

Conference Program

Thursday, June 23rd

Room: Arts A 108

9:10 – 9:40 Registration and Coffee

9:40 – 9:50 Welcome (Robb Dunphy)

9:50 – 11:10 Session 1

Speaker 1: Michael Gutierrez (Loyola University Chicago): *Husserl's Regional Phenomenologies and the Constraints of the Material A Priori*

Speaker 2: Devin Fitzpatrick (Oregon): *The Transcendental Gap: The Possibility of the Epoché for Phenomenology and Cognitive Science*

Chair: Robb Dunphy

11:10 – 11:20 Break

11:20 – 12:40 Session 2

Speaker 1: Dr. Andrea Pace Giannotta (Florence): *The Priority of Epistemology Over Metaphysics in Transcendental Phenomenology*

Speaker 2: Genevieve Hayman (UCD): *Time for Phenomenology and Science: Evolving from Francisco Varela's Naturalisation of Husserlian Time-Consciousness*

Chair: Gabriel Martin

12:40 – 14:00 Lunch Break

14:00 – 15:20 Session 3

Speaker 1: Arzu Gokmen (Bogazici): *Deep Sleep: Phenomenal or Not?*

Speaker 2: Rebecca Harrison (UC Riverside): *"Positive Ambiguity" and Merlau-Pontyan Realism*

Chair: Patrick Levy

15:20 – 15:30 Coffee Break

15:30 – 16:50 Keynote Address

Dr. David Roden (Open University): *Dark Posthumanism*

Chair: Dr. Mahon O'Brien

17:00 **Drink in IDS Bar (on campus)**

19:00 **Dinner in Brighton**

Friday, June 24th

Room: Arts A 108

9:10 – 9:30 **Registration and Coffee**

9:30 – 10:50 **Session 1**

Speaker 1: Agustina Lombardi (Oxford): *Own Body and the Naturalisation of Phenomenology*

Speaker 2: Dr. Francesca Forlè (Vita-Salute San Raffaele University, Milan): *Embodying Perception: The Body Between Constitutive and Causal Relations*

Chair: Christopher Stockel

10:50 – 11:00 **Break**

11:00 – 12:20 **Session 2**

Speaker 1: George Carpenter (Keele): *J.J Valberg's 'Impossible' Hard Problem and Philosophy of Psychiatry*

Speaker 2: Emily Hammond (Exeter): *Transcending the Natural Attitude? Possibilities and Limitations of Empirical Phenomenology*

Chair: Denis Chevrier Bosseau

12:20 – 13:20 **Lunch**

13:20 – 14:40 **Session 3**

Speaker 1: Daria Vitasovic (Milan): *Unconscious Content: What is it like to think P when there is nothing it is like?*

Speaker 2: Duygu Uygun Tunc (Heidelberg/Helsinki): *Is Pre-Reflective Consciousness Inherently Immediate? Two Cognitive Scientific Accounts*

Chair: TBC

14:40 – 14:50 Coffee Break

14:50 – 16:10 Session 4

Speaker 1: Joseph Higgins (SASP – University of St. Andrews and University of Stirling): *Body and Sociality, Science and Phenomenology: An Attempt to Ease the Tension*

Speaker 2: Michael Roberts (Birmingham): *Naturalism Through Convergence: Phenomenological Constraints in Enactivism*

Chair: Robb Dunphy

16:10 – 16:20 Break

16:20 – 17:40 Keynote Address

Professor Michael Wheeler (Stirling): *The Body: Where Phenomenology and Cognitive Science Meet, Where Transcendentalism and Naturalism Collide*

Chair: Dr. Anthony Booth

17:45 Drinks at IDS Bar (on Campus)

Abstracts

Michael Gutierrez (Loyola University Chicago): *Husserl's Regional Phenomenologies and the Constraints of the Material A Priori*

In what amounts to an ontological overture prior to the main phenomenological movements of Edmund Husserl's *Ideas I*, the philosopher spells out an important distinction between the formal and material a priori. While the former consists of the logical features of any object whatsoever, the latter restricts its focus to objects within a particular, though maximally general, region of objects. The division of all objects into regional ontologies lays the groundwork for regional phenomenologies, which attempt to provide a descriptive analysis of what constitutes the experience of objects within particular regions. Indeed, the work of regional phenomenology is taken up in the manuscripts composing *Ideas II*. The first such phenomenology attempted is that of material nature, an ontological region already mapped out in *Ideas I*.

In view of the radical stance of phenomenological inquiry, the question arises: *what presuppositions has the regional phenomenology adopted in an uncritical fashion from the regional ontology?* On the one hand, Husserl's division into regional ontologies serves as a merely provisional starting point for further investigation. His separate regions of the physical thing, consciousness, and intersubjective cultural life, are, arguably, a repurposing of Dilthey's Natur-/Geisteswissenschaften distinction, which awaits the critical analysis that transcendental phenomenology can provide. On the other hand, the regional phenomenologies undertaken in *Ideas II* not only take their regional ontological presuppositions as points of departure, but also, arguably, let them determine the point of arrival as well. In other words, the regional ontology preempts what phenomenological description describes. This can be seen in the fact that the main poles of attitudinal analysis -- the dualism of the naturalistic and personalistic attitudes -- artificially constrain the sorts of description that Husserl can offer of psycho-physical, or embodied, consciousness. In the analyses of *Ideas II*, the phenomenology of animal nature is the awkward onto-phenomenological compromise that neither captures the essence of embodied life, nor provides the experiential link between the separate experiential spheres of nature and cultural life.

