

Studi

From Minimal Self to Self as Hyper-generalized Sign. Notes for an Integrated Model of Subjectivity

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Riassunto *Dal sé minimo al sé come segno iper-generalizzato. Note per un modello integrato di soggettività* – Il presente articolo propone una prospettiva teorica di tipo fenomenologico e intende mostrare che l'intersoggettività e le sue dinamiche di costituzione di senso sono coerenti con una vision emergentista del sé personale. In particolare, questo studio propone un modello semiotico di mente e una concezione correlata del sé come “segno iper-generalizzato”. Il punto di partenza di questa analisi poggia sui modelli proposti dalla ricerca fenomenologica, cognitiva e da quella ispirata dalla teoria dell'enazione, che distinguono tra una coscienza pre-reflectiva e un sé non concettuale proprio del corpo vissuto. Il presente studio mira a proporre un singolo costrutto non-ipostatizzato di tipo psicologico e psicodinamico capace di ricomprendere e integrare tutte quelle proprietà intersoggettive della cognizione che sono oggi oggetto d'indagine della ricerca fenomenologica sulle varie tipologie di sé (sé minimo; sé pre-riflessivo; sé non-concettuale; sé ecologico; sé esteso), le quali vengono anche indagate nelle scienze cognitive da coloro che seguono l'approccio incarnato e situato.

PAROLE CHIAVE: Sé minimo; Sé pre-riflessivo; Sé non-concettuale; Sé ecologico; Sé esteso.

Abstract This paper proposes a phenomenologically oriented theoretical perspective and it aims at showing that intersubjectivity and its dynamics of sense-making are consistent with an emergentist view of the personal Self. In particular, this paper proposes a semiotic model of mind and a correlated conception of the Self as a “hyper-generalized sign”. The starting point for this analysis is based on models emerging from phenomenological, cognitive and enactive research which differentiate between pre-reflective consciousness and a non-conceptual Self of the living body. The paper will try to develop a single non-hypostatised construct of a psychological and psychodynamic kind that includes and integrates all those intersubjective features of cognition addressed by phenomenological research on the various forms of the Self (the minimal Self; the pre-reflective Self; the non-conceptual Self; the ecological Self; the extended Self) which are also an object of study for embodied and situated approaches in the cognitive sciences.

KEYWORDS: Minimal Self; Pre-reflective Self; Non-conceptual Self; Ecological Self; Extended Self.



IN A GENERAL OVERVIEW OF CURRENT cognitive science we immediately notice that mod-

els of mental life develop along two major intertwined directions.

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On the one hand, in the wake of a growing interest in biology that is not reduced to a mere neuroscientific investigation of the brain, we see increasing emphasis on the involvement of the body (embodied cognition) in its totality, in its practical complexity and its phenomenological (material-objective and subjective) duality.

On the other hand, we witness an increasingly broad ecological form characterizing mental models, namely a *situated* study of the agents whose cognitive activity, in order to be adequately understood, must be seen in an environmental context, a background of behavioural patterns, a scenario of varied interactions, socially structured and shared, within which the subject operates.¹

This two-pronged exploration, which helps overall to restructure our understanding of mind and cognition, is naturally full of methodological and epistemological implications which involve the most challenging topics in cognitive science such as the study of subjective consciousness, personal identity and Self.

In these areas it is clearly necessary to coordinate the interwoven drives entailed by embodied and situated models of cognition, which result in the need to reconstruct the multiple dimensions and different levels of scientific research in an integrated and *complex* view of mind and Self, seeking a cognitive-operational model whose epistemological sense can be expressed by Morin's words:

complexus means that which is woven together. In fact there is complexity whenever the various elements [...] that compose a whole are inseparable, and there is inter-retroactive, interactive, interdependent tissue between the subject of knowledge and its context, the parts and the whole, the whole and the parts, the parts amongst themselves. Complexity is therefore the bond between unity and multiplicity.²

In order to focus on the need for a model that can adequately capture the different aspects of research into the Self,³ we believe it is worth starting from an exploration of enactive-

phenomenological research into the minimal, corporeal and ecological levels of Self; from there a line of argumentation will develop demonstrating that in order to reach an understanding of a fully specified cognitive agent – fully compliant, as we will see, with these same models of pre-reflexive Self – the Self must be studied in the context of its social, pragmatic-interactive and linguistic background.

