Action Readiness in a Landscape of Affordances

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We will investigate the phenomenon of skilled intentionality from the perspective of the self-organization of the brain-body-environment system. In previous philosophical work, we have characterized skilled intentionality as the organism’s tendency towards an optimal grip on multiple relevant affordances. (Rietveld, et al., 2013; cf. Rietveld, 2012). Affordances are possibilities for action provided by the environment (Gibson, 1979; Chemero, 2003; Rietveld, 2008a). The detection of an affordance that is relevant to what the individual cares about in the particular situation gives rise to an affordance-related action readiness (Rietveld, et al., 2013; Rietveld, 2012). In the first part of this paper, we introduce the notion of skilled intentionality and the phenomenon of responsiveness to a field of relevant affordances. In the second part of this paper we build upon an insight from a recent paper on unreflective skillful action by Frijda, Ridderinkhof & Rietveld (2014). In many real-life situations multiple states of action readiness interact in generating action tendencies and action (Rietveld, 2012). Frijda et al. suggested that emotion regulation in these cases can be understood in terms of the self-organized coordination of multiple states of action readiness (cf. Rietveld, 2008b; De Haan et al., 2013). In order to develop this idea, we will now investigate the coordination of states of action readiness from the perspective of the theory of self-organization, focusing both on neurodynamics and on the brain-body-environment system as a whole (or better, the system brain-body-landscape of affordances).

References