After reviewing how Husserl's ontological presuppositions artificially constrain his regional phenomenology, I will pose a closing challenge to his thought in the spirit of Adolf Reinach's "phenomenological realism." Namely, does the retention of the a priori material constraints of objectivities within the scope of the phenomenological reduction favor, even require, a kind of Platonizing essentialism about the natures of worldly objects? Husserl would surely reject this reading, but the question remains whether he provides the philosophical and phenomenological resources to do so. Gaining clarity on this front is an important precondition for understanding whether or not transcendental phenomenology can offer insight to the theory and practice of the "dogmatic" sciences over and above whatever its ontological presuppositions might already provide.

Devin Fitzpatrick (Oregon): *The Transcendental Gap: The Possibility of the Epoché for Phenomenology and Cognitive Science*

The contemporary engagement between Husserlian phenomenology and cognitive science has spurred debate as to whether phenomenology should be naturalized or its claim to transcendental insight maintained. Naturalizing phenomenology is intended to address the “explanatory gap,” the seemingly categorical difference between what can be analyzed from a third-person perspective and what must be described from a first-person perspective, such that cognitive research can be clearly related to consciousness as experienced. The four editors of the volume *Naturalizing Phenomenology* suggest in their introduction that the progress of science and mathematics has demonstrated Husserl’s antinaturalism to be unwarranted, and thus that phenomenology is compatible with naturalism. But Dan Zahavi has argued that while phenomenology must heed science, it cannot be reduced to another empirical endeavor; insofar as phenomenology explains the possibility of science through its descriptions of the constituting and intersubjectively constituted transcendental ego, its transcendental status must be preserved. For Zahavi, to abandon the phenomenologist’s access to transcendental insight would be to forsake phenomenology’s explanatory potential.

What has yet to be explained in transcendental phenomenology, however, is the possibility of the *epoché*, the initial suspension of belief in the natural attitude that Eugen Fink attempts to justify in his “phenomenology of phenomenology.” To resolve the explanatory gap through transcendental phenomenology requires resolving what I am calling a “transcendental gap”: the gap between the phenomenologist in the natural attitude and as transcendental onlooker. How do we verifiably “bracket” a particular phenomenon such that we can inquire into its invariant structures, and then intelligibly express this knowledge in ordinary language? Zahavi’s willingness to consider the *epoché* as occurring within scientific experiments weakens it as compared to Fink’s understanding of it as a tremendous rupture. But we cannot weaken the *epoché* while also strengthening the transcendental status of phenomenology: either phenomenology has access to a purified domain of transcendental insight or it doesn’t, and its dialogue with the sciences will be shaped accordingly.

The peculiar dilemma of the intersection of transcendental phenomenology and cognitive science is that for phenomenology to close the explanatory gap by offering a criterion of scientific validity for testimony about first-person experience, a transcendental method must be utilized in an empirically verifiable manner. In brief, I do not think the kind of *epoché* that neurophenomenologists are talking about is the kind of *epoché* that Husserl and Fink are talking about. Zahavi straddles this divide only by overlooking this equivocal use of the *epoché* as empirical, here meaning performed in the context of an experiment, and transcendental, here meaning always already performed before any experiment takes place. It is evident when comparing the writings of Varela and Depraz to Husserl and Fink that the subjects in neurophenomenological experiments are not performing the transcendental *epoché*. This means that one cannot be sure (and has no means of confirming) that these subjects are referring to invariant structures of consciousness, which in turn means that this take on phenomenology is not closing the explanatory gap, because it is not attaining to intersubjective validity. When transcendental phenomenology is deployed to close the explanatory gap, a transcendental gap opens up between transcendental insight and empirical evidence.

Dr. Andrea Pace Gianotta (Firenze): *The Priority of Epistemology Over Metaphysics in Transcendental Phenomenology*

The metaphysical issue of the relation between consciousness and nature is at the heart of various naturalistic approaches in the philosophy of mind. In this talk, I will argue that transcendental phenomenology, in its static and genetic developments, allows to frame this issue in a more epistemologically adequate way – claiming, also, that it can be fruitfully combined with approaches such as the *enactive approach* and *neurophenomenology*.

First, I will make an overview of different naturalistic approaches in philosophy of mind, highlighting the connection, in them, between epistemology and metaphysics. I will claim, in particular, that these approaches imply a metaphysically realist conception of nature.

The reductionistic version of *scientific naturalism* identifies nature with the ontological domain that is postulated by mathematical physics. And this view goes together with a kind of *phenomenal internalism*, that is based on the thesis of the mere subjectivity of the qualitative domain (the so-called *qualia* and, therefore, the *hard problem* for the philosophy of mind). The non-reductionist version of this view, instead, claims that the physicalist ontology has to be broadened to explain the emergence of phenomenal consciousness within nature.

Naïve naturalism, on the contrary, is a kind of metaphysical realism too that, in opposition to scientific naturalism, conceives the qualitative properties of the objects of perceptual experience as really pertaining to the things “in themselves”. It goes together, then, with a kind of *phenomenal externalism*.

