

DIVERSITY READING LIST PRESENTS:

MIND, COGNITION, AND THE SELF. AN EMBODIED PERSPECTIVE

A DRL READING GROUP BLUEPRINT BY **MARÍA JIMENA CLAVEL VÁZQUEZ**
LEVEL: INTERMEDIATE

INTRODUCTION

Embodied cognition is a subset of theses that pertains to what is known as 4EA approaches or situated approaches to cognition. The acronym “4EA” refers, more specifically, to the theses that cognition is Extended, Embodied, Enacted, Embedded, and Affective. While typically treated as a block, the views and theses that populate the 4EA approach are often disparate. Regardless, they are united by a revisionary attitude towards cognitivism, the paradigm that dominates cognitive sciences, and an emphasis on the non-trivial roles played by the non-neural body and the environment on cognition. The views that can be identified as committed to the embodiment of cognition are neither entirely unified nor homogeneous, either. In fact, it is possible to find some formulation of the embodiment of cognition in many of the theses that populate the 4EA approach. In this blueprint, we mostly focus on proposals that fall within enactivism, a framework that thinks of the mind as continuous with life. From this perspective, meaning arises from the interactions between an agent and its environment. Enactivism also emphasizes the active nature of cognition, broadly construed. In virtue of its themes and theses, enactivism offers a rich alternative to think about cognition and the mind, while maintaining an open dialogue with various disciplines and traditions. Despite the focus on enactivism, we have also included papers that are, more broadly, committed to the embodiment of cognition and that have enriched these debates. The result is a collection of papers characterized, thus, not only by their commitment to the thesis of embodiment, but also by the diversity of approaches they bring together and their interdisciplinarity.

This blueprint focuses on the work of female researchers working in embodied cognition. The aims of this blueprint are to: (1) introduce key concepts within the embodied cognition program, (2) introduce the work of central researchers within the program, and (3) discuss the contributions of the research program to other philosophical disciplines. To this end, the blueprint is organized in two main parts. The first part (weeks 1 to 6) focuses on key aspects of this research program and the contributions of female researchers to it. The second part (weeks 7 to 11), in turn, focuses on the contributions of the embodied cognition program to and from topics that have been traditionally overlooked in philosophy. This second section has been labeled feminist embodied cognition because these topics have received attention from feminist philosophers. However, these topics have been widely discussed in the context of other (philosophical) disciplines. The papers selected as essential were considered, in most cases, more accessible for students who are less familiar with the literature. They also allow for a good organization of the topics discussed. The discussion questions are related to these essential readings. Suggested readings might constitute key contributions to the debate or discuss important implications and provide alternative perspectives.

CATEGORIES

- Philosophy of Mind
- Philosophy of Cognitive Science
- Embodiment and Situated Cognition
- Extended Cognition
- Feminist Philosophy of Mind

AVAILABLE ONLINE AT:

<https://diversityreadinglist.org/blueprint/mind-cognition-and-the-self-an-embodied-perspective/>

WEEK 1. INTRODUCING SITUATED COGNITION

Embodied approaches to the mind can be thought of as views and theses that engage in a dialogue with conceptions of the mind that disregard the role played by the body. To introduce this dialogue, the first session takes on a historical perspective. The proposal is to read some sections of Katalin Farkas's "The boundaries of the mind" where she introduces a Cartesian internalism to which various philosophers in the 20th and 21st century have objected. The focus is on responses that come from a naturalistic perspective and, more specifically, from theses on the extended and embodied character of the mind. Given that there are several approaches that join embodied cognition in its rejection of the traditional conception of the mind, the second text proposed for this week is "Situated Cognition" by Miriam Solomon, where she focuses on the various ways in which cognition and knowledge depend on the body and the environment. The third text by Dave Ward and Mog Stapleton is a suggestion to further understand the various views that pertain to 4EA approaches to cognition. The guiding questions focus on Farkas's and Solomon's papers.

FARKAS, KATALIN. *THE BOUNDARIES OF THE MIND*

2017, In Amy Kind (ed.), *Philosophy of Mind in the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries: The History of the Philosophy of Mind*, Volume 6. New York: Routledge, pp. 256-279. **Difficulty:** Easy

Fragment: pp. 256-258, 266 ss.

Abstract: The subject of mental processes or mental states is usually assumed to be an individual, and hence the boundaries of mental features – in a strict or metaphorical sense – are naturally regarded as reaching no further than the boundaries of the individual. This chapter addresses various philosophical developments in the 20th and 21st century that questioned this natural assumption. I will frame this discussion by first presenting a historically influential commitment to the individualistic nature of the mental in Descartes' theory. I identify various elements in the Cartesian conception of the mind that were subsequently criticized and rejected by various externalist theories, advocates of the extended mind hypothesis and defenders of embodied cognition. Then I will indicate the main trends in these critiques.

SOLOMON, MIRIAM. *SITUATED COGNITION*

2006, In Paul Thagard (ed.) *Handbook of the Philosophy of Psychology and Cognitive Science*. Elsevier, pp. 413-428. **Difficulty:** Easy

Abstract: This chapter provides a structured overview of work on situated cognition. The main fields in which situated cognition is studied—cognitive science, feminist epistemology, and science studies—are unnecessarily isolated from one another. Cognition is always situated. It is always concretely instantiated in one way or another. There are no disembodied cognitive achievements. The situated cognition literature details the ways in which cognition can be instantiated and—instead of abstracting what is in common to all cognition—explores the epistemic significance of particular routes to cognitive accomplishment. The phenomena of situated cognition have been described in several disciplines. Cognitive scientists have described the ways in which representation of the world, learning, memory, planning, action, and linguistic meaning are embedded in the environment, tools, social arrangements, and configurations of the human body. The situated cognition approaches have in common the rejection of the ideas that cognition is individualistic, general, abstract, symbolic, explicit, language based, and located in the brain as mediator between sensory input and action output.

WARD, DAVID AND MOG STAPLETON. *ES ARE GOOD. COGNITION AS ENACTED, EMBODIED, EMBEDDED, AFFECTIVE AND EXTENDED*

2012, In Fabio Paglieri (ed.), *Consciousness in Interaction: The role of the natural and social context in shaping consciousness*. John Benjamins Publishing, pp. 89-104.

Difficulty: Easy

Additional reading

Abstract: We present a specific elaboration and partial defence of the claims that cognition is enactive, embodied, embedded, affective and (potentially) extended. According to the view we will defend, the enactivist claim that perception and cognition essentially depend upon the cogniser's interactions with their environment is fundamental. If a particular instance of this kind of dependence obtains, we will argue, then it follows that cognition is essentially embodied and embedded, that the underpinnings of cognition are inextricable from those of affect, that the phenomenon of cognition itself is essentially bound up with affect, and that the possibility of cognitive extension depends upon the instantiation of a specific mode of skilful interrelation between cogniser and environment. Thus, if cognition is enactive then it is also embodied, embedded, affective and potentially extended.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Why is Descartes' conception of the mind characterized as internalistic, if he was concerned with the contributions of the body to cognition?
2. What is the Cartesian idea that the computationalist-functionalist conception of mental processes was able to accommodate?
3. Why can a functionalist defend that mental states can be realized by more than the brain and even include elements external to the body of the agent?
4. What are some of the themes of the embodied cognition programme? How does it differ from the externalism that arises within functionalism?
5. Solomon shows that cognition and knowledge depend on the environment, goals, social and political position, tools, context, embodiment. Can this dependence be articulated in the same way across these domains?
6. To what extent do these cases of situated cognition and knowledge challenge traditional views of cognition and the mind? For instance, do they necessarily involve a rejection of functionalism or of computationalism?

