
ROY DINGS

Ruhr University Bochum – Institute for Philosophy II
r.p.j.m.dings@gmail.com

PSYCHOPATHOLOGY, PHENOMENOLOGY AND AFFORDANCES

abstract

Can affordances help in understanding psychiatric illness and psychopathological experience? In recent work on the philosophy of psychiatry and phenomenology, the answer appears to be a clear ‘yes’, but some recent worries have emerged that the affordance-concept might be “insufficiently discerning” and thus ill-suited to make sense of psychiatric illness and experience. In this paper I briefly review recent attempts to use the affordance-concept to make sense of psychopathology, as well as the worries voiced by the critics. I argue that much of this criticism is, in fact, best understood as a call for more research and offer some exploratory considerations on how this research might proceed. Specifically, I argue that an improved understanding of the self-referentiality that is inherent to experiencing affordances can be useful for psychiatry.

keywords

affordances, psychopathology, phenomenology, solicitations, self-referentiality

1. Introduction Does the framework of affordances facilitate our understanding of psychopathology and pathological experiences? Or more generally, what is the utility of the affordance-concept in the context of psychiatric illness?

Recent research in phenomenology and philosophy of psychiatry is riddled with ‘affordance-talk’ and one gets the impression that there is somewhat of an implicit agreement that affordances can in fact help us better understand psychiatric illness and psychopathological experiences (see e.g. De Haan *et al.*, 2013; Kim & Kim, 2017; Krueger & Colombetti, 2018). Some recent critics have questioned that implicit agreement, and note that the affordance-concept might be “insufficiently discerning” and therefore ill-suited for making sense of psychiatric illness and experience (see e.g. Ratcliffe 2015; Ratcliffe & Broome, in press).

In this paper I briefly review some of the recent attempts to capture psychopathology in terms of affordances, as well as the points of criticism that were voiced against these attempts. I will argue that these points of criticism contain no knock-down argument for why affordance-talk cannot be useful, but should rather be seen as a call for more research into the phenomenology of affordances. In the remainder of the paper I set out to offer some exploratory considerations on how the affordance-concept can be made more useful for understanding psychopathology. Specifically, I emphasize how researchers ought to pay more attention to the broad self-referentiality of affordances, and how being sensitive to the ambiguity of human ‘action’ might help to do so.

2. Recent trend of using affordance-concept to make sense of psychopathology Largely in tandem with an increase in research on embodiment in psychopathology, is a trend to use the concept of *affordances* for understanding psychopathology. That is, there are many researchers who in recent years have argued that affordances may facilitate our understanding of psychopathology, anomalous experiences, treatments or treatment-effects. Some authors address psychopathology or treatment more generally (Fuchs, 2007; Fuchs & Schlimme, 2009; Koster, 2017; Röhricht, *et al.*, 2017; Kronsted, 2018; Krueger & Colombetti, 2018; Gallagher, 2018a), whereas others have a more precise focus and argue that, for instance, we can better understand autism (Loveland, 1991; Hellendoorn, 2014; Kiverstein, 2015; Constant *et al.*, 2018; Roberts *et al.*, 2018), depression (Seniuk, 2015) or schizophrenia (Sass, 2004; Nelson *et al.*, 2013; Kim & Kim, 2017; Krueger, 2018) if we make use of the affordance-concept.

To be fair, this overview is not exhaustive, nor does it do justice to the intricate differences between various accounts. That is, some authors seem to mainly adhere to an embodied/ecological/enactive/embedded position and more or less take it for granted that affordances play a role within that theoretical position. In other words, they buy into the 4E framework rather than specifically to the affordance-concept. Others only refer to affordances on occasion, seeing it as a useful tool to put into words their findings or ideas (perhaps for stylistic reasons). But for some, affordances play a more crucial role.

Kim & Kim (2017) for instance argue to re-conceptualize schizophrenia in terms of failures to perceive affordances (and Hellendoorn [2014] seems to do something similar for autism). In the case of De Haan *et al.* (2013), their understanding of the treatment effects of deep brain stimulation (DBS) for obsessive-compulsive behavior hinges on the affordance-concept. And Gallagher (2018b) similarly cashes out alterations in autonomy following treatments such as DBS in terms of affordances. What these authors appear to converge on is that framing psychopathology and/or psychopathological experiences in terms of affordances is helpful.

In fact the use of the affordance-concept in recent (philosophical) writings on psychiatric illness seems to be so widespread that an elaborate introduction into what affordances are seems to be superfluous. That is, there appears to be an implicit agreement *that* affordances are useful, and because of that agreement, there is no need to justify this application or to provide an elaborate analysis of what the affordance-concepts entails.

