

# AZIMUTH

*Philosophical Coordinates in Modern and Contemporary Age*

**XII (2024), nr. 23**



*Experiencing.*

*Perception, Representation, and Action  
between Phenomenology and Pragmatism*

*Esperire.*

*Percezione, rappresentazione e azione  
tra fenomenologia e pragmatismo*

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edited by • a cura di

FEDERICA BUONGIORNO – GIOIA LAURA IANNILLI

FEDERICA BUONGIORNO – ROBERTA LANFREDINI, PHENOMENOLOGY, PRAGMATISM AND THE QUESTION OF MONISM. HUSSERL, JAMES, AND MEAD IN COMPARISON

*Abstract:* The aim of this article is to highlight some fundamental similarities between Husserl's phenomenology, on one hand, and the pragmatism of James and Mead, on the other hand, which revolve around the common critique of the dualism of subject and object and the valorization of the empirical quality of experience, namely the priority of perception over the operations of abstraction and objectivation typical of positive science. These common assumptions contribute to delineating in all three authors a position that we define here, with reference to Russell's well-known label, as "monistic"; however, these are three variants of monism that present crucial differences. While in the case of James and Mead it is correct to speak of a *radical neutral monism* – where the very duality or polarity of subject and object is called into question – in Husserl, we should rather speak of a *tempered experiential monism*, in which a polarity or tension between subject and object is maintained while simultaneously affirming the priority of the unity of subjective experience. Our goal is to substantiate a monistic interpretation of intentionality and experience, which allows for a richer description of knowledge as a process. The proposed reading assumes that the authors analyzed are actively attempting to move from an ontology of substances (static) to an ontology of processes (dynamic).

*Keywords:* pragmatism, phenomenology, monism, dualism, experience

AGOSTINO MARCONI, PHENOMENOLOGY OF IDENTITY AND GENESIS OF THE SELF. A MEETING BETWEEN SARTRE AND PRAGMATIST PSYCHOLOGY

*Abstract:* In this article I would like to propose an attempt at integration between Sartrean phenomenology and the psychology of James and Mead, with respect to the problem of the self. I argue that in both traditions we can see a critical consideration of the visions on identity that had characterized modern metaphysics, inheriting in this some intuitions of Humean philosophy but overcoming it towards more coherent and comprehensive conceptualizations. The synthesis of these two traditions allows to understand the self as a temporal reorganization of the experiences that each individual implements through the internalization of the intersubjective relationships in which it develops.

*Keywords:* subjectivity, phenomenology, psychology of self, narrative self, transcendence

CHRISTIAN FRIGERIO, FROM REGIONAL ONTOLOGY TO MODES OF EXISTENCE. HUSSERL, JAMES, AND THE MULTIVOCITY OF BEING

*Abstract:* Thanks to the work of Bruno Latour, the concept of "modes of existence" has become once again a pivotal theme in philosophy. This paper compares two traditions that have been crucial in the development of this concept: the phenomenological tradition of Edmund Husserl, and the "pragmatic-speculative" tradition that finds its great forefather in William James, and especially in the chapter of his *Principles of Psychology* (1890) about *The Perception of Reality*. The argument of the paper will

be that, while Husserl's contribution was fundamental in renewing discussions about the multiplicity of modes of existence, it is James's elaboration of this concept that allows to respect two demands expressed by Latour, whose urgency remains untouched: the need to counter the excesses of "modernization" through an "ecologization" of our practices, and the need to begin a fair diplomatic interaction with non-modern collectives. A final and very sketchy comparison between Latour's proposal and Husserl's *Krisis* should show how the latter retains some typically "modern" traits of which a philosophy of modes of existence had better do without.

*Keywords:* William James, Edmund Husserl, modes of existence, Bruno Latour, phenomenology

#### SEBASTIAN LEDERLE, THE PRECARIOUS ARTICULATION OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE IN WILLIAM JAMES' *THE WILL TO BELIEVE*

*Abstract:* The article is based on the assumption of a productive tension between phenomenology and pragmatism, which can be centered around the concept of experience. Experience is understood as a bridging concept between the two philosophical traditions, through which similarities and differences can be brought into focus depending on the context in question. In particular, it is the phenomenological experience of the world, in which worldly situatedness and a longing for transcending it as a whole, providing a link to a pragmatist philosophy of religion. The article turns to William James' text *The Will to Believe* as it presents an influential account of how religious practices and experience can be conceptualized in an undogmatic way, while also reflecting on religious experience as one mode of explorative experience among others. According to James, what is specific for religious experience and practices consists in an existential and affective relation to reality as a whole, which is perceived as intrinsically meaningful. James introduces the concept of the religious hypothesis and a specific option associated with it, which he defends against various agnostic-secular objections. His main consideration is that even the denial of a religious worldview makes operational use of assumptions about reality that it cannot fully justify discursively. Rather, science and scientific community do both rest on what James calls practical faith, without which no objective knowledge can be achieved. Therefore James holds that faith in a broader sense should be seen as a common ground of religious and non-religious hypotheses. Religious experience is, according to the thesis of the article, a precarious practice that is articulated and shaped in an equally precarious way. It implies an awareness of its very own openness and contingency, that generates a strong sense of commitment among religious believers. What can be called the post-secular precarity of religious experience and practices, as it is further shown, lies in the risk that it means to surrender to reality as an uncontrollable process, and at the same time to share this reality with others for whom religion plays no significant role.

