivist interventions: Rethinking the mind*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- León, F. (2016). An interactionist approach to shared cognition: some prospects and challenges. In Szanto, T., Moran, D. (eds.). *The phenomenology of sociality. Discovering the “We”*. Routledge, London.
- Walsh, P.J. (2020). Intercorporeity and the first-person plural in Merleau-Ponty. *Cont Philos Rev*, 53, 21–47.

### **Ilia ONEGIN**

*HSE University Moscow*

#### **Phenomenologizing Naturalism: Taking Phenomenology Transcendentally**

I shall argue in favour of the compatibility of phenomenology with reductionist approaches in cognitive science, be that cognitivism or connectionism in Evan Thompson’s terms. This seemingly paradoxical position will be based on emphasizing Husserl’s both transcendentalist claims, that will lead to viewing the inextricable tendencies of his general project as irreducible to a meticulous description of individual experience, i.e. of an autonomous yet interacting-with-the-world system’s experience, considered enactivistically.

Firstly, I shall argue that attempts to put the enactivist approach transcendentally made by Francisco Varela and Evan Thompson fail to suffice for the notion of the transcendental elaborated by Husserl, nor do they provide ground for restoring phenomenology as the foundation of all sciences, as intended by Husserl. Three arguments may be applied here. The first of them is aimed to show the excessiveness of the possible enactivist attempt to ground the transcendental on the individual experience. The second argument focuses on negligence of the notion of the transcendental in the design of actual enactivist-style research. The last argument highlights the fundamental discrepancy between the modes of reasoning that underpin the enactivist notion of the transcendental and the Husserlian one correspondingly.

Then, I shall focus on some pivotal distinctions made by Husserl that enable us to set apart the Husserlian transcendental realm from what can be understood as experience within the enactivist approach. The first one is the thorough distinction of noema and noesis, that entails separate discussion of both in Husserl’s works. The second distinction to be mentioned is that between psychological and transcendental subjectivity. According to these distinctions, it shall be shown that a number of topics explored by Husserl (e.g., those of intersubjectivity and world as world-horizon) in order to question and re-think the ‘objective ideal’ of science relate to the sense of given phenomena primarily not just as to that revealing in individual experience, but as the only accessible sense that permeates vast areas of meaningful activity, which cannot be grasped in psychological fashion.



Finally, it shall be stated that this interpretation of Husserl's works focusing on its transcendentalist claims actually makes room for admitting a naturalistic approach in cognitive sciences. The argument that showed the excessiveness of the reference to the individual experience as a transcendental realm may be equally deployed to demonstrate the compatibility of the transcendental claims of Husserlian phenomenology with the properly designed reductionist mode of research. Although the starting point of the entire phenomenological project was criticism of naïve naturalism, the phenomenological reconsideration and clarification of the basics of reductionism in a manner similar to Husserl's reflective approach to general scientific themes is possible and important. Its primary concern would be examining the status of experiential reports, the border between objective and subjective elements in such reports, as well as boundaries of naturalism and entries from this to other modes of thinking. However, my aim is rather posing a question of such co-existence and collaboration, than drawing a precise schema of it.

**Maria ONYSZKIEWICZ**

*Univeristy of Warsaw*

**Other's death as a change of context**

Starting from the question of "the pattern that connects all living things," Gregory Bateson, stated that what is characteristic of living beings are cognitive processes<sup>[1], [2]</sup>. He thus equated living processes with mental processes, which he understood as an organizational and adaptive property of the animate world. He called every behavior of a living organism communication – this is the basic assumption of his contextual model of communication. Contemporary continuators of his thought are enactivists, who believe that the cognitive process consists in the co-constitution of the subject and the world, in which the subject acts and to which through this action he gives meaning<sup>[3]</sup>. Bateson's considerations in many ways parallel the phenomenological considerations of Edmund Husserl. According to him, the Other is the first stage of the constitution of the objective world, as well as the finalization of the constitution of the Self as psychophysical unity<sup>[4], [5]</sup>. The Self and the Other co-constitute the objective world while producing a community (We) that transcends each of its constituent subjects. The co-created world is shared by the Self and the Other, and through the We its mutual sense is co-created.