The emergence of minimal Self

For the sake of our discussion, it is worth starting from Haselager, Broens and Quilici Gonzalez's model of the emergence of the minimal Self.⁴

The Authors' remarks summarize the *status quaestionis* very well and get to the crux of the complex, heated interdisciplinary debate about personal identity and the Self as it has been developing through contrasts between cognitive neuroscience, the embodied cognitive sciences and the naturalized phenomenological investigation of experience.

The Authors in fact take a radically embodied cognitive and experiential approach in which the lived body,⁵ in its biological integrity, in its unavoidable structural complexity and its experiential dimension – and not just the brain or nervous system abstractly considered in their autonomy from the living organism and the environment – is totally involved in the primary constitutive dynamics of the emergence of a minimal sense of identity.

The roots of a minimal sense of Self must therefore be located, according to the Authors, not in the brain itself⁶ but in the global embodied dynamics of the body itself experienced in the concrete environment.

The body is understood here not just as a body-object (*Körper*) but, in the tradition of phenomenological studies, as an animated, sentient system structuring and enactivating a field of experience and, at the same time, taking possession of its dynamic possibilities starting from the basic experience of movement.

Following especially the insights of the Sheets-Johnstone enactive-phenomenological

approach whereby «we do not come into the world embodied. We come into the world moving»,⁷ the Authors dwell on the primary role of proprioceptive mechanisms and the kinaesthetic experiences of the lived biological body which, through proprioceptive/exteroreceptive feeling, co-determine – in the style of Gibson – the environment it is correlated to, contextually specifying and storing a nuclear, minimal, ecological sense of the Self,⁸ which is expressed at first in spontaneous movement (*I move*) and then in voluntary movement (*I can move*):

having an identity is having the capacity to have “I”-experiences. However, these “I”-experiences need not require linguistic or conceptual capacities. [...] the moving body provides for a minimal Self (at times also called a nonconceptual or “ecological” Self [...]) that is more basic than the reflexive, conceptualised, consciously experienced Self that is the primary focus of philosophy and most of cognitive science.⁹

In its most primitive and fundamental form, self-consciousness consists, for the phenomenological-cognitive perspective, merely in the constant first-person manifestation of experience.¹⁰

Such pre-reflective self-consciousness – typical of every subjective experience – is closely related to the embodied corporeal character that specifies how concrete biological and agents can establish a perspective and situated connection with a world and co-specify experience itself.

The first unfolding consciousness in body movement through proprioceptive, sensorimotor structure and kinaesthetic experience, is neither a kind of objectual consciousness (not a perception of the body as an object) nor a meta-cognitive consciousness, but rather the original way in which consciousness as embodied consciousness constitutes itself:

primarily, my body is experienced, not as an object, but as a field of activity and affectivity, as a potentiality of mobility and volition, as an “I do” and “I can”.¹¹

Legrand summed up this matter effectively in this way: «by definition, the body-as-subject is itself absent-as-intentional-object».¹² The minimal sense of identity is therefore to be intended in an ecological sense, embodied-situated, connected to the lived body seen as the vehicle of our *being in the world*,¹³ the zero-point around which experience itself is organized according to the traditional phenomenological approach:

kinaesthetic activation during perception produces an implicit and pervasive reference to one’s own body. This is the basis for a bodily self-awareness that contributes to organizing perception. The implicit self-awareness of the actual and possible movements of my body helps shape the experience that I have of the world. To be clear, however, bodily self-awareness is not an awareness of the body in isolation from the world; it is embedded in action and perception. We do not first become aware of the body and subsequently use it to engage with the world. We experience the world bodily, and the body is revealed to us in our exploration of the world. Primarily, the body attains self-awareness in action (or in our dispositions to action, or in our action possibilities) when it relates to something, uses something, or moves through the world.¹⁴