WEEK 2. COGNITION AND NORMATIVITY

This week focuses on enactivism and its conception of cognition and normativity. Embodied cognition is closely associated with enactivism, a view of cognition that takes this to be continuous with life. Embodiment is, for enactivism, a central feature of cognition. In their paper, Evan Thompson and Mog Stapleton distinguish enactivism from the thesis of the extended mind. To do so, they provide a helpful overview of the central concepts of enactivism and, more specifically, of the concept of sense-making. This paper serves as a good basis to understand some of the concepts that will become important for other weeks, as well as to understand the enactivist understanding of cognition. By characterizing cognition as sense-making, enactivism emphasizes that the normative character of cognition arises from the interactions between the agent and the environment and has biological normativity at its basis. This last point is also explored by Laura Mojica who argues for the continuity between biological, cognitive and social normativity. To do so, she draws on Wittgenstein's considerations on public norms and engages with the debate on the naturalization of content. Thus, showing how enactivism can further contribute to this debate. The suggested reading is Chapter 8 of *The Embodied Mind*, where Francisco Varela, Evan Thompson and Eleanor Rosch present their view of embodied cognition and enactivism. They start off from a reconstruction of some of the main ideas within cognitivism to then turn to their proposal of embodied cognition where they take cognition to arise from the sensorimotor interactions between an agent and its environment. They take colour as a case study to show that colour can only be understood considering the relation between the perceiver and the world.

THOMPSON, EVAN AND MOG STAPLETON. *MAKING SENSE OF SENSE-MAKING: REFLECTIONS ON ENACTIVE AND EXTENDED MIND THEORIES*

2009, *Topoi* 28(1), pp. 23-30.

Difficulty: Intermediate

Abstract: This paper explores some of the differences between the enactive approach in cognitive science and the extended mind thesis. We review the key enactive concepts of autonomy and sense-making. We then focus on the following issues: (1) the debate between internalism and externalism about cognitive processes; (2) the relation between cognition and emotion; (3) the status of the body; and (4) the difference between 'incorporation' and mere 'extension' in the body-mind-environment relation.

MOJICA, LAURA. *THE ENACTIVE NATURALIZATION OF NORMATIVITY: FROM SELF-MAINTENANCE TO SITUATED INTERACTIONS*

2021, *History and Philosophy of the Life Sciences* 43(4), pp. 1-27.

Difficulty: Intermediate-Advanced

Abstract: The autopoietic enactive account of cognition explains the emergence of normativity in nature as the norm of self-maintenance of life. The autonomous nature of living agents implies that they can differentiate events and regulate their responses in terms of what is better or worse to maintain their own precarious identity. Thus, normative behaviour emerges from living organisms. Under this basic understanding of normativity as self-maintenance, autopoietic enactivism defends a continuity between biological, cognitive, and social norms. The self-maintenance of an agent's sensorimotor identity establishes the cognitive norms that regulate its behaviour, and the self-maintenance of its social identity determines the social norms. However, there is no clear explanation of how individuals, who by their very constitution are primarily moved to interact with the world under the norm of self-maintenance, could interact with the world driven by non-individual norms. Furthermore, understanding all normativity as self-maintenance makes it unclear how agents establish genuine social interactions and acquire habits that have no implication for their constitution as individuals. So, to face these challenges, I propose an alternative notion of normativity grounded on a Wittgensteinian, action-oriented, and pragmatic conception of meaning that distinguishes between an agent with a normative point of view and

external normative criteria. I defend that a normative phenomenon is an interaction that is established by an individual point of view as defined by autopoietic enactivism and that is part of a self-maintaining system. The latter establishes the external normative criteria to evaluate the interaction, and it may or may not coincide with the identity of the interacting agent. Separating external normative criteria from the self-constitution of the interactant agent not only solves the challenge but potentially explains the situated and relational character of agency.

VARELA, FRANCISCO, EVAN THOMPSON AND ELEANOR ROSCH. *THE EMBODIED MIND*

1991, MIT Press, pp. 147-184.

Difficulty: Intermediate

Additional reading

Fragment: Chapter 8

Abstract: The Embodied Mind provides a unique, sophisticated treatment of the spontaneous and reflective dimension of human experience. The authors argue that only by having a sense of common ground between mind in Science and mind in experience can our understanding of cognition be more complete. Toward that end, they develop a dialogue between cognitive science and Buddhist meditative psychology and situate it in relation to other traditions such as phenomenology and psychoanalysis.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. From the perspective of enactivism, what is characteristic of living systems that are cognitive?
2. What is an autonomous system? Think of an example. Why is this an autonomous system? What is the difference between autonomous and autopoietic systems?
3. Why isn't enactivism neither internalistic nor externalistic? In what sense is cognition relational?
4. How do Thompson and Stapleton defend the idea that cognition is embodied action?
5. Why isn't cognition rightly characterised as information processing?
6. What is, according to Mojica, the distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic normativity? Why does intrinsic normativity imply that there is an individual interacting with a world? Why does it imply external normative criteria?
7. How does Mojica show that normative criteria must be publicly available and that this is the case for all living beings?
8. What advantage do interactive accounts and autopoietic enactivism have over evolutionary accounts of normativity (e.g., teleosemantics)?
9. Why is the third kind of normativity identified by enactivism interactive? How does it emerge?
10. How does Mojica propose to overcome the gap between self-centred biological normativity and normativity oriented to action?

WEEK 3. THE CONTINUITY OF PERCEPTION, ACTION, AND COGNITION

This week focuses on enactive accounts of perception. In one of the readings of the previous week it is noted that for enactivism cognition can be described as sensorimotor interaction. Similar ideas can be found in other views within 4EA approaches which emphasize the continuity between perception, action, and cognition. In their paper, Nivedita Gangopadhyay and Julian Kiverstein discuss a couple of different conceptions of perception found in enactivism: Susan Hurley's and Alva Noë & Kevin O'Regan's. In this discussion, they advance arguments to show that perception is inseparable from cognition and action. This paper will be helpful to further understand the conception of the mind that is at play in the embodied cognition program, as well as to understand the relation between perception, cognition, and action. While many discussions on perception focus on vision, the paper by Becky Millar advances a sensorimotor view of chemical senses. This paper not only focuses on senses that aren't typically discussed, but also addresses some concerns that arise for enactivist views of perception. The suggested paper is by Susan Hurley. Here she presents a criticism to the classical view of cognition and introduces the two-level interdependence view on the relation between action and perception. This is one of the views discussed by Gangopadhyay and Kiverstein.

GANGOPADHYAY, NIVEDITA AND JULIAN KIVERSTEIN. *ENACTIVISM AND THE UNITY OF PERCEPTION AND ACTION*

2009, *Topoi* 28(1), pp. 63-73.

Difficulty: Easy-intermediate

Abstract: This paper contrasts two enactive theories of visual experience: the sensorimotor theory (O'Regan and Noë, *Behav Brain Sci* 24(5):939–1031, 2001; Noë and O'Regan, *Vision and mind*, 2002; Noë, *Action in perception*, 2004) and Susan Hurley's (*Consciousness in action*, 1998, *Synthese* 129:3–40, 2001) theory of active perception. We criticise the sensorimotor theory for its commitment to a distinction between mere sensorimotor behaviour and cognition. This is a distinction that is firmly rejected by Hurley. Hurley argues that personal level cognitive abilities emerge out of a complex dynamic feedback system at the subpersonal level. Moreover reflection on the role of eye movements in visual perception establishes a further sense in which a distinction between sensorimotor behaviour and cognition cannot be sustained. The sensorimotor theory has recently come under critical fire (see e.g. Block, *J Philos* CII(5):259–272, 2005; Prinz, *Psyche*, 12(1):1–19, 2006; Aizawa, *J Philos* CIV(1), 2007) for mistaking a merely causal contribution of action to perception for a constitutive contribution. We further argue that the sensorimotor theory is particularly vulnerable to this objection in a way that Hurley's active perception theory is not. This presents an additional reason for preferring Hurley's theory as providing a conceptual framework for the enactive programme.

