

**Philosophy Workshop  
on the  
Embodied Mind**

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**“Self-Knowledge, Constitution and Discovery”**

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The focus of the paper is the notion of self-knowledge. Some contemporary accounts of self-knowledge seek to explain the distinctive features of self, as opposed to other-ascriptions, of typical psychological states in non-epistemic terms. In other words, self-ascriptions are not a matter of exercising a cognitive ability, but rather of determining the content of one's own mind. However, these accounts involve too restrictive a notion of self-knowledge, in so far as it makes sense to consider some cases of self-ascriptions as the result of an ability for self-understanding. Thus, the paper concentrates on one such case, and clarifies the nature of the cognitive ability involved, in relation to other paradigmatic cognitive abilities.

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**“The Problem of Other Minds: A Phenomenological Approach”**

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This paper argues that phenomenology – in particular Husserlian and Merleau-Pontian phenomenology – offers a compelling alternative to the traditional responses to the problem of other minds. Traditional “solutions” to the problem may be gathered under two large headings: “*Conservative*” responses are responses that essentially retain the Cartesian idea of the mind as something separate from the perceptible body and hence not directly manifest the way the latter is. Consequently, these responses insist that we need to draw *inductive inferences* based on the physical evidence accessible to us in order to obtain knowledge about other minds. Most (in)famous among these approaches is of course the so-called argument from analogy; but there are other conservative responses as well, as recent discussions in philosophy of mind and cognitive science reveal. “*Reductive*” responses, on the other hand, include behaviorist responses, as well as responses based on the “neutral monism” of Russell, Ayer, and others. Generally, this type of response is characterized by an attempt to show that mental phenomena ultimately reduce to behavior (or dispositions to behavior) or constructions of sense-data. If either is the case, then it is possible to have direct perceptual experiences of the mental states of others. However, I argue that none of these attempted solutions is likely to work. Roughly put, the problem for the conservative approaches is that the retained gap between mind and body remains too wide to bridge. Reductive responses, on the other hand, invite the suspicion that the success in solving the problem of other minds is bought at a too high cost – namely that of explaining away the very phenomenon that we were trying to understand. Phenomenologists such as Husserl and Merleau-Ponty, however, attempt to develop a way of retaining the notion of a direct experience of the mental lives of others, while at the same time avoiding reductionism. The key idea is that we need to provide a more fundamental revision of the Cartesian picture of mind *and* body than the reductive responses offer. For the behaviorist reductive response leaves intact the Cartesian construal of the realm of physical bodies. To that extent, it retains a conservative element. The phenomenological non-reductive “revisionist” response, by contrast, escapes the traditional impasses precisely by abandoning this residual conservative element.

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**“Emotion, Expression and Conversation”**

David Cockburn

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The paper is an exploration of the place that the bodily and linguistic expression of emotion has in our lives; and of the connection of that with the place that *emotion* has in our lives. Emotion and its expression resist placing within traditional mind-body dualism, within belief-desire psychology, and within standard views of the place of language in human life. We see this in two strands in Descartes' thinking: the radical lack of connection between emotion and behavioural manifestations, and the idea that to experience a situation through an emotion is to experience it in a *confused* way. In contrast with this, we see the sense in which we may, through its expression, have unmediated recognition of another's emotions by reflecting on the place that these different forms of expression have in our relations with each other. It is crucial to this place that *different* people may manifest in their speech or bodily expression what strikes me immediately as the *same* emotional reaction to a situation. It is important, too, that expression has a two way relation to its context: on the one hand, what I see in her, or hear in her words, may immediately strike me in a certain way, and, with that, may clearly suggest a context of a certain form; on the other, knowledge of the context may play a crucial role in what I see in her. Focusing on a central form of linguistic expression of emotion: what someone speaks about, and the ways in which she speaks of it, may embody a certain picture of how things are. It may be through such articulations that I come to acknowledge that this is the way in which the situation *is to be understood*; and much that is naturally spoken of as 'conversation' involves attempts to engage with each other's articulations. Clarification of these relations, and, in particular, of the way in which speech is a form of contact with another, casts in a fresh light the familiar observation that there are many emotional states that can only be ascribed to one who possesses a language.

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### **“The Embodiment of Morality in Aristotle's Ethics”**

Refeng Tang

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This paper explains the embodiment of moral knowledge in Aristotle's ethics. I shall show that, in Aristotle's ethics, virtue as an embodied character is always rational, and, practical wisdom, as an intellectual character, is at the same time an embodied character. For Aristotle, a moral person is a person with a rationally directed moral body, namely, a body with the right kind of desire.