From minimal Self to extended Self

As Mead showed in his classic social-psychological research:

until the rise of his self-consciousness in the process of social experience, the individual experiences his body – its feelings and sensations – merely as an immediate part of his environment, not as his own, not in terms of self-consciousness. The Self and self-consciousness have first to arise, and then these experiences can be identified peculiarly with the Self, or appropriated by the Self.¹⁵

Before the subject of experience perceives himself and we can therefore talk about the

possibility of a reflexive self-consciousness – belonging to the personal, relational, social and inter-subjective area – in the pre-reflexive experiential dimension there must exist for the phenomenologist «a certain whole [...] something that is already structured» that «in the next reflection [...] I can, indeed I must find it».¹⁶ Moreover, as an Italian phenomenologist wrote:

it is possible that a very young child or an animal doesn't have a self-consciousness, and isn't able to say "I". And yet it is part of their immediate (unreflected) experience to be a central reference point.. This "I" as a center precedes self-consciousness and self-awareness and even the practical understanding of meanings. It's an original I, *an element that can be conceived independently of the inter-subjective relation*. If we wanted to use the term nuclear consciousness, we would use it only in this context.¹⁷

Husserl states in this regard: «*self-perception is a reflection [...] and it presupposes in essence an unreflected consciousness*»,¹⁸ and elsewhere:

when I say I, I grasp myself in a simple reflection. But this self-experience [*Selbsterfahrung*] is like every experience [*Erfahrung*], and in particular every perception, a mere directing myself towards something that was already there for me, that was already conscious, but not thematically experienced, not noticed.¹⁹

Therefore, if the «I that is established in reflection leads to another I»,²⁰ such a reference makes it convenient for Husserl – similar to James' distinctions (1890) – to distinguish between:

I that I am" from the subject side and "I that I am" as *obiectum* for me, which is represented, formed, specifically intended in I-am: the Me [*das Mich*]. Here this means "the person" made for me, the I, that is present in consciousness as the Self.²¹

The psychological subject (the person, in these distinctions by Husserl) doesn't emerge in a solipsistic way: the self-conscious subject – the Self in the sense of extended consciousness²² – is in fact intrinsically social for the phenomenologist too. Husserl himself clarifies it unequivocally:

according to our expositions the concepts I-we are relative: the I requires the You, the We, the "Other". Besides, the I (the I as person) requires the relation to a world of things. Therefore, I, we, the world belong together.²³

Reflexive subjective consciousness thus implies initially sociality, interaction with others, language, culture, history and indeed, we can now say, it is the embodied nature of consciousness itself which reveals some specific ways to develop these implications and indications:

embodiment brings intersubjectivity and sociality into the picture, and draws attention to the question of how certain forms of self-consciousness are intersubjectively mediated, and may depend on one's social relations to others.²⁴

First, in fact, it is only the concrete experience of the other which in terms of the real genesis of the subject, makes reflexivity possible, that is the decentralization from one's body and ascribing intentional attitudes, an *ego* to the *alter's ego*: «*when this happens the child isn't his own body anymore: he has a body*».²⁵

Secondly – from an even more general point of view or phenomenological perspective on the subject – this self-reflexivity emerges by sharing an interactive dynamics in the common world where he empathically meets others and learns to relate reflexively to him/herself.²⁶

The extended Self emerges in relation to a world of real inter-subjective practices, a limit to the links between possible actions that appear to the subject as the real meanings of things:

understanding what are used to make objects, the child may experience as “meaningful” the behaviors of others, and therefore ascribe a mind to the other [...] then the objects become social objects, provided with a public meaning, common and inter-subjective, that is, symbols mediating the understanding of intentions of others.²⁷

Only insofar as the subject can access *a prospect* of meanings – encountered in the world and inter-subjectively presented as the *practice with* objects – and make them his own, thus opening up to a cultural world, can he become a proper personal identity, an *I* open to the possible, to temporality, reflexively able to look at *Self as another*²⁸ and empathically related to others in the sense of intentional subjects who have before them the same confines of practical references grasped by the subject, and the same meanings.