MILLAR, BECKY. *TOWARDS A SENSORIMOTOR APPROACH TO FLAVOUR AND SMELL*

2020, *Mind and Language* 36(2), pp. 221-240.

Difficulty: Easy-intermediate

Abstract: Sensorimotor enactivism takes perceptual experience to be constituted by a kind of attunement to sensorimotor contingencies – law-like relations between sensory inputs and bodily activity. The chemical senses have traditionally been construed as especially simple and passive, and a number of philosophers have argued that flavour and smell are problem cases for the sensorimotor approach. In this article, I respond to these objections to the sensorimotor approach, and in doing so offer the beginnings of a sensorimotor account of the chemical senses.

Additional reading

Abstract: A traditional view of perception and action makes two assumptions: that the causal flow between perception and action is primarily linear or one-way, and that they are merely instrumentally related to each other, so that each is a means to the other. Either or both of these assumptions can be rejected. Behaviourism rejects the instrumental but not the one-way aspect of the traditional view, thus leaving itself open to charges of verificationism. Ecological views reject the one-way aspect but not the instrumental aspect of the traditional view, so that perception and action are seen as instrumentally interdependent. It is argued here that a better alternative is to reject both assumptions, resulting in a two-level interdependence view in which perception and action co-depend on dynamically circular subpersonal relations and as a result may be more than merely instrumentally interdependent. This is illustrated by reference to motor theories of perception and control theories of action.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How do the versions of enactivism introduced in this paper differ from the one discussed in the previous week? What are the points of agreement?
2. How does enactivism differ from computational theories of vision? In what sense do these views characterize perception as passive and disembodied?
3. Why does Hurley characterize Gibson's description of the relation between action and perception as an instrumental relation?
4. How does the two-level interdependence view of Hurley differ from the sandwich view of the mind?
5. Why does Noë and O'Regan's separation between sensitivity and awareness lead back to a separation between perception, action, and cognition?
6. How do Gangopadhyay and Kiverstein account for experiential blindness? How does this allow them to show that sensorimotor behaviour and cognition are inseparable?
7. What is, according to Millar, sensorimotor understanding?
8. Why does the lack of bodily activities involved in olfaction and flavour perception is a challenge for sensorimotor theories of perception? How can this objection be addressed?
9. Why don't the chemical senses seem to involve the detection of invariances? How does Millar argue against this concern?
10. What is the notion of sensorimotor understanding to which Millar arrives?

WEEK 4. SOCIAL COGNITION AND THE INTERSUBJECTIVE DIMENSION OF COGNITION

This week focuses on social cognition and on the intersubjective aspects of knowledge and cognition that follow from some embodied accounts of cognition. Within the context of enactivism, some have applied the concept of sense-making to social cognition. To do so, they advance the concept of participatory sense-making to account for our capacity to understand each other (see, De Jaegher, H. & Di Paolo, E., (2007), "Participatory sense-making" *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*). In her paper, Hanne De Jaegher applies this notion of participatory sense-making to what she calls human knowledge. For her, human knowledge is at the basis of many activities that have an epistemic component that goes unnoticed and is central to it (e.g., dementia care). To capture and articulate this epistemic component, De Jaegher draws on participatory sense-making understood as the coordination between two or more autonomous agents. This paper allows for an articulation of social cognition as participatory sense-making. It also allows for the identification of intersubjective aspects of knowledge, and the epistemic aspects of many intersubjective activities. The second essential reading, the paper by Cuffari et al., further expands on the notion of participatory sense-making. It also shows how enactivism can account for language by characterising it as a form of sense-making and showing that it plays a central role in social coordination. The suggested reading is "Participatory Sense-Making" by Hanne De Jagher and Ezequiel Di Paolo. In this paper, they introduce the concept of participatory sense-making to provide an enactivist account on social understanding. This is the view on which De Jagher and Cuffari et al. draw in the essential readings.

DE JAEGER, HANNE. *LOVING AND KNOWING: REFLECTIONS FOR AN ENGAGED EPISTEMOLOGY*

2019, *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 20(5), pp. 847-870.

Difficulty: Intermediate

Abstract: In search of our highest capacities, cognitive scientists aim to explain things like mathematics, language, and planning. But are these really our most sophisticated forms of knowing? In this paper, I point to a different pinnacle of cognition. Our most sophisticated human knowing, I think, lies in how we engage with each other, in our relating. Cognitive science and philosophy of mind have largely ignored the ways of knowing at play here. At the same time, the emphasis on discrete, rational knowing to the detriment of engaged, human knowing pervades societal practices and institutions, often with harmful effects on people and their relations. There are many reasons why we need a new, engaged—or even engaging—epistemology of human knowing. The enactive theory of participatory sense-making takes steps towards this, but it needs deepening. Kym Maclaren's idea of letting be invites such a deepening. Characterizing knowing as a relationship of letting be provides a nuanced way to deal with the tensions between the knower's being and the being of the known, as they meet in the process of knowing-and-being-known. This meeting of knower and known is not easy to understand. However, there is a mode of relating in which we know it well, and that is: in loving relationships. I propose to look at human knowing through the lens of loving. We then see that both knowing and loving are existential, dialectic ways in which concrete and particular beings engage with each other.

CUFFARI, ELENA CLARE, EZEQUIEL DI PAOLO AND HANNE DE JAEGER. *FROM PARTICIPATORY SENSE-MAKING TO LANGUAGE: THERE AND BACK AGAIN*

2015, *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 14(4), pp. 1089-1125.

Difficulty: Intermediate-advanced

Abstract: The enactive approach to cognition distinctively emphasizes autonomy, adaptivity, agency, meaning, experience, and interaction. Taken together, these principles can provide the new sciences of language with a comprehensive philosophical framework: languaging as adaptive social sense-making. This is a refinement and advancement on Maturana's idea of languaging as a manner of living. Overcoming limitations in Maturana's initial formulation of languaging is one of three motivations for this paper. Another is to give a response to sceptics who challenge enactivism to connect "lower-level" sense-making with "higher-order" sophisticated

moves like those commonly ascribed to language. Our primary goal is to contribute a positive story developed from the enactive account of social cognition, participatory sense-making. This concept is put into play in two different philosophical models, which respectively chronicle the logical and ontogenetic development of languaging as a particular form of social agency. Languaging emerges from the interplay of coordination and exploration inherent in the primordial tensions of participatory sense-making between individual and interactive norms; it is a practice that transcends the self-other boundary and enables agents to regulate self and other as well as interaction couplings. Linguistic sense-makers are those who negotiate interactive and internalized ways of meta-regulating the moment-to-moment activities of living and cognizing. Sense-makers in enlanguaged environments incorporate sensitivities, roles, and powers into their unique yet intelligible linguistic bodies. We dissolve the problematic dichotomies of high/low, online/offline, and linguistic/nonlinguistic cognition, and we provide new boundary criteria for specifying languaging as a prevalent kind of human social sense-making

DE JAEGHER, HANNE AND EZEQUIEL DI PAOLO. *PARTICIPATORY SENSE-MAKING: AN ENACTIVE APPROACH TO SOCIAL COGNITION*

2007, *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 6(4), pp. 485-507.