Some authors have questioned this implicit agreement and have voiced their worries that the affordance-concept may be more of a hype rather than actually useful in understanding psychopathological experiences.

In a recent chapter, Ratcliffe & Broome (in press, p.14) set out to investigate “whether or not phenomenological changes in psychiatric illness can be captured in terms of affordances”.¹ In other words, they are interested in the “*utility* of the affordance concept – whether, when and how it serves to illuminate something that would be murkier without it”. Their own position entails that the concept of affordances “remains too blunt a tool and only gets us to the beginning of a phenomenological inquiry into how possibilities are experienced”.

In earlier work, Ratcliffe (2015, p.61, note 24) made a similar point:

Things do not simply ‘afford’ activities; they appear significant to us in all sorts of ways. It is not helpful to say that a bull affords running away from, while a cream cake affords eating. What is needed [...] are distinctions between the many ways in which things appear significant to us and, in some cases, solicit activity.

On the opposite side of the debate are researchers who have tried to investigate precisely the phenomenology of affordances, that is, who try to alter the affordance concept such as to accommodate the various ways in which things may appear significant to us (see e.g. Withagen *et al.* 2012; De Haan *et al.* 2013; Rietveld & Kiverstein 2014; Dings 2018). Ratcliffe & Broome (in press, p.16) briefly discuss these authors and summarize their ideas (i.e. their revisions to the original affordance-concept, cf. Gibson 1986) as follows:

3. Critics of using affordances to make sense of psychopathology

¹ Ratcliffe & Broome (in press) target not only the affordance-concept, but also the recent construal of psychopathological experiences in terms of ‘salience’. Many of their arguments pertain to both concepts, but for present purposes I will focus on affordances.

- Affordances are embedded in forms of life, reflecting not only abilities but also skills and associated norms;
- experiences of affordance are more fragile and depend on idiosyncratic, contingent, changeable cares and concerns;
- affordances reflect, to varying degrees, the structure of a life;
- the field of affordances can be further analyzed in terms of width, depth, height, and affective coloration.

Although Ratcliffe & Broome admit that these additions provide an improvement to the original affordance concept, they nevertheless feel that it remains “insufficiently discerning”. Let me briefly summarize some of the points they make to support this claim.

- * Experienced affordances (or *solicitations*) tend to be construed in terms of inviting or soliciting a certain action, but this does not seem to cover the full range of how our perceptual experiences may relate to potential activities. For example: an object may no longer afford something, or afford the impossibility to be acted upon.
- * It is unclear how and to what extent one might experience affordances for other people. A bystander might observe an individual who is conducting a particular task and experience affordances ‘for that individual’. But how far do such experiences go? As Ratcliffe & Broome put it: “do we experience something as ‘affording p for them but not for me’, as ‘affording p for me, q for her, and r for them’, as ‘affording p for them and also p for us but only if they don’t get here first’?” (p. 17).
- * The affordance concept really starts to give way when emphasizing the diachronic structure of human concerns. That is, it is unclear how a ‘here and now’ possibility is to be distinguished from a possibility that is more spread out in time or lies in the (near or far) future. According to Ratcliffe & Broome this requires the specification of ‘content’ for affordance-experiences. What is required is an indication of *what* is experienced when one experiences a particular affordance (in order to distinguish that experience from another affordance-experience).
- * Affordance-experience need not be merely perceptual. It is unclear how other modalities of intentionality relate to affordances (e.g. think of imagining a possibility for action, or remembering one).

These considerations let Ratcliffe & Broome conclude that “the affordance-concept lacks the phenomenological depth required to analyze all-enveloping experiential changes associated with severe psychiatric illness”. In brief, their worry is that the affordance-concept is “insufficiently discerning”, “lacks the required discriminatory power” and “should only serve as a starting point”. What would be a better take on this issue, Ratcliffe & Broome note, “is to acknowledge the many subtly but importantly different ways in which human experience is permeated by a sense of the possible than to mask this complexity and diversity by settling for concepts that are insufficiently discerning”.

How to respond to these worries and points of criticism?