In order to develop the reflective and self-conscious Self – and develop a proper sense of personal identity – social interaction broadly speaking (both in its bodily aspects and in its specific symbolic-linguistic and socio-cultural inter-subjective praxis) is thus an essential condition.²⁹ As Mead argued: «the physiological conception or theory of consciousness is by itself inadequate; it requires supplementation from the socio-psychological point of view».³⁰

The Self as hyper-generalized sign

The personal identity of the psychological subject, whose minimal, pre-conceptual and ecological features are rooted – as Haselager, Broens and Quilici Gonzalez emphasized – in the dynamic possibilities of the lived body, also displays in an original and ineluctable way the mark of sociality, and its emergence is connected phenomenologically to the inter-subjective,³¹ practical and pragmatic dynamics of the construction of meaning and the use of signs:

we're related to a common surrounding world [*gemeinsame Umwelt*] – we are in a society of persons: both things belong to-

gether. We could not be persons for others if we had not in front of us, in the commonality and intentional connectedness of our life, a common surrounding world; in correlative terms: one thing constitutes itself essentially with the other.³²

The personal mind emerges therefore in relation to inter-subjectively generated and shared meanings and in their symbolic understanding involving otherness; the extended Self – the self-conscious subject – is manifested in the possibilities of action it encounters in the interactive dimension, trying out the social rules involved in using signs and taking part in language games generating the sense of experience,³³ thus opening up to symbolic expression of thought, both in communicative form as in the derived form of inner monologue or *talking to myself*.³⁴

My awareness of myself as one person among others, an awareness that I may frame from the perspective of others, attempting to see myself as they see me, involves a change in the attitude of self-consciousness. Within this attitude, judgments that I make about myself are constrained by social expectations and cultural values. This kind of social self-consciousness is always contextualized, as I try to understand how I appear to others, both in the way I look, and in the meaning of my actions. I find myself in specific contexts, with specific capabilities and dispositions, habits and convictions, and I express myself in a way that is reflected off of others, in relevant (socially defined) roles through my language and my actions.³⁵

If the Self – according to enactive and phenomenological approaches – is involved from the beginning in a dynamic of sense-making within which it is grasped correlative-ly as reflective consciousness, taking part, in semiotic-pragmatic terms, in the common linguistic games which specify the rise of meanings themselves, then its process of emergence

should be explored through a psychological model in which basic, embodied and higher processes do not picture separate worlds, but polarities of a whole dialectics.

Such a model must consider the mind as a system working through and/or on meanings, where every meaning – in line with what is stated above and in close relation to Wittgenstein³⁶ and Peirce's theories of sign and meaning³⁷ – must be approached as the product, rather than the cause, of sense-making, and therefore brought back onto a level of pragmatic, contextual, dialogical semiotics – namely a semiotics which no longer considers meaning as existing before sense-making (i.e. the use of the sign; language-games, in Wittgenstein's terminology), but as emerging from it.

This semiotic view of the mind, viewing psychological processes in terms of a dynamics of signs, exploring the micro-dynamics of sense-making through which meaning processes emerge and which mechanisms instantiate such processes, provides a general model of the constitution of signs, namely – in Peircean terms – the process through which a brute state of the world experienced in itself (*Firstness*) acquires the semiotic status of something standing for something else (*Thirdness*).³⁸

According to this view Identity is not at all an entity. We generally think of identity as an entity whose more or less invariant and homogeneous properties and qualities affect – regulate, motivate, constrain – the *psyche*: we *have* an identity, just as we have an arm or a car; we feel, think, behave, choose according to how such an entity is and works.

The basic background of this view is the assumption that invariance and variability are linked by a relationship of conflictual opposition: identity is what is equal to itself – the nucleon of invariance which remains so *despite* the changing of all the rest.