Difficulty: Intermediate-advanced

Additional reading

Abstract: As yet, there is no enactive account of social cognition. This paper extends the enactive concept of sense-making into the social domain. It takes as its departure point the process of interaction between individuals in a social encounter. It is a well-established finding that individuals can and generally do coordinate their movements and utterances in such situations. We argue that the interaction process can take on a form of autonomy. This allows us to reframe the problem of social cognition as that of how meaning is generated and transformed in the interplay between the unfolding interaction process and the individuals engaged in it. The notion of sense-making in this realm becomes participatory sense-making. The onus of social understanding thus moves away from strictly the individual only.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How does De Jaegher understand human knowledge? How is it exemplified in the cases she discusses?
2. What is participatory sense-making? How does it feature self-organization?
3. In what sense do we require a different epistemology to account for human knowledge?
4. What is letting-be and why is it embodied and intersubjective?
5. What does it mean to understand knowing as loving?
6. What is characteristic of an enactive approach to language, according to Cuffari et al.?
7. How does enactivism articulate an understanding of cognition as decoupled and offline?
8. What is languaging? How does this form of sense-making allow for the regulation of other forms of social agency?
9. What are linguistic sensitivities?
10. How does the incorporation of linguistic sensitivities transform our embodied way of being?

WEEK 5. SELF, EMBODIMENT, AND INTERSUBJECTIVITY

This week turns to conceptions of the self that grant a central role the embodied and situated aspects of cognition. In the first paper, Catriona Mackenzie discusses the embodied dimension of self-narratives. She defends the view that these are constituted against the background of embodiment. To make her case, Mackenzie draws on discussions on embodiment and the self that lie at the intersection of philosophy of cognitive science and phenomenology. The second paper, by Miriam Kyselo, discusses pluralistic views of the self that seek to do justice to the many dimensions that constitute it. Kyselo brings forward a tension that arises between views that emphasize the bodily constitution of the self and those that emphasize the social constitution. To address this tension, she draws on the enactive concept of autonomy. This allows her to articulate how these two dimensions of the self interact. The suggested reading is a paper by Nick Brancazio where she discusses the role of gender in the ways we perceive our interactions with the world. In this paper, she articulates the self in terms of agency to show that the self is always embodied and embedded.

MACKENZIE, CATRIONA. *EMBODIED AGENTS, NARRATIVE SELVES*

2014, *Philosophical Explorations* 17 (2), pp. 154-171.

Difficulty: Easy-intermediate

Abstract: Recent work on diachronic agency has challenged the predominantly structural or synchronic approach to agency that is characteristic of much of the literature in contemporary philosophical moral psychology. However, the embodied dimensions of diachronic agency continue to be neglected in the literature. This article draws on phenomenological perspectives on embodiment and narrative conceptions of the self to argue that diachronic agency and selfhood are anchored in embodiment. In doing so, the article also responds to Diana Meyers' recent work on corporeal selfhood.

KYSELO, MIRIAM. *THE BODY SOCIAL: AN ENACTIVE APPROACH TO THE SELF*

2014, *Frontiers in Psychology* 5, pp. 1-16.

Difficulty: Intermediate

Abstract: This paper takes a new look at an old question: what is the human self? It offers a proposal for theorizing the self from an enactive perspective as an autonomous system that is constituted through interpersonal relations. It addresses a prevalent issue in the philosophy of cognitive science: the body-social problem. Embodied and social approaches to cognitive identity are in mutual tension. On the one hand, embodied cognitive science risks a new form of methodological individualism, implying a dichotomy not between the outside world of objects and the brain-bound individual but rather between body-bound individuals and the outside social world. On the other hand, approaches that emphasize the constitutive relevance of social interaction processes for cognitive identity run the risk of losing the individual in the interaction dynamics and of downplaying the role of embodiment. This paper adopts a middle way and outlines an enactive approach to individuation that is neither individualistic nor disembodied but integrates both approaches. Elaborating on Jonas' notion of needful freedom it outlines an enactive proposal to understanding the self as co-generated in interactions and relations with others. I argue that the human self is a social existence that is organized in terms of a back and forth between social distinction and participation processes. On this view, the body, rather than being identical with the social self, becomes its mediator.

Additional reading

Abstract: This paper details the ways that gender structures our senses of agency on an enactive framework. While it is common to discuss how gender influences higher, narrative levels of cognition, as with the formulation of goals and in considerations about our identities, it is less clear how gender structures our more immediate, embodied processes, such as the minimal sense of agency. While enactivists often acknowledge that gender and other aspects of our socio-cultural situatedness shape our cognitive processes, there is little work on how this shaping takes place. In order to provide such an account, I will first look at the minimal and narrative senses of agency (Gallagher in *New Ideas in Psychology*, 30(1), 15–31, 2012), a distinction that draws from work on minimal and narrative selves (Zahavi 2010). Next I will explain the influence of the narrative sense of agency on the minimal sense of agency through work on intention-formation (Pacherie in *Psyche*, 13(1), 1–30, 2007). After a discussion of the role of gender in the narrative sense of agency, I'll expand on work by Haslanger (2012) and Young (1990) to offer three ways in which gender influences the minimal sense of agency, showing the effect that gender has on how we perceive our possibilities for interaction in a phenomenologically immediate, pre-reflective manner.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What are the three dimensions from which we can say that the first-person perspective is anchored in our embodiment? How are these dimensions articulated? How do they relate to each other?
2. In what sense is Zahavi's notion of the experiential self an abstraction? How does this idea relate to Mackenzie's view that the self is an achievement of a concrete embodied agent?
3. How does Mackenzie defend the view that selfhood is constituted against the background of our bodily lives?
4. Why does the phenomenon of bodily alienation represent a challenge for Mackenzie's view?
5. What are the constraints that self-narratives must meet to be autonomous?
6. How can you compare and relate the pattern view of the self with the distinction between the experiential and the narrative self?
7. What's the challenge faced by pluralistic accounts of the self?
8. What's the body-social problem? Why does it arise? What are the two broad positions that can be taken to address it?
9. How would you characterise the principle of needful freedom? What's social needful freedom and how does it allow for an articulation of social autonomy?
10. How does Kyselo's proposal address the body-social problem?

WEEK 6. AFFECTIVITY

This week focuses on discussions on affective phenomena and the extended, enactive mind. The first recommended reading is by Giovanna Colombetti where she defends the idea that affective phenomena can be extended. Rather than drawing on the extended mind, however, she draws on enactivism and the continuity between mind and life. The idea of affectivity extending into the environment is also explored in the paper by Giulia Piredda, where she articulates the concept of affective artifacts. These discussions have become relevant to discuss not only the role of environmental elements in our mental and cognitive life, but also on the role political and social artifacts might play in them. The suggested paper is a chapter by Lisa F. Barrett that provides an overview of the history of the theorizing about emotions and the role of embodied theories within it.

COLOMBETTI, GIOVANNA. *ENACTIVE AFFECTIVITY, EXTENDED*

2017, *Topoi*, 36(3), pp. 445-455.