In opposition to the above-mentioned, naturalistic approaches, I will claim that Husserlian transcendental phenomenology is based on the thesis of the priority of epistemology over metaphysics: it conceives the critique of knowledge as an inquiry into the possibilities and the limits of ontology and metaphysics (and, therefore, as preliminary to the investigation of the ontology of nature).

I will claim, then, that transcendental-constitutive phenomenology is not *metaphysically neutral* but *preliminary*. I will argue, in particular, that it leads to a kind of *phenomenal relationism*, which goes together with a correlative analysis of the objects of experience as constituted in the experiential relation. At the same time, I will claim that the issue of the relation between consciousness and nature has to be faced through the genetic deepening of transcendental phenomenology, which allows to investigate the bodily and temporal roots of subjectivity and, in this way, the *genesis of the constitution*.

I will argue, then, that genetic phenomenology leads to admit an ultimate dimension of being that is unknowable in itself, but that accounts for the genetic co-constitution of subject and object in reciprocal dependence. At the same time, this investigation can be fruitfully combined with some approaches in contemporary philosophy of mind and cognitive science that overcome the epistemological difficulties of the standard naturalist approaches, and that are therefore compatible with the phenomenological thesis of the priority of epistemology over metaphysics. I will refer, in particular, to the *enactive approach* and to Varela’s *neurophenomenology*, which is conceived as an analysis of the correlation between phenomenological data and neurobiological processes, without any temptation of reduction of one to the other.

Genevieve Hayman (UCD): *Time for Phenomenology and Science: Evolving from Francisco Varela's Naturalisation of Husserlian Time-Consciousness*

The phenomenological methodology associated with philosophers such as Edmund Husserl can be characterized as privileging lived experience over the epistemic and ontological claims of natural science. However, certain theorists within philosophy and cognitive science – such as Jean Petitot, Francisco Varela, Bernard Pachoud, and Jean-Michel Roy in their 1999 book *Naturalizing Phenomenology* – advocate for the ‘naturalisation’ of phenomenological accounts, so that the natural sciences and phenomenology might be held in mutual regard.

One prominent example of this endeavour can be seen with Francisco Varela’s 1999 paper ‘The specious present: a neurophenomenology of time consciousness’. Specifically, Varela promotes a particular form of naturalisation – one in which dynamical systems and neurological processes are essential to drawing connections between Husserlian time-consciousness and the natural sciences.

In my presentation, I will show that there are improved ways to naturalise the phenomenology of time. First, I will identify three main issues with Varela’s account: (1) the claim that emergent (neuronal) cell assemblies act as strict correlates for Husserl’s present time-consciousness is phenomenologically inconsistent; (2) the specific utilisation of dynamical systems implies that time-consciousness is grounded in ‘clock time,’ which lacks sufficient ontological support; and (3) the lack of appreciation for the philosophical endeavours of Husserlian phenomenology render this naturalisation incongruent with Husserlian descriptions.

By recognizing these errors, we can develop a more authentic naturalisation of the phenomenology of time. One option is to drop the explanatory role proposed by the aforementioned theorists and use science as a means of expanding temporal experience, not explaining it. In this way, we can avoid the vocabulary of ‘strict neural correlates’ while using science to evoke new phenomenological insights. Another option is to deliberately frame the mathematical model according to a certain metaphysical understanding of time *before* modelling time-consciousness within dynamical systems. This then escapes the naïveté of relying on an easily refuted ontological foundation. Lastly, we can abandon a Husserlian definition of phenomenology in favour of a less idealistic phenomenological understanding, such as that of Merleau-Ponty, though we must then define what this means for Husserlian time-consciousness.

While not finalised solutions to the problem of naturalisation, these options form improved starting points and a methodological direction that gives hopes to a redefined project of naturalisation, particularly with regard to time. Thus, my presentation sheds new light on how phenomenology and the natural sciences can indeed come together, but as an evolution from the perspectives of Petitot, Varela, Pachoud, and Roy.

Arzu Gokmen (Bogazici): *Deep Sleep: Phenomenal or Not?*

Is deep sleep some state of absence of consciousness or is there some kind of consciousness in deep sleep (i.e., dreamless, NREM, slow wave sleep)? Neither phenomenology nor natural sciences have yet substantial discussions for the status of consciousness in deep sleep and even the major theories in both disciplines has said very little on the subject. However, deep sleep is the best candidate to be a contrast to conscious phenomena that seems available to our investigation in order to understand what consciousness is by investigating what might it not be. By ‘contrast’, I don’t mean that deep sleep is an absence of consciousness; rather, I mean that even if there be some kind of consciousness, this kind is very unlikely to have the qualities we assume phenomenal consciousness to have. Indeed, the proponents of the existence of a kind of consciousness in deep sleep claim that this consciousness is non-intentional, lacks perspective, provides no self-awareness and has no epistemic content. But, how is this kind of consciousness supposed to differ from the absence of consciousness then? Is this consciousness, if any, phenomenal? Does deep sleep have phenomenal character? Is it embodied? Can phenomenology study these questions? Can natural science provide answers to these questions while there is not yet an answer to the question why do we sleep?