Combining ecology of mind, enactivism and phenomenology, I would like to show what role the Others play in the constitution of our world and how this world changes with their death. Death is a significant change in the environment in which we live and thus affects our perception of the world and how we live. How the world appears to the Self is closely connected to the Others who co-constitute it. Death disturbs the context in which the relationship with the Other functioned – the lack of a reaction on their side is interpreted as inadequate behavior, not fitting into the pattern of interaction developed in the relationship. With the death of the Other, the Self

that they co-created dies. However, the Self continues to be involved in the world as it has been shaped for it, which includes the presence of the Other. The deceased still remains in the life horizon of the Self<sup>[6]</sup>. His absence is not abstract but real, even tangible<sup>[7], [8]</sup> and is experienced by the Self as embodied loss<sup>[9], [10]</sup> because how the world has been shaped for the Self demands an Other. The process of grieving is therefore not only an emotional process, but primarily a cognitive one involving adaptation to altered environmental conditions (the change in context resulting from the death of another person).

### Notes

- [1] G. Bateson, *Umysł i przyroda. Jedność konieczna*. Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1996.
- [2] G. Bateson i M. C. Bateson, *Angles fear. Towards an Epistemology of the Sacred*. Bantam Books, 1988.
- [3] F. J. Varela, E. Thompson, i E. Rosch, *The Embodied Mind. Cognitive Science and Human Experience*, Revised edition. Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: The MIT Press, 2016.
- [4] E. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations. An Introduction to Phenomenology*. Dordrecht: Springer Science+Business Media, 1960.
- [5] E. Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to Phenomenological Philosophy. Second Book*. Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publisher, 1989.
- [6] M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 2. wyd. London, New York: Routledge, 1981.
- [7] I. Ziemiński, „Twoja śmierć. Próba eksplikacji doświadczenia śmierci”, *Diametros*, nr 11, s. 111–141, 2007.
- [8] J.-P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*. New York: Pocket Books, 1978.
- [9] F. Tomasini, „Is Post-mortem Harm Possible? Understanding Death Harm and Grief”, *Bioethics*, t. 23, nr 8, s. 441–449, 2009.
- [10] F. Tomasini, „Embodying loss and the puzzle of existence”, *Sociol. Rev.*, t. 56, nr S2, s. 249–263, 2008.

### Victor PORTUGAL

*Georg-August Universität Göttingen*

#### **Transcendental Phenomenology and Enactivism on Meaning, Sense-Bestowing and Constitution: a clarificatory attempt.**

Meaning is a highly-discussed concept in Husserlian phenomenology. It encompasses not only different phases of Husserl’s thought, but also its consequences in its analytic and continental interpretations. Because the concept remained important throughout Husserl’s development, the

phenomenological tradition, in its diversity, was highly influenced by it. In the framework of transcendental phenomenology it presents itself as a key mediating concept that is essential in key-discussions regarding phenomenology's complex position between realism and idealism, embodied through the concepts of meaning-bestowal, reality-constitution, etc. Nevertheless, its influence did not stop with the phenomenological tradition. It is well known that enactivism draws a lot from phenomenology; however, it seems that their connections, differences, as well as their possible epistemological, ontological and even methodological consequences have been overlooked. In this sense, it is not a surprise that enactivism's use of the concept of meaning, sense-bestowal, constitution, etc., and its relation to the phenomenological usage was never an object of deep investigation. Against this background, the present article attempts to provide an initial clarificatory account of the relation between Husserlian transcendental phenomenology and enactivism through the concept of meaning. This analysis inevitably leads to its unfolding, which points to the problematic debate regarding the relationship between subject and world, as well as the constituting relationship that takes place between the analyzed poles. I start my analysis with an orthodox definition of meaning in Husserlian phenomenology as well as in enactivism (mainly in Varela, Thompson, Gallagher and Fuchs), attempting to provide a scope of their backgrounds and main intentions. In a second moment I give an account of what it means to "make sense" or to "bestow sense" in these two perspectives. This leads to a third necessary step that refers to the connection between meaning, the subject that bestows it, and the reality in which she is involved, i.e., it leads to the problem of "constitution" of the world. I attempt in this step to indicate what might be understood under such a concept in both traditions. Finally I attempt to draw initial conclusions, suggesting what could be some general similarities and differences between the two projects regarding meaning and constitution, and also what they can indicate in a more general level of analysis with respect not only to their purposes, but also their possible -perhaps unwished- background commitments. In conclusion I briefly draw on the debate around Husserl's transcendental idealism in order to situate the present critical analysis of both these two traditions in the history of philosophy in general.