Difficulty: Intermediate-Advanced

Abstract: In this paper I advance an enactive view of affectivity that does not imply that affectivity must stop at the boundaries of the organism. I first review the enactive notion of “sense-making”, and argue that it entails that cognition is inherently affective. Then I review the proposal, advanced by Di Paolo (*Topoi* 28:9–21, 2009), that the enactive approach allows living systems to “extend”. Drawing out the implications of this proposal, I argue that, if enactivism allows living systems to extend, then it must also allow sense-making, and thus cognition as well as affectivity, to extend—in the specific sense of allowing the physical processes (vehicles) underpinning these phenomena to include, as constitutive parts, non-organic environmental processes. Finally I suggest that enactivism might also allow specific human affective states, such as moods, to extend.

PIREDDA, GIULIA. *WHAT IS AN AFFECTIVE ARTIFACT? A FURTHER DEVELOPMENT IN SITUATED AFFECTIVITY*

2020, *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 19(3), pp. 549-567.

Difficulty: Intermediate

Abstract: In this paper I would like to propose the notion of Bffective artifact[^], building on an analogy with theories of cognitive artifacts (cf. Casati 2017; Fasoli 2018; Heersmink, 2013, 2016; Hutchins 1999) and referring to the development of a situated affective science (cf. Colombetti 2014; Colombetti and Krueger 2015; Colombetti and Roberts 2015; Griffiths and Scarantino 2009). Affective artifacts are tentatively defined as objects that have the capacity to alter the affective condition of an agent, and that in some cases play an important role in defining that agent’s self. The notion of affective artifacts will be presented by means of examples supported by empirical findings, by discussing a tentative definition and classification, and by considering several related but differing notions (cf. Colombetti and Krueger 2015; Heersmink 2018). Within the framework of situated affectivity, the notion of affective artifacts will represent a further step in the enterprise of understanding how the environment helps us scaffold our affective processes. I will conclude that affective artifacts play a key role in the philosophy of cognitive science, the philosophy of technology and in the debate about the self.

2008, In Gün R. Semin & Eliot R. Smith (eds.), *Embodied grounding: social, cognitive, affective, and neuroscientific approaches*. New York: Cambridge University Press, pp. 237 - 262.

Difficulty: Easy-intermediate

Additional reading

Abstract: Historically, almost all psychological theories of emotion have proposed that emotional reactions are constituted by the body in some fashion, but those theories utilized a common metaphor that the body and mind are separate and independent forces in an emotional episode. Current embodiment theories of the mind challenge this assumption, however, by suggesting that the body helps to constitute the mind in shaping an emotional response. We briefly review new theories of embodied cognition in light of accumulating findings from emotion research, to lay the foundation for novel hypotheses about how the conceptual system for emotion is constituted and used. Finally, we discuss how an embodied perspective can help to usher in a paradigm shift in scientific approaches to what emotions are and how they work.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How is it that, for enactivism, cognition is intrinsically affective? How is affectivity and its relation to concern understood?
2. How does enactivism defend that living systems can extend beyond the boundaries of the organism? Colombetti goes through some examples found in nature. Think of an example of extended life that involves human beings.
3. How does the conception of life as extended change how we think of affectivity?
4. What is an extended mood? Think of an example.
5. What are affective artifacts? Piredda discusses several examples. Come up with your own example. To what extent is this case one of an affective artifact that is part of someone's self?
6. How do affective artifacts extend the self?
7. Are all affective artifacts cases of extended affectivity? Why?
8. Some have discussed the political dimension of affective scaffoldings (e.g., its contribution to affective imperialism and oppression). Do you think the concept of affective artifacts has a political dimension, too?

WEEK 7. FEMINIST EMBODIED COGNITION

The next five weeks turn to the contributions to and from embodied cognition and debates that focus on traditionally marginalized and undertheorized topics in philosophy. To introduce these readings, the first week engages with two texts that put some pressure on these contributions. The first paper, by Victoria Pitts-Taylor, goes back to an idea found in Miriam Solomon's text: that situated cognition encompasses both proposals in situated cognitive science and situated epistemology. Pitts-Taylor agrees with Solomon to some extent, but argues that some aspects of embodiment and situatedness and left out of the discussion on embodiment that is at play in cognitive science. Donna Haraway's text, in turn, proposes the myth of the cyborg as a way of articulating the situation of woman in the last part of the XXth century. Her proposal can be helpful to further articulate the questions that remain open when thinking about embodiment from a situated perspective, as well as the dichotomies that should be surpassed. The suggested reading by Anya Daly takes a closer look at the interaction between enactivism and feminism. According to Daly, enactivism can provide feminism with a metaphysical grounding that does justice to its moral and political concerns.

PITTS-TAYLOR, VICTORIA. *THE MIND IN THE BODY: FEMINIST AND NEUROCOGNITIVE PERSPECTIVES ON EMBODIMENT*

2014, In Sigrid Schmitz & Grit Höppner (ed.), *Gendered Neurocultures: Feminist and Queer Perspectives on Current Brain Discourses*. Zaglossus, pp. 187-202.

Difficulty: Easy-intermediate

From the introduction: "The body's epistemic significance is a shared preoccupation for both feminist theory and neurophilosophy, two fields that rarely interact. Neurocognitive theories of embodied mind seek to identify the features of embodiment that inform cognition and consciousness. They share with feminist epistemologies a view that consciousness is inextricably linked to lived embodiment and situated in the environment, and they each offer powerful challenges to the disembodied, abstract Cartesian subject. This convergence bears deeper consideration. In this chapter I address claims of their compatibility, and also how feminist concerns trouble neurophilosophical interpretations of the embodied mind. I begin with a brief introduction to neurobiologically informed views of mind that embrace reductive physicalism, and then I describe the non-reductive physicalism of embodied mind theories. Later, I take up feminist epistemology and its parallels and tensions with this subfield of neurophilosophy. I raise the question of epistemic difference as an opening for critical engagement." (p. 1 - online version)

HARAWAY, DONNA. *A MANIFESTO FOR CYBORGS: SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND SOCIALIST FEMINISM IN THE 1980S*

1989, In Linda Nicholson (ed.) *Feminism/Postmodernism*, Routledge, pp. 190-233.

Difficulty: Intermediate-hard

Abstract: From the introduction: "This chapter is an effort to build an ironic political myth faithful to feminism, socialism, and materialism. Perhaps more faithful as blasphemy is faithful, than as reverent worship and identification. Blasphemy has always seemed to require taking things very seriously. I know no better stance to adopt from within the secular religious, evangelical traditions of U.S. politics, including the politics of socialist feminism. Blasphemy protects one from the Moral Majority within, while still insisting on the need for community. Blasphemy is not apostasy. Irony is about contradictions that do not resolve into larger wholes, even dialectically, about the tension of holding incompatible things together because both or all are necessary and true. Irony is about humour and serious play. It is also a rhetorical strategy and a political method, one I would like to see more honoured within socialist feminism. At the centre of my ironic faith, my blasphemy, is the image of the cyborg." (pp. 190-191)