To the more optimistic reader, many of the points raised by Ratcliffe & Broome read as questions for future research rather than definitive points of criticism.² Moreover, many of the

² In fact, Ratcliffe & Broome end with a sort of “to do list”, which includes an agenda of what research on the phenomenology of affordances should be able to account for, such as “[T]he kind of significant possibility involved; The degree of determinacy with which Y is experienced; How Y relates to and perhaps integrates a range of other experienced affordances; The specificity of any activities solicited by X ”, etc.

points they raise are already acknowledged by the researchers they aim to criticize. For instance, there has been emerging research that tries to see how longer term concerns and temporal anticipation should be thought of in an affordance-framework (Van Dijk & Rietveld, 2018; Dings, 2018), as well as the way in which social and cultural aspects of our experience relate to affordance perception (Rietveld & Kiverstein, 2014; Van Dijk & Rietveld, 2017). In addition, the idea of an object “anti-affording” actions has been acknowledged and discussed (albeit briefly) (Dings, 2018). Furthermore, there have been attempts to see how the uniquely personal affectively laden experience of affordances can best be understood (Withagen, 2018; Dings 2018). Finally, there has been work that tries to understand affordances in different modalities such as imagination (Bruineberg, Rietveld & Chemero, 2018). Crucially, the point is not that what these researchers have accomplished so far serves as a full-blown argument for the validity and usefulness of the affordance-concept in trying to understand psychiatric illness and experience. Indeed their findings are not nearly sufficient for that task. But the criticism voiced by Ratcliffe & Broome is rather unfair, in the sense that a field of investigation that is just starting to emerge is criticized for not being fully developed yet. So Ratcliffe & Broome are correct, I believe, that there is a tendency in recent literature in philosophy of psychiatry in which “the word ‘affordance’ becomes a placeholder, a blank to be filled in”. But there is also emerging research that is trying to do precisely that – to ‘fill in’ the concept by elucidating the rich phenomenology that can be associated with experiencing affordances. In doing so, many authors draw on the writings of e.g. Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger and Koffka (cf. De Haan *et al.*, 2013; Kiverstein, Van Dijk & Rietveld, 2019).

In the remainder of this paper I will try to further contribute to the advancement of this trend by offering some explorative considerations on how the affordance-concept can be made (more) useful for making sense of psychiatric illness and disordered experiences.

To start, it is important to note that when researchers try to make use of the affordance-concept in understanding psychopathology, they are typically interested in *relevant* affordances (i.e. solicitations or invitations) rather than in affordances *per se*. This is important because for an affordance to be experienced as relevant, it has to entail a degree of self-referentiality. That is, it being relevant says something not only about the possibility for action itself, but also something about the individual to whom it is relevant. In Heideggerian terms, soliciting affordances are selfwordly (*selbstweltliche*) experiences (Heidegger GA 58; 61) and as such can be useful in clinical practice.

In this respect, Glas (2019) has recently offered a thorough and refined analysis of self-referentiality and its implications for understanding psychiatric illness as well as clinical practice. Glas highlights how affective experiences, including emotions and action tendencies, always tell us something about *both* the situation that elicited that experience as well as about the individual having the experience. This self-referentiality can serve as a heuristic in the treatment of personality disorders (Strijbos & Glas, 2018) and can play an important role in psychiatric self-management (Glas, 2017). An in-depth discussion of this framework goes beyond the scope of this paper.³ For present purposes, it suffices to acknowledge that self-referentiality of experiences is important for psychiatry, and that an account of affordances that accommodates this self-referentiality would thereby be more beneficial to psychiatry. Of course self-referentiality was already present in Gibson’s pioneering work on affordances. He famously argued that ‘to perceive the world is to co-perceive oneself’ (Gibson, 1986, p. 141).

4. Making the affordance-concept more useful for psychiatry: Incorporating self-referentiality

3 To illustrate, the rich analysis of Glas (2019) distinguishes self-referentiality (which has first-, second- and third-order forms) from self-relatedness, self-awareness and self-interpretation.

But as I have argued in previous work (Dings, 2018), affordances can have a much broader self-referentiality than is typically acknowledged. Much research on affordances has focused solely on the embodied character of our interaction with possibilities for action: perceiving a chair entails co-perceiving your bodily configuration and bodily capacities. However, particularly in the case of psychiatric illness, what is at stake is a person with a certain history, dreams, social roles, narratives and values (cf. Glas, 2019). The phenomenology of affordances has to be able to accommodate that full range of self-aspects, and thus it needs to be investigated how affordances can be self-referential in a *broader* sense.

Interestingly, Ratcliffe & Broome (in press, p. 6) seem to highlight the importance of (broad) self-referentiality when they say that “what appears salient in a given situation and context of activity is often just what we are most concerned about, something that *reflects* a range of different commitments, values, habits and projects” (italics added). Moreover, elucidating the self-referentiality of affordances (i.e. how your values, narratives and projects might be ‘reflected’ in the soliciting experience) can shed light on their ‘content’, as Ratcliffe & Broome call it, as well as how a synchronic experience of a possibility for action relates to diachronic concerns.