## References

- Bernet, R. Kern, I., & Marbach, E. (1996). Edmund Husserl: Darstellung seines Denkens. Meiner
- Fuchs, T. (2017). *Ecology of the Brain. The phenomenology and biology of the embodied mind.* Oxford University Press.
- Gallagher, S. 2017. *Enactivist Interventions: Rethinking the Mind.* Oxford University Press.
- Gallagher, S. (2018). A well-trodden path: From phenomenology to enactivism. *Filosofisk. Supplement*, Vol. 3.
- Gallagher, S. (2018). New Mechanisms and the Enactivist Concept of Constitution. In: *Consciousness and the Ontology of Properties.* (pp. 207-220).
- Gallagher, S., & Zahavi, D. (2008). *The Phenomenological Mind: An Introduction to Philosophy of Mind and Cognitive Science.* London: Routledge.

- Husserl, E. *Husserliana - Gesammelte Werke*. Martinus Nijhoff/Springer.
- Maturana H, & Varela F (1980). *Autopoiesis and cognition: the realization of the living*. D. Reidel Publishing, Dordrecht.
- Moran, D. (2003). *Making Sense: Husserl's Phenomenology as Transcendental Idealism*. In: J. Malpas. *From Kant to Davidson: Philosophy and the Idea of the Transcendental* (pp.48-74). Routledge.
- Sokolowski, R. (1970). *The Formation of Husserl's Concept of Constitution*. Martinus Nijhoff.
- Thompson E. (2007) *Mind in life: Biology, phenomenology, and the sciences of mind*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge.
- Thompson, E. (2011). *Living Ways of Sense Making*. *Philosophy Today*, 55 (Supplement), pp. 114-123
- Varela F., Thompson E. & Rosch E. (1991) *The embodied mind*. Mit Press.
- Welton, D. (2011). *Can a Top-Down Phenomenology of Intentional Consciousness be Integrated with a Bottom-Up Phenomenology of Biological Systems?*. *Philosophy Today*, 55 (Supplement), 102-113.
- Zahavi, D. (2017). *Husserl's Legacy: Phenomenology, Metaphysics, & Transcendental Philosophy*. Oxford University Press.

### **Mirko PROKOP**

*University of St. Andrews*

#### **Hans Jonas and the Phenomenological Continuity of Life and Mind: A Transcendental Reading**

According to the ‘phenomenological life-mind continuity thesis’ (PLMCT), certain phenomenological features of human experience, e.g. self-concern, purposiveness, and selfhood, are applicable to all living organisms. Recent years have seen a debate concerning the role that Hans Jonas’ philosophy of organisms should play for the development of PLMCT within ‘Varelian’ or ‘autopoietic’ enactivism (AE). It is commonly agreed that Jonas’ analysis of metabolism provides the pivotal inspiration for AE’s development of a phenomenological notion of sense-making, considered to be cognition in its basic form, which underwrites AE’s understanding of PLMCT. However, AE’s reliance on Jonas has raised many eyebrows. Critics object that Jonas introduces a problematic anthropomorphism into enactivism, jeopardizing both the scientific and ontological plausibility of AE’s approach to life and cognition. In response, some of those sympathetic to PLMCT have argued that AE should drop its Jonasian notion of sense-making. Others that it should consider wider phenomenological resources beyond Jonas’

analysis of metabolism to defend PLMCT, especially the idea of direct, felt encounters between living bodies.