What is the basis of our knowledge, if any, of having slept? Do we experientially know that we slept or do we infer it? Is deep sleep has a reportable character? Which discipline might be better at providing the knowledge or detection of being asleep: phenomenology or neuroscience? While the knowledge of being conscious is priorly available to the subject himself, as no science can prove to you that you are not conscious while you think you are conscious; but, it seems just the opposite for deep sleep case. Indeed, you cannot know, during deep sleep, that you are in deep sleep, while this knowledge seems to be objectively available, those other than yourself. What could be the basis of this objective knowledge, if we find any, of being asleep?

Is it possible to gain a phenomenal access to deep sleep? Are we conscious in deep sleep, or rather we are not conscious but it is possible, by training, to be conscious in deep sleep? What kind of a basis is there for the lack of phenomenal consciousness then, if it is possible to beat it? Some neuroscience experiments seem to suggest that experiential data correlates with the phenomenal reports of the trained subjects in deep sleep experiments. Should this suggest the compatibility of phenomenology and natural sciences?

This paper addresses these questions and aims to focus on deep sleep where both phenomenology and science seem to be devoid of substantial source to deal with the problem which however is to be the mine that conceals what consciousness is and how science and phenomenology relates each other.

Rebecca Harrison (UC Riverside): *“Positive Ambiguity” and Merleau-Pontyan Realism*

In *The Phenomenology of Perception*, Maurice Merleau-Ponty writes that “the nature of the perceived is to tolerate ambiguity,” and that “we must recognize the indeterminate as a positive phenomenon”. This is a remarkable claim. Typically, philosophers have taken perceptual ambiguity, or the fact that our perceptual experiences are sometimes vague, confused, or erroneous, to undermine our intuitive sense that perception puts us into direct

contact with the real world. Since perception is sometimes in error, they reason, what we experience must be something fundamentally different from the world itself. Our perception of the world is thus thought to be mediated by some kind of mental content: we perceive a representation *of* the world, not the world itself.

Merleau-Ponty, on the contrary, seems to think that perception puts us into a special kind of “communion” or “symbiosis” with the world itself – a view which several commentators have characterized as a variety of “direct realism,” or the view that we have an immediate relation to the world in experience. However, it is not so clear that Merleau-Ponty should be characterized this way: other commentators have resisted the notion, and Merleau-Ponty himself explicitly argues against the idea of some determinate, mind-independent substance that grounds our perceptual experiences. Yet, Merleau-Ponty also clearly wants to resist the transcendental idealist’s inclination to ground experience in a constituting subject, or indeed, any attempt at all to mediate perceptual experience through some kind of mental content.

In this paper, I will investigate how Merleau-Ponty’s account of “positive ambiguity” can shed light on the broader question concerning Merleau-Ponty’s realism. First, I will provide a brief analysis of Merleau-Ponty’s account of illusion. This analysis shows that ambiguous or even non-veridical perceptual experiences are not only reconcilable with, but in fact essential to, a direct relation to a concretely real external world. For Merleau-Ponty, that our perceptions are sometimes ambiguous, confused, or erroneous is only to be expected in an interaction with a genuine external world that extends beyond our individual subjective experience. I will also argue that, on Merleau-Ponty’s view, ambiguous or even non-veridical experiences should nonetheless be considered genuine (or “positive”) perceptions of the world, however confused or liminal. For Merleau-Ponty, these experiences involve a certain departure from the normative or “optimal” experience of the object. However, the “tension” created through that departure is essential to such experiences; through this tension, the ambiguous or non-veridical experience still leads us back to the object itself. Ultimately, Merleau-Ponty’s account of positive ambiguity supports conceiving of him as a direct realist, of a particular and highly unique sort. I will conclude with some comments on the possible consequences of Merleau-Ponty’s view for contemporary cognitive scientific approaches to ambiguous perceptual experiences, and for the project of “naturalizing” phenomenology more generally.

Dr. David Roden (Open University): *Dark Posthumanism*

Speculative Posthumanism (SP) claims that there could be posthumans: powerful nonhuman agents arising through some technological process. In my book *Posthuman Life*, I buttress SP with a series of philosophical negations whose effect is to leave us in the dark about these historical successors (Roden 2014). The first negation employs the idea of dark phenomenology to argue against transcendental interpretation of human experience. The second, argues against transcendental interpretations of human normativity or “the space of reasons”.

In this talk I will recapitulate these arguments, arguing that they jointly imply a posthumanism unbounded by human conceptions of agency or ethics. It is also a naturalistic position, though I will argue, weakly so, since it can derive no normative constraints from current scientific practices.

Anthropologically unbounded SP thus confounds us in moral and epistemic darkness. We lack rules specifying the nature of the posthuman or how to recognize it. We do not know what we are becoming; and lack any assurance that our moral conceptions can travel into the future(s) we are complicit in producing. It thus raises questions about the role we can allot to experience in posthumanism, given that no transcendental conception of subjectivity can be endorsed by it.

In response, I argue that the void delineated by speculative posthumanism implies that some form of aesthetics is the first philosophy of the value domain, for it forces us to judge itineraries in posthuman possibility space without criteria. This very minimal aesthetics thus furnishes a basis for pursuing and organizing trajectories into the future: one distancing us from any current conception of the good or any normative appeal to universality. This estrangement or abstraction, I will claim, does not express a postmodern ethics of transgression or “transvaluation” but falls out of the ontological and temporal structure of planetary technical networks.