*Keywords:* practical faith, religious experience, religious hypothesis, precarious articulation, explorative empiricism

#### SHAUN GALLAGHER, SCIENCE, ART AND NATURE. A TAPESTRY OF PHENOMENOLOGY AND PRAGMATISM

*Abstract:* I trace the overlapping interests in the science of embryology and the philosophy of art shared by Dewey and Merleau-Ponty both of whom were interested in the insights these studies offered for our understanding of nature. Both philosophers shared connections with the work of Gesell and Coghill, and a mutual interest in artists such as Matisse and Cézanne. What they find expressed in both embryology and their considerations of perception and painting are principles that apply more generally to nature: principles of continuous reintegration, interpenetration/intertwinement between structure and function.

*Keywords:* Dewey, Merleau-Ponty, embryology, Matisse, Cézanne, nature

#### FRANCESCA Papi, BEYOND THE DICHOTOMY THROUGH THE RESTRUCTURING POWER OF CREATIVE LANGUAGES

*Abstract:* In my paper, I will clarify the limits of the phenomenological attempt to overcome the subject-object dichotomy by adopting a pragmatist approach to the organism-environment interaction and therefore to linguistic practices. The traditional dichotomy between subject and object has long been considered a fundamental feature of our understanding of the world. However, this study proposes an innovative perspective that seeks to solve this incurable rift, highlighting the crucial role of language in shaping even the perception of ourselves and our environment. Drawing on a critical review of philosophical literature, we will examine how language is not simply a tool of communication, but rather an active agent in the process of reality construction. The goal is to regain the unity of living by starting from the centrality of that experiential threshold between whose mesh the various articulations of experience stand out.

*Keywords:* body, experience, language, phenomenology, pragmatism

#### KENNETH W. STICKERS, “VALUE” AND “THE QUALITATIVE” IN THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF MAX SCHELER AND JOHN DEWEY’S PRAGMATISM

*Abstract:* Following an examination of the context for this article’s analyses, its second part compares notions of “value” in the phenomenology of Max Scheler and John Dewey’s pragmatism and suggests ways in which those philosophies might support, complement, clarify, and enrich each other. As interesting as such comparisons might be, more interesting is the comparison of Scheler’s notion of value (*Wert*) and Dewey’s notion of “quality”, or “the qualitative”, and in this article’s last part I argue that Dewey’s notion of “the qualitative” is very close to Scheler’s notion of “value”, indeed much closer to it than to his idea of “value”.

*Keywords:* values, qualitative, Scheler, Dewey, American Pragmatism

DANIELE NUCCILLI, DEWEY AND SCHAPP ON HISTORIES. AT THE CROSSROADS BETWEEN PRAGMATISM AND PHENOMENOLOGY

*Abstract:* In this paper I analyze the genesis and issues related to the concept of histories in the works of John Dewey and Wilhelm Schapp. Although the two authors belong to different philosophical movements and adopt different methods, the concept of histories emerges in their work in response to similar philosophical questions. After considering the methodological perspectives of the two authors and showing how they both criticize the exclusively theoretical cognitive approach, I explore how Dewey and Schapp intend the concept of histories, highlighting methodological and conceptual affinities and differences.

*Keywords:* Dewey, Schapp, histories, phenomenology, empirical naturalism

DANILO MANCA, THE EXPERIENCE OF THE ENVIRONMENT. ON THE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN PHENOMENOLOGY AND PRAGMATISM IN ENACTIVISM

*Abstract:* This article aims to study the match and the mismatch between pragmatism and phenomenology in conceiving of embodied mind-environment interaction. After investigating the stages that historically made the encounter of phenomenology and pragmatism possible in the enactive approach to mind, I will look for the crucial assumption of their convergence, and I will discuss the problematic identification of the phenomenological notions of lifeworld and living body respectively with the notion of niche and organism.

*Keywords:* niche construction, lifeworld, Leib, enactivism, John Dewey

DOMINIQUE PRADELLE – FEDERICA BUONGIORNO, APPENDIX. A REGIONAL PHENOMENOLOGY OF MATHEMATICAL IDEALITIES. INTERVIEW WITH DOMINIQUE PRADELLE

*Abstract:* The interview takes its cue from the publication of Dominique Pradelle's latest two books (*Intuition et idéalités*, Paris, PUF, 2020, and *Être et genèse des idéalités*, Paris, PUF, 2023) dedicated to the question of intuition and the experience of mathematical idealities. The interview retraces the most relevant problematic and conceptual nodes in Pradelle's work and the complex phenomenological topic of intuition – particularly when it pertains to ideal objects – with reference to the contemporary philosophical and mathematical debate.

*Keywords:* Dominique Pradelle, phenomenology, mathematics, intuition, idealities