My argument in this talk will proceed in three steps. First, after briefly reviewing the state of the dialogue concerning AE's reliance on Jonas, I will argue that the responses above fail to address the crucial question for defending PLMCT against its critics, namely: what justifies the attribution of phenomenological features to all organisms? Second, drawing on previous commentators, I will present a novel interpretation of Jonas' understanding of metabolism, highlighting both its systematicity and its transcendental flavour. Finally, based on this interpretation, I will motivate a 'transcendental' argument which seems to justify the attribution of some phenomenological features to all organisms. Its underlying thought is that, for Jonas, the attribution of purposive selfhood is a necessary precondition for our understanding of the possibility of metabolism, rather than being derivable from metabolism itself. If my argument is successful, it will expose misconceptions in the interpretation of Jonas and strengthen AE's case for PLMCT against its critics. Furthermore, it will shed light on Jonas' understanding of the relationship between human experience and the study of living organisms.

**Jan PUC**

*Palacky Univerity Olomouc*

**Corporeality of emotion**

Phenomenological philosophy, enactivism and contemporary psychology are united by an interest in corporeality in the sense of a living, sentient body (Leib, flesh), which cannot be reduced to a physiological body. From this perspective, they also approach affective experiences. In my talk, I will present three specific arguments for the corporeality of emotion that can be obtained from these approaches. In other words, my talk aims to describe three aspects in which we feel emotions by the body.

I proceed from the classical cognitivist argument that emotion cannot be identified with bodily sensations because it is a situational context that makes an experience or behavior into a manifestation of an emotion. Contrary to this conception, I suggest that the meaning of an experience and behavior is both determined by and determining a situation. In the first part of my talk, I clarify this notion of reciprocal sense-making by specifying various ways the attentional context enters into emotion experience and by showing that bodily sensations can perform the function of emotional context.

Secondly, I briefly present current psychological theories that, based on the concept of action readiness, conceive the affectivity of emotion as bodily. These theories suggest that the very fact that emotions move, motivate, and direct behavior is felt by the body. I suggest that the

perceived physical attitude of action readiness is a necessary part of emotion, which contributes to distinguishing among types of emotional situations.

In the third part, I distinguish two forms of manifestation of emotions and focus on the question of whether emotion can be bodily also in a different sense than that it is felt bodily. I argue that those manifestations of emotion that are not feelings are either bodily movements or are founded on bodily movements. Special attention will be paid to the manifestation of emotion in the imagination.

### **Ainhoa RODRIGUEZ-MUGURUZA**

*University of the Basque Country*

#### **Menstrual Cycles as key to embodied Synchronisation**

The concept of embodiment has allowed philosophical discussions to refer to cognition as the result of a series of interactions occurring both within and outside the organism, in constant interaction with the environment. Francisco Varela (Thompson and Varela 2001) defined cognition in a multi-level manifold he referred to as cycles of operations. If successful, the interactions of cognition with internal and external cues involve the coupling of the organism with their environment, allowing them to perceive reality as meaningful. Thomas Fuchs elaborated on Varela's definition, presenting cognition within a process of synchronisation (Fuchs 2001). Such synchronisation would occur in a manifold similar to that postulated by Varela, split in two levels of interaction, a physiological and a psychosocial level. In the physiological level, synchrony is tied to biochemical rhythms that involve environmental cues; in the psychosocial level, synchrony concerns the habits according to which social day-to-day habits are scheduled. The synchronisation Fuchs and Varela postulated is, indeed, bidirectional: while environmental cues can have an impact in the completion of bodily functions, the body needs to coordinate to those cues in order to avoid potential disruptions.

And, when looking at the rhythms involved in such connections, circadian processes, also referred to as 24-hour cycles, have caught most of the attention. Nevertheless, female bodies, specifically menstruating bodies, present a physiological rhythm that extends daily processes and that aligns with infradian cues, longer than 24-hours.