Agustina Lombardi (Oxford): *Own Body and the Naturalisation of Phenomenology*

In this paper I will tackle the question of the naturalisation of phenomenology by addressing one of the most important concerns within phenomenology: the own body. Following Dan Zahavi, my suggestion will be that the reflection of this particular topic, while avoiding reducing the body to mere naturalistic considerations, opens the path for a fruitful dialogue with the natural sciences.

I will briefly discuss Husserl’s rejection of naturalism (understood in his time as positivism) and the distinction he presents in *Ideas II* between *Körper*, *i.e.* the body as a physical thing with all the proper features of matter – space, time, extension – and *Leib*, *i.e.* the body as lived and sentient. This distinction led Husserl to consider that the body is not a mere object amongst others objects in the world, concluding that the lived body cannot be fully accounted for with the means of the natural sciences alone.

I will move to assess Merleau Ponty’s ideas of the own body in his *Phenomenology of Perception*, in particular by considering his insights on the experienced phenomenological body, offered as a reaction to both mechanistic physiology and behavioural psychology. While mid-twentieth century physiology and behavioural psychology conceive the body as being another object in the world, Merleau-Ponty argues that the lived experience of the own body seems to escape a mere scientific treatment. Indeed, for Merleau-Ponty, the own body presents itself as having an ambiguous existence in which we do not have bodies, we are bodies, *i.e.* we are embodied beings. Given that our bodies present physiological and psychological events related in such a way that there can never be one without the other, our bodies are not merely objects, but subjects, they are the subjects of perception, our access to the world. Thus, our lived experience reveals our ambiguous existence inasmuch as we are

simultaneously subject and object, first person and third person. Notwithstanding this objection to naturalism, *i.e.* to reducing the own body to an object among other objects, Merleau-Ponty is far from criticising science *per se*. Indeed, he established an open dialogue with the psychological and physiological findings of his time. This critical engagement with psychology and neurology is disclosed by his analysis of the phantom limb and the clinical case of Schneider's motor disorder, among others.

In a similar fashion, phenomenologist Dan Zahavi has of late offered an analysis of the possibility of a naturalisation of phenomenology focusing on the lived body. One possible way Zahavi conceives of a naturalisation of phenomenology is by establishing a fruitful dialogue between phenomenology and the natural sciences, where both disciplines inform, contribute, and challenge each other. As a result of this proposal, for example, Zahavi suggests comparing neuropsychological descriptions of body-awareness disorders to phenomenological descriptions of the lived body presented in both Husserl and Merleau-Ponty. Hence, following some traditional phenomenologists, one could argue for the naturalisation of phenomenology as long as one understands this as creating a dialogue with the natural sciences, without reducing the 'phenomenon' to scientific *explananda*.

Dr. Francesca Forlè (Vita-Salute San Raffaele University, Milan): *Embodying Perception. The Body Between Constitutive and Causal Relations*

In the contemporary debate, defenders of the Embodied and Extended Mind Theories argue that the physical substrate of cognition may cross the boundaries of the skull, implicating neural, bodily and environmental features.

Against this thesis Adams and Aizawa, for instance, argue that the brain is the only constitutive basis for cognitive processes since it bears the mark of the cognitive – that is, it involves mechanisms of the same natural kind working on non-derived representations. In their view, the extra-neural body and the external environment can be said to have just a causal role for cognition, not an actual constitutive one. Interestingly, in this debate, causal contributors are mainly seen as external elements which are *not* part of the supervenience substrate of cognitive processes.

The main aim of this talk is to focus on perceptual experience and argue against Adams and Aizawa's idea that the body has just a causal role for perception. I will try to do so by making some phenomenological reflections about the relationship between the body and visual perception, going beyond Adams and Aizawa's naturalistic account by means of a transcendental analysis of the human body.

First, I will argue that our body has not just a causal role for visual perceptual experiences, but also a motivational one. Our kinetic and practical experiences motivate (*i.e.* they give us pre-reflective and implicit reasons for) the way objects visually appear to us: for instance, mastering how objects' perceivable aspects change as we move around them can give us reasons for maintaining that, while in movement, we are looking at the same object even

though we actually see different profiles. Trying to underline the differences between causes and motivations, I will show that the one just described is already the domain of rationality and positionality, not just the naturalistic level of causal relations.

Secondly, I will argue that our body can be said to be a constitutive part of the physical substrate of perceptual experiences, at least of visual ones. Exploiting the phenomenological distinction between *Körper* and *Leib* I will underline that our body is not just an object among others but a lived/living body that acts as a transcendental principle for visual perception: it is the zero-point of orientation, its kinesthetic horizon is fundamental to motivate our perception of a stable and coherent world, and the active possibilities it allows re-define the environment as a world of practical meanings. In this sense, our body shapes our perception and contributes to the constitution of an embodied consciousness, then acquiring a subjective dimension. Therefore, I will maintain that our body is a constitutive part of the substrate of visual perceptual experiences not because it drives perceptual routines, but because it constitutes the lived/living subject of perceptual experience itself. In this sense, the body is not just in an *external*, causal relation with perception, but in an *internal*, transcendental one.