Additional reading

Abstract: This paper explores the issue whether feminism needs a metaphysical grounding, and if so, what form that might take to effectively take account of and support the socio-political demands of feminism; addressing these demands I further propose will also contribute to the resolution of other social concerns. Social constructionism is regularly invoked by feminists and other political activists who argue that social injustices are justified and sustained through hidden structures which oppress some while privileging others. Some feminists (Haslanger and Sveinsdóttir, *Feminist metaphysics*. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy*. Stanford: Stanford University, 2011) argue that the constructs appealed to in social constructivism are real but not metaphysically fundamental because they are contingent. And this is exactly the crux of the problem—is it possible to sustain an engaged feminist socio-political critique for which contingency is central (i.e., that things could be otherwise) and at the same time retain some kind of metaphysical grounding. Without metaphysical grounding it has been argued, the feminist project may be rendered nonsubstantive (Sider, *Substantivity in feminist metaphysics*. *Philosophical Studies*, 174(2017), 2467–2478, 2017). There has been much debate around this issue and Sider (as an exemplar of the points under contention) nuances the claims expressed in his earlier writings (Sider, *Writing the book of the world*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2011) and later presents a more qualified account (Sider, *Substantivity in feminist metaphysics*. *Philosophical Studies*, 174(2017), 2467–2478, 2017). Nonetheless, I propose the critiques and defences offered by the various parties continue to depend on certain erroneous assumptions and frameworks that are challengeable. I argue that fundamentality as presented in many of these current accounts, which are underpinned by the explicit or implicit ontologies of monism and dualism and argued for in purely rationalist terms which conceive of subjects as primarily reason-responding agents, reveal basic irresolvable problems. I propose that addressing these concerns will be possible through an enactivist account which, following phenomenology, advances an ontology of interdependence and reconceives the subject as first and foremost an organism immersed in a meaningful world as opposed to a primarily reason-responding agent. Enactivism is thus, I will argue, able to legitimize feminist socio-political critiques by offering a non-reductive grounding in which not only are contingency and fundamentality reconciled, but in which fundamentality is in fact defined by radical contingency. My paper proceeds in dialogue with feminists generally addressing this ‘metaphysical turn’ in feminism and specifically with Sally Haslanger and Mari Mikkola.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In what sense can we say that 4EA approaches to cognition are accidental feminists, according to Pitts-Taylor?
2. What is left out of the conception of embodiment of these approaches (e.g., in Clark's distinction between the special contribution view and the extended functionalist views of embodiment)?
3. What are the questions that remain open for 4EA approaches? What other questions would you add?
4. What are the three boundary break-downs identified by Haraway?
5. What are the short-comings of Marxist and socialist feminism and radical feminism?
6. What does Haraway mean when she claims that "Epistemology is about knowing the difference"? In her text, Haraway emphasizes the value of the liminal or marginal position. How does this relate to her claim about difference?
7. Haraway lists a series of dichotomies. What is characteristic of them? How do they relate to more 'traditional' dichotomies? How does the situation of women relate to them?
8. What's the homework economy? In this context, what is the feminization of labour?
9. Haraway asks: "Why should our bodies end at the skin or include at best other beings encapsulated by skin?". This question is similar to those asked by extended theories of the mind. What is the difference in the articulation of these questions?
10. How would you articulate the concept of embodiment at play in Haraway's proposal?

WEEK 8. GENDER, SEX AND THE BODY

This week looks into two discussions on gender, sex, and the body that are concerned with questions about the boundaries of the body, and the relation between embodied agents and their environment. In the first paper, Saray Ayala and Nadya Vasilyeva advance a concept of extended sex. They draw on the extended cognition thesis to argue that sex can be extended into the environment in a way that allows us to go beyond the dichotomy between male and female. They argue that this process of extension should be recognized as one form of biological construction. In this way, their paper further contributes to the articulation of the extended mind. Alejandra Martínez Quintero and Hanne De Jaegher, in turn, provide an enactive analysis of pregnancy. They argue that pregnancy should be understood as the relation between three autonomous systems, the mother, the foetus, and pregnancy itself. In pregnancy, foetus and mother engage in a relation of sense-making, and both participate in the processes of individuation. The suggested reading is the paper by Iris Marion Young, "Throwing like a girl", where she proposes that our spatial and motor experience is shaped by gender. This phenomenological analysis has been central to the understanding of the role played by gender on our embodied experiences.

AYALA, SARAY AND NADYA VASILYEVA. *EXTENDED SEX: AN ACCOUNT OF SEX FOR A MORE JUST SOCIETY*

2015, *Hypatia* 30(4), pp. 725-742.

Difficulty: Easy-intermediate

Abstract: We propose an externalist understanding of sex that builds upon extended and distributed approaches to cognition, and contributes to building a more just, diversity-sensitive society. Current sex categorization practices according to the female/male dichotomy are not only inaccurate and incoherent, but they also ground moral and political pressures that harm and oppress people. We argue that a new understanding of sex is due, an understanding that would acknowledge the variability and, most important, the flexibility of sex properties, as well as the moral and political meaning of sex categorization. We propose an externalist account of sex, elaborating on extended and distributed approaches to cognition that capitalize on the natural capacity of organisms to couple with environmental resources. We introduce the notion of extended sex, and argue that properties relevant for sex categorization are neither exclusively internal to the individual skin, nor fixed. Finally, we spell out the potential of extended sex to support an active defense of diversity and an intervention against sex-based discrimination.

MARTÍNEZ QUINTERO, ALEJANDRA AND HANNE DE JAEGER. *PREGNANT AGENCIES: MOVEMENT AND PARTICIPATION IN MATERNAL-FETAL INTERACTIONS*

2020, *Frontiers in Psychology* 11.

Difficulty: Intermediate-hard

Abstract: Pregnancy presents some interesting challenges for the philosophy of embodied cognition. Mother and fetus are generally considered to be passive during pregnancy, both individually and in their relation. In this paper, we use the enactive operational concepts of autonomy, agency, individuation, and participation to examine the relation between mother and fetus in utero. Based on biological, physiological, and phenomenological research, we explore the emergence of agentive capacities in embryo and fetus, as well as how maternal agency changes as pregnancy advances. We show that qualitatively different kinds of agency have their beginnings already in utero, and to what extent fetal and maternal movement modulate affectivity and individuation in pregnancy. We thus propose that mother and fetus are both agents who participate in pregnancy. Pregnancy then emerges as a relational developmental organization that anchors and holds its developing participants. We end the paper with reflections on ethical implications of this proposal, and suggestions for future research.

Additional reading

From the introduction: This paper seeks to begin to fill a gap that thus exists both in existential phenomenology and feminist theory. It traces in a provisional way some of the basic modalities of feminine body comportment, manner of moving, and relation in space. It brings intelligibility and significance to certain observable and rather ordinary ways in which women in our society typically comport themselves and move differently from the ways that men do. In accordance with the existentialist concern with the situatedness of human experience, I make no claim to the universality of this typicality of the bodily comportment of women and the phenomenological description based on it. The account developed here claims only to describe the modalities of feminine bodily existence for women situated in contemporary advanced industrial, urban, and commercial society. Elements of the account developed here may or may not apply to the situation of woman in other societies and other epoch, but it is not the concern of this paper to determine to which, if any, other social circumstances this account applies.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What's the prescriptive force of sex categories? And why do they embody an oppressive hierarchy?
2. How do environmental or external elements need to be incorporated into a process or system in order to extend it?
3. In what sense is environmental construction comparable to body construction? How does this relate to the notion of biological construction?
4. What does it mean to extend sex? And how does this go beyond the dichotomy between male and female?
5. What's the difference between the personal and political dimensions? How does this relate to the ameliorative aim of Ayala and Vasileya's project?
6. What are the processes of self-individuation and self-production? How do they relate to each other? How is individuation an open-ended process?
7. Why do the authors argue that in implantation there's agency? Why don't the previous processes of self-individuation don't amount to agency?
8. Why is there a movement from self-organizing patterns to adaptive self-regulation patterns in foetal movements?
9. In what sense is the interactive relation between foetus and mother one of negotiation?
10. Why are mother and foetus participating in sense-making? Why is this characterized as minimal sense-making?