In this presentation, I have explored how the adherence of the secretion of some hormones to 24-cycles led scientific research to, rather hastily, present circadian rhythms as the rhythm of human bodies, prioritising its coordination over any other rhythms that, contrarily, have not been taken into consideration. It is my belief that the focus of clinical research on circadian rhythms, and its disregard of other bodily rhythms, results from a case of gender bias that has extrapolated findings achieved solely in male bodies to the entire human physiology. Following on this

hypothesis, I have argued that clinical research has tended to prioritise the analysis of circadian rhythms due to the secretion cycle of testosterone following a 24-hour frequency.

With Varela's and Fuchs' definitions as reference, this presentation has criticised the efforts of actively neglecting the existence of processes in menstruating female bodies that differ with the circadian cadence. I have gathered the limited research available on the impact of infradian rhythms in the physical, mental, and emotional health of women and I have furthered my hypothesis that, due to the role of a biased scientific research, women might have been kept from the information that would have allowed them to respond to the physiological changes occurring in their bodies, jeopardising the correct functioning of essential bodily functions. Following Fuchs and De Jaegher (Fuchs and De Jaegher 2009), I have also enquired effect neglecting their bodily rhythm might have had on women's health, not only physical, but also mental and emotional, looking at how disruptions in Fuchs' physiological level could have kept menstruating female bodies from feeling in synch.

**Bryan SMYTH**

*University of Mississippi*

### **Critical Phenomenology, Enactivism, and the Question of Myth**

“Critical phenomenology” is a hot topic these days. This reflects a renewal of the long-standing conviction that the *philosophical* radicalness of phenomenology should have correspondingly radical *political* implications—that phenomenology is a *critical* project not only in the limited Kantian sense, but also in the more engaged and potentially transformative sense that Horkheimer originally gave to it. This is a serious point of contention among contemporary phenomenologists, and the key issue may be expressed as follows: is the radical ‘criticalness’ of critical phenomenology *intrinsic* to phenomenology? An affirmative answer to this question will imply a *generative* understanding of phenomenology, and this will have methodological consequences concerning the nature of the phenomenological reduction that point toward the paradigm of enactivism as a generalization of biological autopoiesis: an organism's enviroing world emerges – *is literally enacted* – as ‘a domain of significance’ through the organism's interactive or metabolic engagement with it. That there is a radically critical impetus intrinsic to phenomenology is thus best understood in terms of phenomenological generativity—and *this* in turn is best understood in terms of enactivism: phenomenology is generative *because* the world with which it is concerned is enacted in and through the embodied ‘sense-making activities’ of organisms. What I wish to show, in other words, is that *and how* the criticalness of critical phenomenology presupposes enactivism.

This theme can be approached from various angles. The approach that I will take in this paper concerns the horizontality of experience: how sense is always conditioned by the horizons within

which it occurs, and in particular how there must be an *outermost* horizon that is not itself situated within any further horizon, and which consequently conditions *all* experienced sense. This horizontality is what Husserl had in mind in turning to the lifeworld as a “realm of original self-evidences” that provide the ultimate presuppositions of objective or scientific cognition. It is in the *Urdoxa* that comprise the “primal institution” [*Urstiftung*] of the lifeworld that the fundamental givenness that is supposed to anchor phenomenology can be found—as Husserl put it, with an allusion to Goethe’s *Faust*, here phenomenology descends to the “entrance to the realm, never before entered, of the ‘mothers of knowledge’.” As this allusion implicitly suggests, the *Urdoxa* are, in epistemic terms, *mythic*, and strictly speaking their givenness is a kind of *pregivenness*. *But more strictly still, the Urdoxa are not pre-given simpliciter but rather enacted.* This enactedness should be understood as a kind of *mythopoesis*, and this is the primordial level of our sense-making activities. Phenomenology is generative and potentially ‘critical’ (in the more radical sense) in virtue of tracking and reiterating methodologically these founding gestures of mythopoetic enaction.

