

Phenomenology of Minds in Skilled Performance

We seek to give an integrated account of the mind in skilled performance. Collectively the speakers seek to understand the novelty, spontaneity, and highly context-sensitive features of the know-how involved in skill performance and how these relate to its distinctive phenomenology. They do so by drawing not only on phenomenology, but also on naturalistic philosophy of mind, pragmatism, and insights from Japanese *dō*— self-cultivation practices. In this respect our research traverses the boundaries thought to divide phenomenological and non-phenomenological traditions.

The phenomenology of performance

Shaun Gallagher (University of Memphis)

In contrast to Dreyfus who over-emphasizes the lack of reflection and thought in expert performance, there are studies of expert performance that suggest forms of mindful practice. I'll review various studies of athletics, dance, and expert musical performance that identify various forms of performative self-awareness that go beyond pre-reflective self-awareness. I'll review four factors that contribute to the nature of this self-awareness and relate this analysis to recent enactivist conceptions of mindful behavior.

Mind in Skilled Performance: Between Mechanism and Intellectualism

Dan Hutto (University of Wollongong)

To appropriately characterize the mind in skilled performance is a difficult balancing act. It requires accounting for the intelligence and emotionality of performing minds without over-intellectualizing them, on the one hand, or depicting them as merely mindless and automatic, on the other hand. This presentation exposes and brings into question the philosophical thinking that limits our imaginations and prevents us from developing an adequate, positive characterization of kind of mentality exhibited in skill performance. It sets the stage for a fruitful exchange between analytic philosophy of mind and non-Analytic traditions of thought - phenomenology, pragmatism and Japanese *dō*. Specifically, it is argued the latter have great potential to enrich

the former, once certain framing assumptions that limit our thinking about mind and cognition are successfully challenged.

High-Wire Act: A Transactional Account of Improvisation in High-risk

Activities

Jesús Ilundáin-Agurruza (Linfield College)

Improvisation plays a critical role in our lives and is ubiquitous across many domains: cognitive, artistic, scientific, sporting, and, of course, amidst the mundane. Being able to react in novel yet suitable ways to changing circumstances is essential to effective action. Philosophically, improvisation has received much attention in aesthetics – particularly in relation to music particularly Jazz, and dance. But, other areas of performance – sports and martial arts – show a dearth of philosophical scholarship.

The presentation delves into the phenomenology of improvisation in the context of martial arts and sports, specifically high-risk manifestations, e.g., Japanese swordsmanship/*kenjutsu* and extreme sports. Operating under exacting formal, aesthetic, and performative standards of what counts as excellent and successful performance, experts in these practices cultivate improvisation under highly constraining, risky conditions that highlight creative spontaneity *and* control under duress. Correlated with pertinent factors that structure such improvisations, e.g., risk, constraint, vulnerability, and practice, this phenomenological account follows a Buddhist analysis of improvised, skillful performance, under the aegis of *upāya* (hōben)—a responsive virtuosity where performers skillfully engage challenging circumstances. Of import are the medieval writings by Chozansi, Munenori, and Takuan on swordsmanship, and Zeami's on Nō theater, which emphasize the germane phenomenon of *mushin* (mindfully fluid awareness). Alongside a situated and enactive account of cognition, this transactional theoretical scaffolding explains experts' improvised responses in dire scenarios while inspirationally shedding light on improvisation at large.

Predictive processing and sports performance

Michael D. Kirchhoff (University of Wollongong)

Predictive processing, an increasingly influential research paradigm in contemporary cognitive science, conjectures that the primary—or exclusive—imperative of neural activity is the

avoidance of unpredictable states (Friston 2010; Bastos et al. 2012). This presentation considers how predictive processing might aid in our explaining the highly context-sensitive intricacies of the action involved in sports performance. Hohwy (2016)—in line with his contention that cognition involves the continual manipulation of “massive hierarchical representations” of the world—has recently claimed that the brain is implicated in “heavy, explicit modelling of external causes” even during the kind of on-the-fly action procedures characteristic of high-octane sports (2016). Clark (2017) disagrees with Hohwy’s assessment. He claims that predictive processing is consonant with the idea of a predictive brain that, in facilitating sports performance, exploits “quick and cheap” heuristics *rather than* engaging in explicit, detailed neuro-modelling. In this talk, we canvass a third alternative for understanding sports performance; one that can capture the idea that the dynamics involved in prediction error minimisation unfold over nested spatial and temporal scales and involve non-trivial aspects of the non-neural body and environment. We argue that the relevant informational dynamics implied by such an account need not (*contra* both Clark and Hohwy) be understood in representational terms. We conclude by suggesting that our non-representational rendering of predictive processing can substantially aid in our understanding of expert sports performance, and in clarifying previous debates about the ramifications of predictive processing for understanding skilful action.

Coping with pain and obeying commands

Katsunori Miyahara (University of Wollongong/University of Tokyo)

Everyday skilful coping depends in part on bodily sensations and particularly on the sensations of pain. How do skilful agents take pains into account in shaping bodily behaviors? In his imperative theory of pain, Colin Klein advances an alternative account based in part on phenomenological considerations, which maintains that skilful coping with pain is a matter of obeying bodily commands. I propose to challenge the imperative account of skilful coping on phenomenological grounds. The imperativist account still fails to get the phenomenology right. In particular, it overlooks the difference between involvement and commitment: We usually find ourselves already involved in skilful coping, while we commit ourselves to action in obeying commands. I argue that this theoretical failure derives from overlooking the difference between two forms of bodily self-consciousness, which is expressed in terms of the lived body and the objective body in the phenomenological tradition.