George Carpenter (Keele): *J.J. Valberg's 'Impossible' Hard Problem and Philosophy of Psychiatry*

Analytic philosophy of mind has traditionally focused on sensations as a source of difficulty for physicalism, due to their seemingly irreducible qualitative properties. By contrast, the phenomenological tradition locates the clash between experience and the scientific image in the former's all-encompassing character, whereby everything that exists (every 'phenomena') refers back to a meaning-bestowing subject. This conception is increasingly influencing analytic philosophers, among them J.J. Valberg, who, inspired by Edmund Husserl, defends what he calls the *horizontal conception of experience*. Valberg argues that this conception displaces the problem of qualia by virtue of dispensing with representational or 'sense data' theories of mind, making it apt to meet challenges to anti-physicalism which stem from attacks on sensory givenness (e.g. Sellars & the later Wittgenstein).

Uncharacteristically for a philosopher opposed to physicalist encroachment, however, Valberg is dismissive of attempts to mitigate the clash between his conception of mind and the biologically reductionist picture furnished by the sciences (where recent attempts to do so might include Evan Thompson, *Mind In Life*, or Thomas Nagel, *Mind and Cosmos*). Indeed he takes classical phenomenologists to task for failing to fully appreciate the *aporia* of the horizontal conception vis-à-vis the scientific worldview, arguing that the existence of consciousness is not so much a 'problem' as an *impossibility*, since he insists that all scientific evidence points towards mind-brain identity. But because the horizontal conception simultaneously commits Valberg to idealism, changes to the brain which affect experience cannot help but signify changes to the world itself. To occupy a point of view is to embody the paradox of being both a small, contingent part of what there is, and the necessary

condition of possibility for what there is (the world is only, as it were, mind-independent *for me*). Valberg's original contribution lies in teasing out the 'impossible' consequences this has for epistemology and ontology.

Louis Sass, a philosopher of psychiatry influenced by poststructuralism, discovers the same paradoxes in the experiences of schizophrenic patients, whose seeming irrationality can be understood as expressions of an underlying 'impossible' lived situation. What was thought to be beyond understanding about these patients' lived worlds can, argues Sass, be cashed out as the upshot of excessive reliance on self-reflection and a quest for the indubitable, which distorts the pre-reflective ambiguity of ordinary consciousness. He therefore argues that the paradoxes of the horizon are made, rather than discovered, by the critical reflection Valberg engages in.

I conclude the paper with some metaphilosophical reflections on the implications Sass's project has for the philosophy of mind: if the kind of consciousness we think we have, and which clashes with the scientific image, is really the upshot of a contingent mode of being (one with affinities with madness), can philosophers still validly object to physicalism?

Emily Hammond (Exeter): *Transcending the natural attitude? Possibilities and limitations of empirical phenomenology*

The possibility of producing rigorous, reliable phenomenological accounts of the nature of conscious experience tantalises philosophers and psychological scientists alike, yet proves elusive. Might the best chance of realising this possibility lie with collaboration between philosophical and empirical approaches to phenomenology, or are the aims of the respective disciplines incompatible? This paper will consider the value and limitations of phenomenology as an empirical methodology through the lens of experiential data, with both philosophical and empirical concerns in mind.

Emotion and affectivity shape how the current situation is experienced and filter the perceived opportunities for action. Thus, it may be said that they sculpt the lifeworld. I will present two studies that use empirical methodologies drawing on different aspects of phenomenology to investigate how emotion is experienced, in order to examine the extent to which this work can speak to different aims and critiques of phenomenology.

The first is a case study of transformation in the experience of sadness following mindfulness-based cognitive therapy for depression using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). IPA is a psychological methodology based, in part, on principles from hermeneutics and attuned to experiential detail, idiography and the implicit. The second study uses an applied philosophical method influenced by Husserlian phenomenology – the explication interview – to investigate how affective stimuli are experienced by experienced meditation practitioners.

Both methods are phenomenological, yet have divergent lineages and practice the mitigation of subjective bias in different ways. The concluding section of the paper will consider the implications of this for the practice of phenomenology and the nature of the data, and how methodological concerns raised by philosophical work and experimental science might begin to be addressed.

Daria Vitasovic (Milan): *Unconscious Content: What is it like to think P when there is nothing it is like?*

Many have come to argue recently for the Phenomenal Intentionality (PI) Thesis. PI can be best defined as intentionality constituted by phenomenal character, or more precisely, a reduction of intentional concepts to phenomenal experiences. There is a second issue associated with this; in particular, the nature of experiences associated with cognitive acts. Is there such a cognitive phenomenology and, if there is, is it *sui generis* or is it reducible to other kinds, e.g. perceptual, sensory, accompanying imagery? However, if there is such a thing as PI, and it is the fundamental kind of intentionality, as the proponents of PI argue, then explaining unconscious mental states is *prima facie* a serious issue for this view. If intentional mental states are constituted by their phenomenal character then one would either have to deny unconscious intentional states altogether or grant their existence, but explain the relation of phenomenology to intentionality in such circumstances.