This perspective can be clarified through the work of Hans Blumenberg—a human lifeworld *is* a ‘domain of significance’ precisely in the sense of being based upon the projection of a mythic horizon that institutes a particular cultural landscape precisely as the definite environmental niche that we lack biologically. By means of a pragmatically appropriate narrative concerning the relation of nature and history, this horizon provides the overarching precognitive background that endows experience with a normatively-valenced orientation and sense of purposiveness. Crucially, this is inherently dynamic—it is always already “worked on,” and because phenomenology is situated within the historicity of the lifeworld, its fidelity to the mythic *Urdoxa* is a functional reiteration of the original enactive moment, not a simple repetition of past content. Phenomenological generativity is thus, at root, “work on myth” in the sense of mythopoetically projecting horizons of significance that are freshly appropriate in pragmatic and normative terms.

This view may seem counterintuitive and problematic. There are, to be sure, serious philosophical and political risks associated with myth and mythopoesis. But it should be noted that this focus on horizontality, since that is not a *real* feature of the world but a structural aspect of experience, is arguably essential in order to take seriously the core idea of enactivism that we literally enact the world through sense-making activities. More generally, this view amounts to a boldly positive reinterpretation of Horkheimer and Adorno’s famously pessimistic claim that “enlightenment reverts to mythology”—an enactive phenomenology represents the possibility of being able to include the ineliminably mythic horizons of experience within a robust conception of critically enlightened reason, and taking up such an approach portends the radical possibility of *reenacting* those horizons otherwise, which is essential for the successful attainment of critical phenomenology’s aims.



**Pierre STEINER**

*Université de Technologie de Compiègne - Sorbonne Université*

**Intentionality without harmony:  
two tensions between enactivism and phenomenology**

It is now common wisdom to underline the proximities and continuities between phenomenological theories of intentionality, and enactive approaches (in which I am including autopoietic enactivism and radical enactivism). Both would converge in their respective rejections of representationalist, theoretical, static and disembodied accounts of intentionality. At best, contentful and theoretical intentionality would be a byproduct of more basic forms of intentionality: “operative intentionality” (Husserl, Fink, Merleau-Ponty), “motor intentionality” (Dreyfus, borrowing the term to Merleau-Ponty), “skilled intentionality” (Rietveld and Kiverstein), “enactive intentionality” (Gallagher), “neo-pragmatic intentionality” (Gallagher and Miyahara), “autopoietic intentionality” (Varela),...

This convergence is often celebrated at the expense of a consideration of interesting tensions amongst phenomenological theories of intentionality. In this paper, I will express and develop two of these interrelated tensions.

(1) Concerning the question of representation and representationalism, the genuine convergence is not between phenomenology in general and enactivism, but between post-Husserlian phenomenology and enactivism. Indeed, one should not forget how much Husserlian phenomenology, from the *Logical Investigations* (1901), embraced subtle yet absolutely real forms of representationalism. Even though Husserl rightly criticized the pitfalls of empiricist representationalism (from Locke to Twardowski) and the idea that representation is a *tertium quid* between consciousness and its objects, he gave to representation (in the form of *Vorstellung*, *Materie* and *Repräsentation*) a structural role in his construal of intentionality. It is only in virtue of representation(s) that the objectifying character of intentionality is possible. True, Husserl later acknowledged the existence and importance of non-representational and non-objectifying forms of intentionality (in order to account for movement, time-consciousness, passive synthesis,...), but representational intentionality always remained for him an irreducible and basic form of intentionality.

In the scholarship, Husserl’s representationalism and its stakes for cognitive science have not been much investigated. One notable exception is the book *Husserl, Intentionality and Cognitive Science* edited by Hubert Dreyfus in 1982. It turned Husserl into a precursor of the computational theory of mind. This is a very debatable view. The opposite caricature would be to assume that Husserl was a non-representationalist philosopher, as many enactivists seem to do today. Up to now, there has not been a consideration of what enactivism must take and must leave out of the representationalism developed by Husserl.