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### **“Cognitive Integration: Embodied Engagements and the Manipulation Thesis”**

Richard Menary

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It is through our bodies that we primarily engage with the world and through this engagement the body is constantly integrating with the environment. When body and environment co-ordinate, the environment becomes part of the resources the organism has for acting, thinking or communicating. How, though, ought we to understand the co-ordination, or reciprocal coupling, of body and environment as accomplishing thinking? Reciprocal coupling is a symmetrical relation, the organism manipulates its environment in one direction, but the result of this environmental alteration feeds back to the organism prompting further bodily actions. My focus is on the nature of bodily manipulations. There are two ways to understand manipulations that I want to explore: Firstly, there are the body schemas and motor programmes (collections of body schemas) that are completed as bodily manipulations of the environment. Some of these will be innate, such as swallowing, and some learned such as writing, or driving a car. Body schemas are the embodied forms of manipulations. Secondly, there are the environmental norms which govern these manipulations and that are followed in training and action (the first consciously, the second not). The co-ordination of body and environment as accomplishing cognition or thought is, therefore, governed both by body schemas and biological and cultural norms. These will draw on many learned skills and habits, which will have been inculcated through body images as conscious rehearsal and practice. I shall focus on the first way to understand the co-ordination between body and environment and begin to connect it up with the second through the manipulation thesis. The

first section outlines the notion of body schema and how body schemas become integrated with the environment. Then I shall move on to outline the manipulation thesis and explain the different types of manipulation through examples.

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### **“Representation in deed, indeed!”**

Shaun Gallagher

University of Central Florida

I examine the following question: Is the concept of representation required for an account of action? I review some recent work by Mark Rowlands, Michael Wheeler, and Andy Clark that suggests a minimal theory of representation as it applied to action. I argue that the various concepts of minimal representation on offer do not apply to action and that a non-representationalist account that focuses on dynamic systems of self-organizing continuous reciprocal causation at the subpersonal level is superior. I further recommend a scientific pragmatism regarding the concept of representation.

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### **“Taste and the Enactive Mind”**

Alessandra Tanesini and Richard Gray

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What distinguishes enactive accounts of perception from other theories is a rejection of the traditional input-output model according to which perception is the input from world to mind and action, by contrast, is the output from mind to world. In its stead enactive accounts propose an intimate connection between action and perception which takes perception as itself dependent on action in ways that go beyond the mere fact that our perceptions change as we move in the world. The debate has hitherto focused mainly on vision. Nevertheless, Noë has claimed that what should be said about vision can be extended to the other sensory modalities (*Action in Perception*, 2004: 160-1). In this paper we take issue with this claim. Firstly we argue that enactive accounts of perception, and more specifically Noë's sensorimotor knowledge version of it, are only applicable to perceptual experiences whose contents are, in a sense to be defined, spatial. Then we show that gustatory experiences are not spatial in this sense, thereby concluding that there are features of the sense of taste which preclude a plausible extension of the enactive or sensorimotor knowledge account. As well as shedding light on the distinctive nature of taste and the limits of the enactive account, our argument also serves to undermine Noë's proposal for a new way of individuating the senses based on different types of sensorimotor knowledge.

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### **“The Phenomenology of Touch”**

Matthew Ratcliffe

University of Durham

This paper explores the phenomenology of touch and suggests that the structure of touch serves to cast light on the more general way in which we 'find ourselves in a world'. Recent philosophical work on perception tends to place a near exclusive emphasis on vision. This, I suggest, motivates the imposition of a distinction between externally directed perception of objects and internally directed perception of one's own body. In contrast, the phenomenology of touch involves neither firm boundaries between body and world nor perception of bodily states in isolation from perception of everything else. I begin by arguing that touch does not involve two distinct feelings, a feeling of the body and a feeling of something external to the body. Rather, these are inextricable aspects of the same unitary experience, with one or the other occupying the experiential foreground. Then I suggest that tactile experience does not always respect a clear boundary between body and world. In touch, bodily and worldly aspects are experienced in a number of different ways and, in many instances, there is no clear experiential differentiation between the two. Finally, I draw these two points together in order to consider the contribution made by touch to our sense of 'being part of the world'.

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### **“Husserl on Embodied Intentionality”**

Peter Poellner

University of Warwick

According to the standard interpretation of Husserl's phenomenology, it involves a version of content internalism according to which the intentional contents of consciousness and self-consciousness are in principle independent of consciousness's being embedded in a world of real spatial objects. In this paper I argue that this interpretation is fundamentally mistaken. Husserl is, on the contrary, committed to the following theses: (a) perceptual thoughts constitute a fundamental class of thoughts about external objects, without which such thoughts would not be possible at all; (b) perceptual thoughts about external things are essentially object-involving; (c) other kinds of thoughts, including thoughts about the thinking subject herself, are necessarily dependent on thoughts about real spatial objects. I argue that the conjunction of these three theses amounts to a version of content externalism. A subject could have no conscious representations of a world or of herself unless she was situated in a world of spatial objects causally affecting her and had well-grounded beliefs about it. The paper focuses particularly on thesis (c) and on Husserl's claims concerning an essential dependence of intentional consciousness on a two-fold consciousness of one's own body – the body 'as subject' and as spatial object.