This leads us to consider the relation between the person and the world in terms of two general kinds of fields: those that allow the identity to reproduce through time and space and those that hinder such reproduction, which are therefore experienced in terms of conflict,

frustration, suffering, alienation – in sum: as events that threaten the stability of the identity.

However, there is another way of seeing identity too – namely, as *hyper-generalized sign* playing a basic regulative function in the dynamics of sense-making itself.³⁹ This basic function allows sense-making to reproduce through time, and so to generate the global sense of the stability of the intra-personal and inter-personal exchange of signs that we usually understand as “identity”.⁴⁰

These kinds of signs in fact regulate sense-making, using a process of abstractive generalization,⁴¹ in order to connect lower-order signs with each other and thus guarantee stability to the semiotic flow.⁴²

Now, the greater the distance between two signs (i.e. the lower the plausibility of their association), the greater the level of generalization required to keep the sense of continuity between them. For instance, consider two feelings, say shame (A) and anxiety (B). The person experiences them as similar and connected, given that their association has a high probability of occurring (i.e. there are many situations in which they tend to occur together).

Therefore, the association $A <> B$ will imply a low level of abstractive generalization – for instance simply one consisting of a reference to a specific indicator which is common to the situations in which $A <> B$ occurs (e.g. the embodied state associated with these feelings).

Consider now a situation in which the two feelings are very different from each other – say sadness (A') and happiness (B'). In this case the person experiencing $A' <> B'$ has to activate a higher level of abstractive generalization, in order to keep the sense of the continuity of the semiotic flow, and therefore of the sense of Self. For instance, the person might think/say: “I am very variable in my affect today”, or “What does it mean that I experience such contrasting feelings: maybe I have to consult a psychologist”, or “What the hell did I eat yesterday”.

Identity as hyper-generalized sign is thus triggered each time a level of abstraction associated with it is required for regulating the dis-

tance between semiotic signs. And this means that the greater the variability of the sense-making, the higher the probability that identity will emerge as regulative signs. In other words, a person can succeed in integrating some very different experiences – and in so doing can keep a sense of the continuity of the Self – only if she interprets them in terms of “these events are what-I-am-experiencing – they are part of the same field because I am always the same”. Identity must be understood as emergence from diversification, as the way of regulating the latter – rather than as resulting from the conflict between a stable Self and a destabilizing world.

In sum, according to the semiotic model of mind, stability of sense-making can lastly be interpreted as the micro-dynamic correlate of minimal or nuclear and pre-reflective Self. Approaching the stability of semiotic process over time as the dynamic source of nuclear Self and the latter as a product of sense-making, the Self as a hyper-generalized sign model provides for an integrated and continuous explanatory pattern of extended and reflective consciousness.

In fact, such a dynamic-semiotic model avoids every hypostatic prerequisite and allows us to look at the nuclear Self – regarded by phenomenological research, as we have seen, as a logical and intrinsic necessity to explain subjectivity – not as an entity but as a process strictly connected with the embodied and situated general semiotic dynamic of the emergence of personal identity itself.

Conclusions

Scientific, philosophical and psychological research explores, as we have seen, many valid constructs of the Self to investigate the various interconnected aspects and multiple dimensions constituting the complexity of the conscious mind of the personal subject in its various phenomenologically and cognitively related extensions.

Moreover, as we observed, if personal identity is properly attributed to the same process of meaning creation in which we grasp our-

selves as subjects – that is embodied self-conscious minds in an inter-subjective world of meanings and other subjects – it must emerge, in its regulative and stabilizing function, as a product of the same overall general dynamic of sense-making.

This integrates the trend of phenomenological analysis with the models of embodied and situated cognitive investigation of the Self that we have explored in this study. Reducing an explanation of subjective consciousness to a single dimension would not only preclude an understanding of the dynamic, integrated, global and continuous semiotic process which must frame the very emergence of the self-conscious mind, but would also prevent us from grasping the procedural, pragmatic-semiotic and non-reifiable nature of the Self.