(2) From Heidegger to Jacques Derrida and Michel Henry, passing by Merleau-Ponty and Emmanuel Lévinas, post-Husserlian phenomenology has strongly criticized the Husserlian theory of intentionality: it would be too intellectual, theoretical, and representational. It seems we have here clear parallels between the enactive criticism of analytic representationalism and post-Husserlian critiques of Husserlian representationalism. But one must also see how much the respective outlets of these criticisms are actually quite different. Here too, it is easy to miss the forest for the trees, by focusing on one phenomenologist only, as for instance Merleau-Ponty. For many post-Husserlian phenomenologists, the criticism of Husserlian intentionality is also a criticism of the foundational role intentionality is supposed to have in lived experience. Heidegger sees intentionality as derived from a more basic non-intentional phenomenon he variously called *Transcendenz*, *Offenheit*, or *Erschlossenheit*. For Lévinas, intentionality is destabilized by the experience of the Other. According to Michel Henry, intentionality is challenged by life and its radical immanence, which is non-intentional. Derrida insists on the precariousness of intentionality as soon as it is inscribed in signs.

Here too, one can see an interesting tension between those post-Husserlian approaches, and contemporary enactivism. They both start from a rejection of representation when defining the essence of intentionality, but whereas contemporary enactivism then retains intentionality as a very basic property of mental life, phenomenology relativizes the power and the importance of intentionality. Enactive approaches situate basic forms of intentionality in basic living phenomena (bacteria), assuming any living process is endowed with experience: “Ur-intentionality” (Hutto & Myin), “autopoietic intentionality” (Varela), “biological intentionality” (Thompson), or “proto-intentionality” (Varela, Thompson, Rosch) are examples of such assumptions. As a generic property of object-directedness exhibited by any living phenomenon, intentionality grounds the possibility of developing a non-reductive naturalist approach to cognition and experience. Whereas for the aforementioned post-Husserlian authors, the relinquishing of representational intentionality is also the relinquishing of the ideal of intentionality as a grounding and unifying factor of experience (experience does not have to be explained by something, and especially by something natural).

In conclusion, concerning intentionality (and intentionality only), enactivism is not the application or expansion of phenomenology into cognitive science. More interestingly, it consists in an original and fragile attempt to navigate between two phenomenological poles: a renewed and sophisticated form of representationalism (as in Husserl), and non-intentional accounts of life and meaningfulness. Intentionality is not contentful, and it is a natural and ground-level relational property of living and cognitive systems: whatever its merits and defects, this core claim of enactivism is not a claim one can generally find in phenomenology understood as a philosophical tradition.

**Roberto Franzini TIBALDEO**

*Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Paraná*

**“Homo Pictor”: A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of Human Thinking**

My proposal endeavours to carry out a topic-focused exploration of the human condition, with the aim to clarify the human being’s distinctive faculties and qualities. It shall be argued that the capacity to *think* plays an essential role in this regard. Hans Jonas’ reflections are of great help to achieve this goal, since his account of the human specificity is embodied in an *eidetic* and *symbolic* experience, which equips the human being with a unique degree of freedom and with capabilities like imagination, reflection, and speech, which are connected to thinking. Indeed, these capabilities exhibit the multidimensionality of the experience of thinking, which can be fruitfully clarified thanks to philosophy’s phenomenological, critical and meta-reflective approach.

In more detail, like other coeval scholars and philosophers, Hans Jonas (1903-1993) strives for an overall reinterpretation of the living beings and of their behaviour capable of overcoming mechanic reductionism, and for a more comprehensive idea of life, organism, and the human being. He also aims to overcome various types of dualisms regarding the human experience (internal-external, mind-body, *psyche-soma*) thanks to a different method of enquiry inspired by phenomenology, namely understanding the human being through the analysis of his/her bodily experience and through a comparative approach with other living beings.

Indeed, the “philosophical biology” [Jonas 1966; Jonas 1991, p. 105] he develops in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century shows that the phenomenon of life is thoroughly misunderstood by both dualistic and monistic-reductionistic perspectives. And yet life is the most eminent feature of being. What is required to understand it thoroughly – states thus Jonas – is a change of paradigm and a renewed way of understanding life. Jonas refers to this rediscovery as an “ontological revolution” [Jonas 2008, p. 222, 226; Jonas 1966, p. 81] capable of changing radically our idea of life from its simplest form – namely, “organic metabolism”. Its “ontological” feature relies on the fact that renewed research starting with the organic metabolism leads to reshape the understanding of life’s essential features, and finally to the renewal of science.