WEEK 9. MATERIALIZED AND INSTUTIONALIZED OPPRESSION

This week focuses on arguments that show how social and environmental elements support oppressive systems. The first paper by Michele Merritt argues that gender can be thought of as a Mental Institution and, in that sense, it plays a crucial role shaping our mental life. She notes that although there is something obvious to this claim, the case of gender can be helpful to understand how, in some cases, the mind doesn't extend into the environment, but instead the (social) environment invades the mind. To make her case, she advances a version of the extended mind thesis. The second text by Shen-yi Liao and Vanessa Carbonell focuses on the way oppression can be materialized. They consider some cases of biased medical devices that are the result and further contribute to the perpetuation of systemic inequalities. In the suggested reading by Michelle Maiese, she draws on the phenomenological and enactivist articulation of habits to explain how ideology is internalised and socially enacted.

MERRITT, MICHELE. *INSTITUTING IMPAIRMENT: EXTENDED COGNITION AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF FEMALE SEXUAL DYSFUNCTION*

2013, Cognitive Systems Research, 25-26, pp. 47-53.

Difficulty: Intermediate

Abstract: I further the argument for a socially extended mind by examining gender and the role it plays in cognition. My first claim is that gender is a social institution that often if not always subtends our cognitive processes, especially those that are maximally embodied. The social institution of gender often serves to inhibit female embodied cognitive processing, as a quick glance at the myriads of oppressive forces at play in gender dynamics illustrates. To combat the potential objection that gender is not a vehicle for extending cognitive processes, but rather plays a shaping role in embodied practice, I propose looking at the history of Female Sexual Dysfunction and its construction by the social institutions of the pharmaceutical companies and media. By doing so, I claim a case can be made that these institutions have actually invaded the minds of many women to the point that cognition pertaining to sex, sexual functioning, and health are wholly dependent upon and constituted by the interplay of these social systems.

LIAO, SHEN-YI AND VANESSA CARBONELL. *MATERIALIZED OPPRESSION IN MEDICAL TOOLS AND TECHNOLOGIES*

2023, American Journal of Bioethics 23(4), pp. 9-23.

Difficulty: Intermediate

Abstract: It is well-known that racism is encoded into the social practices and institutions of medicine. Less well-known is that racism is encoded into the material artifacts of medicine. We argue that many medical devices are not merely biased, but materialize oppression. An oppressive device exhibits a harmful bias that reflects and perpetuates unjust power relations. Using pulse oximeters and spirometers as case studies, we show how medical devices can materialize oppression along various axes of social difference, including race, gender, class, and ability. Our account uses political philosophy and cognitive science to give a theoretical basis for understanding materialized oppression, explaining how artifacts encode and carry oppressive ideas from the past to the present and future. Oppressive medical devices present a moral aggregation problem. To remedy this problem, we suggest redundantly layered solutions that are coordinated to disrupt reciprocal causal connections between the attitudes, practices, and artifacts of oppressive systems.

Additional reading

Abstract: One of humans' distinctive cognitive abilities is that they develop an array of capacities through an enculturation process. In "Cognition as a Social Skill," Sally points to one of the dangers associated with enculturation: ideological oppression. To conceptualize how such oppression takes root, Haslanager appeals to notions of mindshaping and social coordination, whereby people participate in oppressive social practices unthinkingly or even willingly. Arguably, an appeal to mindshaping provides a new kind of argument, grounded in philosophy of mind, which supports the claims that feminist and anti-racist want to defend. However, some theorists worry that Haslanager's account does not shed much light on how individuals could exert their agency to resist oppression. I argue that enactivist conceptions of mindshaping and habit can help us to make sense of the power of social influences and how they have the potential to both enable and undermine cognition and agency. This moves us toward increased understanding of the workings of social oppression—distinguishing between constructive and enabling forms of heteronomy, and overdetermining and pernicious modes that lead to atrophied moral cognition and a narrowing of the field of affordances.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What is characteristic of the fourth scenario described by Merrit? Why is it that, in this case, the cognitive process of Alex is partly constituted by social institutions?
2. What is the difference between the thesis of extended cognition and the thesis of socially extended cognition? In what way is cognition subtended by social processes according to this view? How is the mind invaded rather than extended?
3. Why should we consider gender a mental institution? What is a mental institution? What would other examples be of mental institutions?
4. How is the case of Female Sexual Dysfunction an example of social mind invasion?
5. How does the claim that gender is a mental institution relate to the concept of extended sex?
6. How can medical technology contribute to the construction of subordinate social categories?
7. What is the dynamic of oppression into which these medical devices are inserted?
8. How do Liao and Carbonell understand oppression? Why might a device materialize bias but not oppression?
9. What is the proposed strategy to address this concern?
10. Are there other lessons from embodied cognition that can further support the proposed strategy?

WEEK 10. EMBODIMENT AND DISABILITY

This week turns to contributions to debates on disability from theses of embodied and extended cognition. The first paper, by Zoe Drayson and Andy Clark, discusses the various ways in which extending the cognitive machinery beyond the brain can change the way we think about cognitive disabilities, as well as its diagnosis and treatment. They also turn to the way in which the debate on models of disability can change in virtue of these theses. The second paper, by Catriona Mackenzie and Jackie L. Scully, focus on moral imagination, more specifically. They are interested in showing the limitations of this capacity when it comes to moral judgments that are concerned with the quality of life of individuals who are differently embodied from us. To make this claim, they draw on the claim that imagination is embodied. The suggested reading turns to psychiatry to propose an enactivist model that encompasses the various dimensions that constitute psychiatric disorders. To this end, de Haan discusses the various models of disorders that have been proposed in this context.

DRAYSON, ZOE AND ANDY CLARK. *COGNITIVE DISABILITY AND EMBODIED, EXTENDED MINDS*

2020, In Adam Cureton & David Wasserman (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Disability*. Oxford University Press, pp. 580-597.

Difficulty: Easy

Abstract: Many models of cognitive ability and disability rely on the idea of cognition as abstract reasoning processes implemented in the brain. Research in cognitive science, however, emphasizes the way that our cognitive skills are embodied in our more basic capacities for sensing and moving, and the way that tools in the external environment can extend the cognitive abilities of our brains. This chapter addresses the implications of research in embodied cognition and extended cognition for how we think about cognitive impairment and rehabilitation, how cognitive reserve mitigates neural impairment, and the distinction between medical and social models of disability.

MACKENZIE, CATRIONA AND JACKIE LEACH SCULLY. *MORAL IMAGINATION, DISABILITY AND EMBODIMENT*

2007, *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 24(4), pp. 335–351.

Difficulty: Intermediate

Abstract: In this paper we question the basis on which judgements are made about the 'quality' of the lives of people whose embodied experience is anomalous, specifically in cases of impairments. In moral and political philosophy it is often assumed that, suitably informed, we can overcome epistemic gaps through the exercise of moral imagination: 'putting ourselves in the place of others', we can share their points of view. Drawing on phenomenology and theories of embodied cognition, and on empirical studies, we suggest that there are barriers to imagining oneself differently situated, or imagining being another person, arising in part from the way imagination is constrained by embodied experience. We argue that the role of imagination in moral engagement with others is to expand the scope of our sympathies rather than to enable us to put ourselves in the other's place. We argue for explicit acknowledgement that our assessments of others' QOL are likely to be shaped by the specifics of our own embodiment, and by the assumptions we make as a consequence about what is necessary for a good quality of life.