Approaching the Self psychologically as a *hyper-generalized sign* could allow us, as we have suggested, to integrate multiple levels and dimensions (bodily, situated, embodied, experiential, intersubjective, social-pragmatic and linguistic) in a complex dynamic model of identity that can incorporate some phenomenological, enactive and social-psychological analysis of the minimal and extended Self without emphasizing partial divisions and subsequent hypostatization of some unilaterally considered dimension. As Francisco Varela stated in this regard:

not only in childhood, but throughout the rest of existence, life, mental life, the life of consciousness, the life of language or the mediated life of language, the whole cycle of empathic socially mediated interaction, I cannot separate from what we call consciousness. So once again it is not inside my head that all this takes place, but in a decentralized way [*excentré*], in the cycle. The problem of the neuronal correlates of consciousness is misplaced, because consciousness is not in the head. In short, consciousness is an emergence requiring the existence of these three phenomena, of these three cycles: with the body, with the world and with others.⁴³

Notes

¹ See A. CLARK, *Being There: Putting Brain, Body, and World Together Again*, MIT Press, Cambridge (MA) 1997; A. NOË, *Out of Our Heads: Why You Are not Your Brain and Other Lessons from the Biology of Consciousness*, Hill & Wang, New York 2009; F.J. VARELA, E. THOMPSON, E. ROSCH, *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Sciences and Human Experience*, MIT Press, Cambridge (MA) 1991.

² E. MORIN, *Seven Complex Lessons in Education for the Future*, UNESCO Publishing Paris 1999, p. 15.

³ It may be useful to give a list summarising these models of Self proposed by S. Gallagher and D. Zahavi (see S. GALLAGHER, D. ZAHAVI, *The Phenomenological Mind*, Routledge, 2008): (a) *material Self*, *social Self*, *spiritual Self* (see W. JAMES, *The Principles of Psychology*, voll. I-II, Dover, New York 1890); (b) *ecological Self*, *interpersonal Self*, *extended Self*, *private Self*, *conceptual Self* (see U. NEISSER, *Five Kinds of Self-knowledge*, in: «Philosophical Psychology», vol. I, n. 1, 1988, pp. 35-59); (c) *autobiographical Self*, *cognitive Self*, *contextualized Self*, *nuclear Self*, *embodied Self*, *empirical Self*, *fictional Self*, *minimal Self*, *neural Self* (see A. DAMASIO, *The Feeling Of What Happens: Body, Emotion and the Making of Consciousness*, Heinemann, London 1999; G. STRAWSON, *The Self and the SEMSET*, in: S. GALLAGHER, J. SHEAR (eds.) *Models of the Self*, Imprint Academic, Thorverton 1999, pp. 39-54). See also the comprehensive updated review of models of the Self in S. GALLAGHER (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of The Self*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2011.

⁴ W.F.G. HASELAGER, M. BROENS, M.E. QUILICI GONZALEZ, *The Importance of Sensing One's Movements in the World for the Sense of Personal Identity*, in: «Rivista Internazionale di Filosofia e Psicologia», vol. III, n. 1, 2012, pp. 1-11.

⁵ See E. HUSSERL, *Ideen zur einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Zweites Buch* (1912), in: E. HUSSERL, *Gesammelte Werke*, Bd. IV, hrsg. von M. BIEMEL, M. Nijhoff, Den Haag 1952; M. MERLEAU-PONTY, Gallimard, Paris 1945. By the term “lived body” (*Leib*) we refer to the classical phenomenological distinction between *Körper* (body in an objectivistic sense, given in the third person) and *Leib* (body experienced subjectively, at first hand), in the terms used by Husserl or, respectively, between “*le corps objectif*” and “*corps propre*” (or “*corps vécu*”) in Merleau-Ponty’s terminology.

⁶ See for instance the research on “Proto-Self” in A. DAMASIO, *The Feeling of What Happens*, cit.