Now, in Jonas’ enquiry into life the role played by the human being is indeed central, since it is the human being who carries out this enquiry and at the same time is part of and involved in the research, due to the fact that he/she inevitably has, or better, *is* a living body. And, according to Jonas, the organic and living body “is the memento of the still unsolved question of ontology, ‘What is being?’ and must be the canon of coming attempts to solve it” [Jonas 1966, p. 19]. Thus, dualism is programmatically rejected.

On the other hand, the human being is a result of evolution, which is a process that cannot be denied, but whose interpretation requires to go beyond a mere Darwinian viz. materialistic-

mechanistic and instrumental account [Jonas 1996, p. 76]. Providing a comprehensive portrait of evolution and of the human specificity – i.e. neither in simply monistic nor dualistic terms, but explained in the light of “a new, integral, [...] philosophical monism” [Jonas 1966, p. 16-17] – is indeed Jonas’ main aim. As we shall see, this entails achieving a renewed view of how human features like imagination, reflection, and speech – in a word, thinking – rely on the evolutive adventure of life.

### References

- Jonas H (1966) *The Phenomenon of Life. Toward a Philosophical Biology*. Harper & Row, New York.
- Jonas H (1991) *Erkenntnis und Verantwortung*, Gespräch mit Ingo Hermann in der Reihe “Zeugen des Jahrhunderts”. Lamuv, Göttingen.
- Jonas H (1996) *Mortality and Morality. A Search for the Good after Auschwitz*. Northwestern University Press, Evanston.
- Jonas H (2008) *Memoirs*. Brandeis University Press, Lebanon (NH).

### Minglei ZHANG

*The University of Maine*

#### **Daylight Saving: A Rhythm Celebration of Bodily Time and Space**

The shape of *time* is uncapturable directly through human eyes, hence invisible. However, people have created various measurements in history, trying to identify the trace of time given its perceptibility. The alternation of day and night inspired human ancestors to invent the timer. With such a visible and convenient measurement, time, once regarded as abstract, has gradually become a normalized commonsense, sweeping over the dial fashion. Daylight Saving Time (DST), as a practice of human adjustment following the periodic change of daylight, exhibits the flexibility of the negotiation between human activities and natural dynamics. This essay takes Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s *Phenomenology of Perception* as the primary coordinate to explore the phenomenological meaning behind DST as a human attempt rather than to explain the history, necessity, and effectiveness of DST as an action. This exploratory analysis concentrates on the active human behaviors on dealing with the relations between objectivity and subjectivity, as well as internality and externality in terms of the dimensions of time and space.

Our bodies reflect the rhythm of time, and we utilize time to maintain the elegance of our bodies. Merleau-Ponty suggests using systematic thinking, or Gestalt perspective, to consider the relationship between one’s body and the world. “One’s own body is in the world just as the heart is in the organism: it continuously breathes life into the visible spectacle, animates it and nourishes it from within, and forms a system with it”.<sup>1</sup> Our body and the world, or the perceived world, are inseparable. When we sense the being of time, our bodies become the vessel of time.

In this case, time does not exist but only lives. There is no pure substance called time. Instead, time and body are in the status of coexistence.

Human beings are also time beings or *Homo Tempus*. We are not merely followers of time. Instead, we are masters of time. People actively take actions to resonate with the changing rhythm of time to pursue the harmony of their life. The purpose of DST is to help people realize the changing patterns of time and make better use of daylight. The process of people adjusting themselves to the new time, especially at the beginning and the end of the DST, illustrates the meaning of time in our bodies. We are time, and thus time is inescapable but adaptable. A healthy body needs a strong heart. A well-organized world also needs a good sense of time.

### Notes

1. Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, and Donald A. Landes. *Phenomenology of Perception*. Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2012.