Additional reading

Abstract: This article addresses the integration problem in psychiatry: the explanatory problem of integrating such heterogeneous factors as cause or contribute to the problems at hand, ranging from traumatic experiences, dysfunctional neurotransmitters, existential worries, economic deprivation, social exclusion, and genetics. In practice, many mental health professionals work holistically in a pragmatic and eclectic way. Such pragmatic approaches often function well enough. Yet an overarching framework provides orientation, treatment rationale, a shared language for communication with all those involved, and the means to explain treatment decisions to health insurers and to society at large. It also helps to relate findings from different areas and types of research. In this article, I introduce an enactive framework that supports holistic psychiatric practice by offering an integrating account of how the diverse aspects of psychiatric disorders relate. The article starts with a short overview both of the four main dimensions of psychiatric disorders and of the currently available models. I then introduce enactivism and the enactive notion of sense-making. Subsequently, I discuss how this enactive outlook helps explicate the relation between the four dimensions and what that implies regarding the causality involved. The article concludes with an overview of treatment implications.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How can theses of embodied cognition explain some cognitive abilities without relying on internal representations?
2. What consequences do the theses of extended and embodied cognition have on considerations about cognitive disabilities?
3. Consider the case of ideomotor apraxia. Why do the authors argue that the environment not only compensates but restores impairment?
4. How does the debate on models of disability change when we consider theses on extended and embodied cognition? How would you articulate a model of disability that considers the lessons of these two theses?
5. Why do Drayson and Clark reject arguments in favour of the view that the thesis of extended cognition can enhance rational autonomy? Based on other views discussed in previous weeks, can you think of an argument that could allow you to support some kind of 'extended' rational autonomy?
6. According to Mackenzie and Scully, in order to properly make quality of life judgments, we need to have knowledge of the features of the life in question, of the way in which we should weight these features and of the standards used to make these assessments. Considering this, why does non-normative embodiment raise difficulties for these assessments?
7. What role is typically attributed to moral imagination in moral judgments?
8. In what senses is imagination embodied? How do the authors support these ideas?
9. What role do Mackenzie and Scully assign to moral imagination in moral judgments?
10. Why do we have a moral obligation to develop and cultivate our capacity for moral imagination?

WEEK 11. EMBODIMENT, ENACTIVISM AND EDUCATION

This week focuses on embodied cognition and education. The first paper, by Michelle Maiese, provides a brief overview on transformative learning and proposes an enactive articulation of it. For Maiese, transformative learning involves a change in one's affective framing, constituted by beliefs and habits of mind in which cognition and affection are deeply intertwined. Drawing on her proposal, Mog Stapleton analyses a case study of philosophy in prisons. She argues that the model applied in this case allowed for transformative learning due to its particular ritualistic nature. These papers show how theses on embodied cognition can enrich both education theory and practice. They also show, however, how certain reflections and practices in education can allow the re-articulation of concepts that are central in philosophy of mind such as perspective-taking. The proposed reading by Melina Gastelum (in Spanish) draws on 4E approaches to cognition to propose an intercultural approach to education given the focus of these approaches on embodied practices.

MAIESE, MICHELLE. *TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING, ENACTIVISM, AND AFFECTIVITY*

2015, *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 36(2), pp. 197-216.

Difficulty: Intermediate

Abstract: Education theorists have emphasized that transformative learning is not simply a matter of students gaining access to new knowledge and information, but instead centres upon personal transformation: it alters students' perspectives, interpretations, and responses. How should learning that brings about this sort of self-transformation be understood from the perspectives of philosophy of mind and cognitive science? Jack Mezirow has described transformative learning primarily in terms of critical reflection, meta-cognitive reasoning, and the questioning of assumptions and beliefs. And within mainstream philosophy of mind, there has been a long-standing assumption that cognition and thought are brain-based, computational, disembodied processes that occur separately from emotion and affect. According to this view, self-transformation might be construed as the forging of new neural connections and the development of new cognitive "programs." However, I will argue that the literature on embodiment and enactivism that has emerged in recent years offers us a different and more productive way to conceptualize the intended effects of transformative learning. From the standpoint of enactivism, the experience of transformative learning is thoroughly bound up with the cognitive shifts that it involves, and it also involves significant changes to the neurobiological dynamics of the living body. Moreover, personal transformation is not simply something that happens to subjects, but rather a process in which they are actively and dynamically engaged. In addition, this enactivist approach emphasizes that the learning process is fully embodied and fundamentally affective. From a phenomenological perspective, personal transformation can be understood as a pronounced alteration in cognitive-affective orientation; and from a neurobiological perspective, the development of new habits of mind can be understood as the formation of highly integrated patterns of bodily engagement and response. The upshot is that it is not just subjects' brains that are altered over the course of transformative learning, but also their overall bodily and affective attunement to their surroundings.

STAPLETON, MOG. *ENACTING EDUCATION*

2020, *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 20(5), pp. 887-913.

Difficulty: Intermediate

Abstract: Education can transform our cognitive world. Recent use of enactivist and enactivist-friendly work to propose understanding transformational learning in terms of affective reframing is a promising first step to understanding how we can have or inculcate transformational learning in different ways without relying on meta-cognition. Building on this work, I argue that to fully capture the kind of perspectival changes that occur in transformational learning we need to further distinguish between ways of reorienting one's perspective, and I specify why different ways are differently valuable. I propose that recent approaches to Confucian ritual provide a clue to what is missing in characterisations of perspective transformation and the resultant transformed perspective. I argue that focussing on ritualised interpersonal interactions provides a further clue as to what's missing from a mere appeal to the ritual-based inculcation of new perspectives, namely the kind of lightness and flexibility that some ritualised interactions encourage participants to have, and the deepening of perspective associated with that lightness. I argue that a case study of a project implementing a highly ritualised philosophical practice with prisoners in Scotland shows how these constraints, seemingly paradoxically, function so as to actually deepen the perspectival spaces of those agents. This case study provides a proof of concept for the proposal that certain forms of ritual engagement can reliably bring about the kind of transformation of perspective that is the target phenomenon of transformative learning theory.

GASTELUM, MELINA. *INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION BASED ON SITUATED COGNITION PRACTICES (SPANISH: UNA EDUCACIÓN INTERCULTURAL BASADA EN PRÁCTICAS COGNITIVAS SITUADAS)*

2024, *Andamios* 21(54), pp. 83-109.

Difficulty: Easy-intermediate

Additional reading

Abstract: In this article we want to enrich a view of intercultural education that can use the conceptualizations of 4E cognition (enactive, embedded, embodied and extended). We follow the idea that education can be understood as a community of situated practices. We argue that the perspective of practices acquires a sense from the 4E cognition that will help to promote an educational epistemology that does not only hover over gnoseological processes but brings into play other categories of the sociocultural environment that help other types of reflections that lead towards a critical, political and ethical interculturality.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. How is transformative learning articulated from the perspective of the cognitive approach? What are the limitations of this approach?
2. Why does ideology critique require challenging both held beliefs and habits of mind?
3. Why is affective self-transformation central for the pursuit of social justice?
4. What is affective framing? How should we understand its neurobiology? How are cognition and affect intertwined?
5. How does Maiese tackle the concern that affective phenomena can have a negative impact on learning?
6. The CoPI model analysed by Stapleton asks participants to not draw on their own experiences. How does this contrast with views that value the epistemic role of one's perspective and experience?
7. What are the different forms of learning identified by Mezirow and articulated by Stapleton?
8. What is the relation between perspective holding, and perspective taking, concatenation, and broadening?
9. In what sense do Confucian rituals support perspective holding?
10. What's the similarity between these rituals and the CoPI model?