⁷ M. SHEETS-JOHNSTONE, *Body and Movement: Basic Dynamic Principles*, in: S. GALLAGHER, D. SCHMICKING (eds.), *Handbook of Phenomenology and Cognitive Science*, Springer, Berlin 2010, pp. 217-234, here p. 219.

⁸ See J.J. GIBSON, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston 1979.

⁹ W.F.G. HASELAGER, M. BROENS, M.E. QUILICI GONZALEZ, *The Importance of Sensing One's Movements in the World for the Sense of Personal Identity*, cit., p. 5.

¹⁰ See S. GALLAGHER, *Phenomenological and Experimental Research on Embodied Experience*, lecture presented at PCRG - CREA, Paris 2000 URL - <http://www2.canisius.edu/~gallghr/paris2000.html>; S. GALLAGHER, *Philosophical Conceptions of the Self: Implications for Cognitive Science*, in: «Trends in Cognitive Science», vol. IV, n. 1, 2000, pp. 14-21; S. GALLAGHER, *How the Body Shapes the Mind*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2005; S. GALLAGHER, D. ZAHAVI, *The Phenomenological Mind*, cit.

¹¹ S. GALLAGHER, D. ZAHAVI, *Phenomenological Approaches to Self-Consciousness*, in: E.N. ZALTA (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (Winter 2010 Edition)* URL: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2010/entries/self-consciousness-phenomenological/>

¹² D. LEGRAND, *MySelf with No Body? Body, Bodily-Consciousness and Self-consciousness*, in: S. GALLAGHER, D. SCHMICKING (eds.), *Handbook of Phenomenology and Cognitive Science*, cit., pp. 184-200, here p. 189.

¹³ See M. MERLEAU-PONTY, *Phénoménologie de la perception*, Gallimard, Paris 1945; J.-P. SARTRE, *L'être et le néant*, Gallimard, Paris 1943.

¹⁴ S. GALLAGHER, D. ZAHAVI, *Phenomenological Approaches to Self-Consciousness*, cit.

¹⁵ G.H. MEAD, *Mind Self and Society from the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*, edited by C.W. MORRIS, Chicago University Press, Chicago 1934, p. 172.

¹⁶ E. HUSSERL, *Ideen zur einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Zweites Buch* (1912), cit., p. 252.

¹⁷ V. COSTA, *Fenomenologia dell'intersoggettività. Empatia, socialità, cultura*, Carocci, Rome 2010, p. 73.

¹⁸ E. HUSSERL, *Ideen zur einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Zweites Buch* (1912), cit., p. 248.

¹⁹ E. HUSSERL, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Dritter Band* (1929-1935), in: E.

HUSSERL, *Gesammelte Werke*, Bd. XV, hrsg. von I. KERN, M. Nijhoff, Den Haag 1973, pp. 492-493.

²⁰ *Ibidem*.

²¹ E. HUSSERL, *Ideen zur einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Zweites Buch* (1912), cit., p. 253.

²² See A. DAMASIO, *The Feeling of What Happens*, cit.

²³ E. HUSSERL, *Ideen zur einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Zweites Buch* (1912), cit., p. 288.

²⁴ S. GALLAGHER, D. ZAHAVI, *Phenomenological Approaches to Self-Consciousness*, cit.

²⁵ V. COSTA, *Fenomenologia dell'intersoggettività*, cit., p. 205.

²⁶ See V. COSTA, *Fenomenologia dell'intersoggettività*, cit.; E. HUSSERL, *Ideen zur einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Zweites Buch* (1912), cit.; E. HUSSERL, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Zweiter Band*, (1921-1928), in: E. HUSSERL, *Gesammelte Werke*, Bd. XIV, hrsg. von I. KERN, M. Nijhoff, Den Haag 1973; E. HUSSERL, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Dritter Band*, (1929-1935), cit.; D. ZAHAVI, *Husserl's Intersubjective Transformation of Transcendental Philosophy*, in: «The Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology», vol. XXVII, n. 3, 1996, pp. 228-245; D. ZAHAVI *Husserl und die transzendente Intersubjektivität. Eine Antwort auf die sprachpragmatische Kritik*, Kluwer, Dordrecht 1996.

