

Action Readiness in a Landscape of Affordances

Erik Rietveld & Jelle Bruineberg
University of Amsterdam

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

- Chemero, A. (2003) An outline of a theory of affordances. *Ecological Psychology* 15 (2), pp. 181-195.
- De Haan, S., Rietveld, E., Stokhof, M., & Denys, D. (2013) The phenomenology of deep brain stimulation-induced changes in OCD: an enactive affordance-based model. *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience* 7 (653), pp. 1-14.
- Frijda, N., Ridderinkhof, K.R., & Rietveld, E. (2014) Impulsive Action: Emotional Impulses and their control. *Frontiers in Psychology* 5 (518), pp. 1-9.
- Gibson, J. J. (1979) *The ecological approach to visual perception*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin
- Rietveld, E. (2008a) Situated normativity: The normative aspect of embodied cognition in unreflective action. *Mind* 117 (468), pp. 973-1001.
- Rietveld, E. (2008b) The skillful body as a concerned system of possible actions: Phenomena and neurodynamics. *Theory & Psychology* 18 (3), pp. 341-363.
- Rietveld, E. (2012) Bodily intentionality and social affordances in context, in Paglieri, F. (ed.) *Consciousness in Interaction. The Role of the Natural and Social Context in Shaping Consciousness*. Amsterdam: J. Benjamins, pp. 207-226.
- Rietveld, E., De Haan, S. & Denys, D (2013) Social affordances in context: What is it that we are bodily responsive to? Commentary on Schilbach et al. *BBS, Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 36 (4).