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### **“Imagination and Situated Cognition”**

Julia Jansen

University College Cork

In this paper I discuss the implications of adopting different general philosophical approaches for assessing the relation between perception and imagination. In particular, I am interested in different views resulting from 'top down' and 'bottom up' approaches to cognition. By 'top down' approaches I mean approaches that conceive of cognition as a process or activity that is guided by intellectual or conceptual ('top') elements. (I consider broadly speaking Kantian accounts typical.) By 'bottom up' approaches I mean approaches that conceive of cognition as a process that emerges from perceptual or embodied ('bottom') elements of cognition. (I consider phenomenological and situated cognition accounts typical.) My considerations are framed by a particular interest in the ensuing consequences of assuming different general frameworks for integrating the issue of imagination within a theory of situated cognition.

I will, first, attempt to elucidate issues concerning the imagination and its relation to perception ensuing from a 'top down' approach to cognition. I will do so by discussing selected issues arising from the debate regarding conceptual vs. non-conceptual perceptual content in conjunction with Kant's notion of transcendental imagination. Second, I will outline a Husserlian alternative to the Kantian (and McDowellian) position and argue for a 'bottom up' approach to cognition that incorporates into perception itself dimensions considered 'imaginary' by 'top down approaches'. I will propose that this has consequences not only for an analysis of perception but also for an investigation of imagination, as I will attempt to demonstrate by outlining Husserl's account of phantasy [Phantasie]. Finally, I will conclude by pointing to some of the important implications a 'bottom up' approach has for a discussion of perception and imagination in the light of a theory of situated and embodied cognition.

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### **“Is the Explanatory Gap to Be Expected?”**

Boran Bercic

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Today we know a neurological basis of many mental states and processes, however, we do not know *why* we experience these neurological states exactly the way that we experience them rather than some other way. We know what is like to have an increased level of adrenaline (C<sub>9</sub>H<sub>13</sub>NO<sub>3</sub>), that is the feeling of facing danger, excitement and aggression.

However, we do not know *why*  $C_9H_{13}NO_3$  causes (or rather *is*) that feeling rather than some other. Some philosophers think that this gap will never be bridged and that therefore any reductionistic program in the philosophy of mind necessarily fails. However, these philosophers simply want to much. The explanatory gap between physical and mental is something to be expected. It is a consequence of the informativity of physicalistic explanations of the mental; without the gap explanations would not be informative. We can explain mental states in terms of other mental states or we can explain them in terms of neurological terms. The taste of ginger is somewhere between the taste of lemon and the taste of horse-radish; melissa (sweet balm, lemon balm) tastes like a mixture of lemon and nettle; etc. On the other hand, we can explain taste by appeal to molecular structure; melissa tastes like it tastes because it contains essential oil of molecular structure \_\_\_\_\_ and because taste receptors at our tongues react \_\_\_\_\_ and send neurological impulses \_\_\_\_\_. I argue that, in spite of the antireductionistic objections, explanations of the second kind are perfectly sound explanations which can not and need not "explain" why we experience certain neurological states the way we do rather than some other way. The argument can be put forward in the following way:

P1: The nature of mental states may be explained *either* by appeal to mental states *or* by appeal to non-mental states.

P2: If the nature of mental states is explained by appeal to other mental states, the explanatory gap is closed but the explanation is circular because mental is explained by appeal to mental.

P3: If the nature of mental states is explained by appeal to non-mental states, the explanatory gap remains unbridged because explanation is incomplete.

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C: Hence, the explanation of the nature of mental states is *either* circular *or* incomplete.

C': Hence, it is better to accept incomplete explanation than the circular one because the incomplete one is informative, while the circular one is not.

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### **“The Apparent Truth of Dualism and the Uncanny Body”**

Stephen Burwood

University of Hull

It has been suggested that our experiences of embodiment in general appear to constitute an experiential ground for dualist philosophy and that this is particularly so with experiences of dissociation, in which one feels estranged from one's body. Thus, Drew Leder argues that these play “a crucial role in encouraging and supporting Cartesian dualism” as they “seem to support the doctrine of an immaterial mind trapped inside an alien body”. In this paper I argue that as dualism does not capture the character of such experiences there is not even an apparent separation of self and body revealed here and that one's body is experienced as uncanny rather than alien. The general relationship between our philosophical theorizing and the phenomenology of lived experience is also considered.

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