²⁷ V. COSTA, *Fenomenologia dell'intersoggettività*, cit., p. 202.

²⁸ See P. RICOEUR, *Soi-même comme un autre*, Seuil, Paris 1990.

²⁹ See K.J. GERGEN, *An Invitation to Social Construction*, Sage, London 1999.

³⁰ G.H. MEAD, *Mind Self and Society from the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*, cit., p. 171.

³¹ See D. ZAHAVI, *Husserl's Intersubjective Transformation of Transcendental Philosophy*, cit.; D. ZAHAVI *Husserl und die transzendente Intersubjektivität*, cit.

³² E. HUSSERL, *Ideen zur einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Zweites Buch* (1912), cit., p. 191.

³³ See L. WITTGENSTEIN, *Notes for Lectures on "Private Experience" and "Sense Data"*, in: «The Philosophical Review», vol. LXXVII, n. 3, 1968, pp. 275-320; S. SALVATORE, *Social Life of the Sign: Sensemaking in Society*, in: J. VALSINER (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Culture and Psychology*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2012, pp. 241-254.

³⁴ See G.H. MEAD, *Mind Self and Society from the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*, cit.

³⁵ S. GALLAGHER, D. ZAHAVI, *Phenomenological Approaches to Self-Consciousness*, cit.

³⁶ See L. WITTGENSTEIN, *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1958.

³⁷ See C.S. PEIRCE, *Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce* (1897), vol. II, edited by C. HARTSHORNE, P. WEISS, Harvard University Press, Cambridge (MA).

³⁸ The way in which these issues are addressed owes a debt to psychoanalytic theory, in particular to Matte Blanco's formal rereading of the psychodynamic notion of primary process (see I. MATTE BLANCO, *The Unconscious as Infinite Sets. An Essays in Bi-Logic*, Gerald Duckworth & Co., London 1975). Such a theory enables us in fact to get a better understanding of the basic role played by affect in sensemaking. The recognition of affect as a basic component of the dynamics of sensemaking enables a comprehensive conceptualization of meaning, as such able to take into account consistently the phenomenological, subjective dimension of sensemaking, as well as the micro-dynamics supporting this dimension. See S. SALVATORE, M.F. FREDI, *Affect, Unconscious and Sensemaking. A Psychodynamic Semiotic and Dialogic Model*, in: «New Ideas in Psychology», vol. XXIX, n. 2, 2011, pp. 119-135.

³⁹ S. SALVATORE, J. VALSINER, *Idiographic Science on its Way: Towards Making Sense of Psychology*, in: S. SALVATORE, J. VALSINER, S. STROUT, J. CLEGG (eds.), *Yearbook of Idiographic Science*, vol. II, Firera Publishing Group, Roma 2009, pp. 9-19.

⁴⁰ S. SALVATORE, *Psychotherapy Research Needs Theory. Outline for an Epistemology of the Clinical Exchange*, in: «Integrative Psychological and Behavioural Science», XLV, n. 3, 2011, pp. 366-388; S. SALVATORE, J. VALSINER, *Identity in the Homogenizing Plurality of Life*, in: S. SALVATORE, A. GENNARO, J. VALSINER (eds), *Yearbook of Idiographic Science*, vol. V, Information Age Publishing, Charlotte (NC), in press.

⁴¹ J. VALSINER, *Culture in Minds and Societies: Foundations of Cultural Psychology*, Sage, New Delhi 2007.

⁴² See S. SALVATORE, *Psychotherapy Research Needs Theory. Outline for an Epistemology of the Clinical Exchange*, cit.

⁴³ F.J. Varela, *La coscienza nelle neuroscienze*, Interview with Sergio Benvenuto, in: *Enciclopedia Multimediale delle Scienze Filosofiche*. URL: <http://www.emsf.raai.it/interviste>