As for the former, this move seems rather implausible, since it is widely accepted that we are subjects to unconscious affections and conations, as well as implicit cognition and perception. This is in effect not just for processes, but contents as well. It is important to note that the unconscious is not reserved for some mental states, and not others. Any aspect of our mental lives can be accompanied by conscious awareness, or lack it. Yet, precisely in that lies the issue, since, as Searle notes, 'Our naïve, pre-theoretical notion of an *unconscious* mental state is the idea of a conscious mental state minus the consciousness.' (Searle, 1991.) This brings me to the second distinction I wish to clarify. Merely dividing the mind in the computational and phenomenal seems untenable in present-day cognitive science era. Most endorse a tripartite division in the conscious, subconscious and unconscious mind. While the computational, information processing mental states, i.e. procedural knowledge, cannot become conscious and the subject cannot be aware of them, making them unconscious processes in the strict sense, this does not mean that all the unconscious states are of this nature. Subconscious states are generally accessible to conscious awareness, even if they are

currently not. Implicit memory and subliminal perception fall under this category. Both procedural and subconscious processes influence further conscious processing and behavior, while remaining of unconscious nature thoroughly. Unconscious processes, regardless of the fact whether they are of automatic or potentially controlled nature, can be genuinely intentional. The term unconscious phenomenology conveys an impression of a contradiction because perception is supposed to have phenomenal character and phenomenology is supposed to be necessarily conscious. Hence, most would say that ‘unconscious phenomenology’ is just an oxymoron.

However, it is evident that the intentionality of automatic, procedural processes’ is quite different from the intentionality of the subconscious, potentially controlled ones. The latter can be both conscious and unconscious. The subject can access these states by either switching attention to them or enhancing it in a different manner, hence transforming the unconscious state to a conscious one. Those states can be intentionally grasped by the cognizer. It is not just the case that the subject can become aware of the objects of those states, but the states themselves can become an object of attention.

My primary aim in this talk is to focus on these kinds of processes, i.e. the potentially conscious ones, with special emphasize on cognitive phenomenology. Nevertheless, I find it odd, at best, that the advocates of PI thesis do not consider the strictly unconscious states as problematic as potentially conscious ones. As will be shown, most advocates of PI either derive unconscious intentionality from conscious one (Searle, 1991; Kriegel, 2011) which seems untenable when one is dealing with strictly unconscious states that cannot, in any circumstances, be conscious. Others, as Pitt, simply constrain their account on the subconscious states, without even considering the unconscious ones, for the reason that such states are substantially different in nature and, in addition, they suffer from indeterminacy of content. The issue for the PI proponents comes down to incompatibility of the PI with two claims:

PI – intentional states are reducible to phenomenal character.

- 1) There are genuinely intentional unconscious states.
- 2) Unconscious states do not have phenomenal character.

Thus, there are two ways a proponent of the PI thesis can proceed: he can either argue for a derived form of unconscious intentional states from conscious phenomenal states, since PI

is the fundamental kind of intentionality and every other kind of intentionality derives from it; or he can maintain that unconscious content is genuinely phenomenally intentional, that is, the concept of unconscious phenomenology is not a contradiction. While my sympathies opt for the latter, I will argue that both of the approaches, as currently developed in the literature, are problematic in their own and suggest an outline of a third approach, based on the notion of *for-me-ness* of experience, which will take into account the strictly unconscious states as well and preserve the PI.

Duygu Uygun Tunc (Heidelberg/Helsinki): *Is Pre-Reflective Consciousness Inherently Immediate? Two Cognitive Scientific Accounts*

The present paper focuses on two central axes of incompatibility between phenomenological and cognitive scientific approaches to consciousness: Whether mental states are by themselves conscious, and whether there are kinds of mental states which are unmediated.

If we categorize the possible configurations of mental states according to these two factors, we can talk about mental states which are, i) conscious and mediated, ii) unconscious and mediated, iii) conscious and unmediated, or iv) unconscious and unmediated. Dismissing the last option as irrelevant and obscure for the study of consciousness, we can say that the first case covers a wide variety of reflectively conscious mental states which both parties acknowledge as such. The key points of dispute concern the second and third options, where unconscious mediated states are acknowledged by cognitive scientific research but dismissed by the phenomenological approaches as non-mental, and conscious but unmediated states are endorsed by phenomenological approaches in terms of pre-reflective phenomenal consciousness but categorically dismissed by cognitive scientific approaches.

The locus of the problem is the postulated inherency and necessity of phenomenal characteristics of pre-reflective conscious experience such as immediacy, direct access, familiarity or perspectival ownership as opposed to their postulated illusoriness and contingency deriving from unconscious processing stages responsible for the emergence of such phenomenal characteristics.

The discussion concerns chiefly two problems posed for phenomenological approaches by cognitive science, which point to similar conclusions from different angles: the transparency constraint on phenomenal consciousness, and the lateness of conscious experience as propounded within the theoretical frameworks respectively of Thomas Metzinger and Jeffrey Gray.

According to Metzinger, the phenomenal characteristics of the sort mentioned above are due to the phenomenal transparency of earlier processing stages giving rise to consciousness, which can, under certain circumstances, fail to give rise to such phenomenal features or produce different kinds of features. The paradigmatic case of phenomenal transparency being

sensation, the transparency constraint is considered to give rise to illusory phenomenal features whose mediated and representational nature is not available for introspection. Metzinger, in difference to a range of representationalist theories of consciousness, argues that transparency comes in degrees, in the sense that earlier processing stages may be rendered opaque and available for consciousness under various circumstances and most clearly in the case of conscious cognitive reference, yet he dismisses fully opaque mental states as a matter of fact and makes the further theoretical claim that such a case would do away with phenomenal characteristics of experience such as perspectival ownership altogether.

Gray argues on the basis of a body of research on the temporal delay involved between reception of sensory inputs and becoming aware, and claims that consciousness, which he considers to be a late error detection mechanism, is retrospective and conscious contents always merely intentional. The phenomenal characteristics of experiencing directly, immediately and in the present are rendered illusory here as well, and attributed theoretically to the observation that the involved delay itself is not cognitively processed.

Joseph Higgins (SASP – University of St. Andrews and University of Stirling): *Body and Sociality, Science and Phenomenology: an attempt to ease the tension*

One scientific approach to cognition and consciousness that not only acknowledges phenomenology but willingly embraces it is *enactivism*, along with its practically targeted offshoot, *neurophenomenology*. The work of Merleau-Ponty is particularly relevant to enactivists in that both Merleau-Pontian phenomenology and enactivism stress the importance of lived subjectivity through an active body (encapsulated by Merleau-Ponty's claim that "I am my body, I am my life"). For example, Thompson directly draws on Merleau-Ponty in telling us that one's body is an expression of subjectivity in virtue of its intentional directedness toward the world, establishing circular causality between an active bodily agent and her milieu. Similarly, De Jaegher and Di Paolo tell us that "cognition cannot but be embodied[...as it] is the autonomous locus and means for significant activity". Clearly, then, an agent's *active body* (and the resultant lived subjectivity) importantly provides some common ground for a marriage between enactivism and phenomenology.

However, in a recent paper, Kyselo highlights a tension regarding the body's role within the enactivist paradigm. This tension is the exact role that bodily processes play in individuating the human self, alongside the individuating contribution of social processes. More specifically, the worry is that the organismic embodiment that is a foundational tenet of enactivism – and which endorses the lived subjectivity of phenomenology – risks merely "giving lip service" to social processes and thereby wrongly individuating human selves as constitutively non-social beings.

In order to preserve a notion of human selves as both fundamentally embodied and ensocialled, the body-social tension that Kyselo introduces needs to be overcome. I propose that resolving this tension involves establishing a kind of neo-Heideggerian conceptual space

in which body and sociality are ontologically unified. This space draws on an agent's bodily emergence within a specific domain of historicity, such that the pre-existing and ongoing background conditions of bodily subjectivity are socially normative. Importantly, such conditional norms are not 'fixed', but instead modulate and are modulated by bodily expressivity. In this way, there is reciprocal feedback between the (social-)body and (bodily-)sociality in such a way that the two cannot be disentangled.

Moreover, this method of dissolving the body-social tension can translate directly to easing the friction between science and phenomenology. The methodologies of science are phenomenologically primed by their presence in the normative world of human sociality, with this world then being further articulated by the progress of empirical science. Through an iterative process of interaction, phenomenology and science can instil ever greater consistency with one another.

This presentation draws together two issues relevant to the conference: (i). the compatibility of phenomenology and cognitive science, and (ii). the body as scientific and phenomenological subject matter.

Michael Roberts (Birmingham): *Naturalism through Convergence: Phenomenological Constraints in Enactivism*

This paper scrutinizes the constraints that phenomenology has been thought to place upon scientific theorising about the mind amongst contemporary enactivist thinkers. It first implicates the enactive approach as an attempt to naturalise the mind through the provision of *converging descriptions* of its character, then argues that some enactivists have retreated from these standards for naturalisation, undermining the explanatory potential of the enactive programme and sustaining the impasse between scientific and phenomenological approaches. I outline how this can be rectified, laying out two alternative avenues that enactivists must choose between to continue their quest at naturalisation. The argument will be conducted in two parts.

In section one, I delineate the basic explanatory strategy of the enactive theory of mind, which itself conceives the mind as emerging from the interaction between organisms and their environments. I focus on enactive accounts of perception, highlighting the constraining function of phenomenology here, as set out by Hutto and Myin. I show that an *explanation* of perception is herein conceived as the drawing out of an increasingly tight *convergence* between first-person and third-person descriptions. This reveals the enactive paradigm as committed to working on, and remodelling, *both* phenomenological and scientific/subpersonal accounts of perception, until they manifest a sufficiently strong degree of isomorphism to motivate identity claims. I comment here briefly on the manner of isomorphism considered necessary and the particular conception of phenomenology employed by enactivists, showing this conception to be inconsistent with introspective understandings and more congruent with transcendental approaches. I conclude this section

by claiming that enactivism can be encapsulated as an attempt at “naturalism through convergence”.

In section two, I demonstrate that these explanatory constraints have been not been adhered to by several influential enactivists, including Hutto and Myin themselves, who retreat from the full implications of such constraints when theorising about the material supervenience base of perceptual experience. I will critique their suggestion that a phenomenological account of perception as essentially *world-involving* is compatible with an entirely *brain-bound* scientific account of perceptual experience. I claim that the distinction they draw between: (a) *understanding* a phenomenon through explanation and (b) committing oneself to the supervenience base of a phenomenon through explanation, is untenable here. It relies upon a problematic separation of cognition from experiential character, undermining the defining characteristic and primary appeal of the enactive approach.

I will instead suggest that, if enactivists are to maintain their founding commitment to the *equal partner* status of phenomenology and cognitive science, they must favour the stances of Ward and Noë, contending that: to make a phenomenological claim about perception *is to make a theoretical commitment* about the subpersonal extension of perception. I then lay out the two options available to the enactivist; they must opt for an account of perception as either (1) world-involving at *both* the scientific and phenomenological levels of description, or (2) world-involving at *neither* level of description. I will conclude by suggesting which of these might be favoured.