In sum, one way (but surely not the only way!) to make the affordance-concept more useful and apt for psychiatric practice and for understanding psychopathological experience, is for it to incorporate (broad) self-referentiality.

5. Self-referential affordances, diachronic concerns and phenomenological ambiguity

In previous work I already tried to shed light on how diachronic concerns affect our experiences of affordances (Dings, 2018; 2019). I highlighted that our experience of affordances depends on their relevance to our concerns. But the heterogeneity of our concerns (e.g. some are diachronic and have been identified with) leads to heterogeneity in our (bodily) phenomenology of experiencing possibilities for action.

Another angle from which to elucidate our experience of affordances is to zoom in on the fundamental *ambiguity of action*. What I have in mind here is the following: affordances are taken to be possibilities for action. But reflection on (human) agency shows that there are particular structures to be discerned in our agency, and those structural features may affect our phenomenology in various ways. In this section I will explore two features inherent in human ‘action’ (in the context of affordances being possibilities *for action*), both of which have phenomenological counterparts and have implications for self-referentiality.

The first feature of human agency that I will discuss is that actions can have a ‘X by Y by Z’-structure.⁴ That is, one carries out action X by carrying out action Y which in turn is carried out by performing action Z. For example, I can be “contributing to society” by “cleaning the street” by “bending down and picking up trash”. Thus, we can describe or identify an action on a more coarse-grained and abstract level, as well as on a more fine-grained and concrete level. What is crucial for present purposes is that different levels of identifying action affect our phenomenology. Colloquially put: *what we think we are doing* may have an effect on our agential phenomenology. To illustrate, an experience of “contributing to society” may differ significantly from an experience of “bending down and picking up trash”, even though they may arise whilst carrying out the same bodily action.

Indeed there is a wealth of psychological research on how identifying actions on a ‘low-level’ (i.e. in terms of *how* to carry out an action) versus a ‘high-level’ (i.e. in terms of *why* the action is carried out) may affect the fluidity, flexibility and stability of how we carry out our actions,

⁴ Much of what is written here is inspired by existing work in philosophy of action. For instance, the structure of action mentioned here is what Goldman (1970) called a ‘generative’ structure.

and thereby its related phenomenology (see e.g. Vallacher & Wegner 1987; 1989; Gallagher & Marcel 1999).⁵ In an analogous manner, what I experience an object as affording might also be more ‘low-level’ (i.e. a piece of trash affording picking up) or ‘high-level’ (i.e. a piece of trash affording contributing to society by cleaning the street).⁶

Conversely, human agency can have an ‘X in order to Y in order to Z’-structure. In terms of our example: I can pick up trash *in order to* clean the streets *in order to* contribute to society.

To better understand the associated phenomenology, we might turn to Heidegger’s analysis in *Being and Time* of how there are different ways of being involved with the world (Heidegger 1962). The various components of our involvements include an “in-which” (e.g. the context within which one is carrying out the action), a “with-which” (e.g. the objects or people with whom the action is carried out), an “in-order-to” (i.e. what one tries to accomplish with the particular action), a “towards-which” (i.e. what the encompassing goal is that one tries to accomplish with that action) and a “for-the-sake-of-which” (i.e. the overall goal one has, or the final state one is trying to achieve). These latter components in particular (“in order to”, “towards-which” and “for-the-sake-of-which”) are important for present purposes, as they cover multiple timescales and kinds of concerns. They can thereby shed light on making affordance-experiences more discerning, as they enable us to see how such experiences might *reflect* our temporally extended concerns. Specifically, they can help us to make sense of the *purposiveness* that is often inherent to agential phenomenology (cf. Horgan, Tienson & Graham, 2003).⁷

Now the point here is not that Heidegger has provided us with a fully fleshed out analysis that we could simply copy onto the affordance-concept. But given that his ideas similarly pertained to how agents experience possibilities (some of which are ‘for acting’), there is likely more to be found here. For instance, I believe that many affordance-researchers have merely emphasized the “in-order-to” character of affordances, while neglecting the “for-the-sake-of-which” that similarly affects their phenomenological character.

Let me further illustrate the points that I have made so far by means of an example. The example is taken from a study by De Leersnyder *et al.* (2018) who investigated emotional experiences and their connection to diachronic concerns. In their study, they report on two individuals (Peter and Jasmine) who received their driver’s license. For both, this experience has a positive valence. But whereas Peter reported mostly feelings of ‘pride’, Jasmine also reported feelings of ‘closeness’ and ‘respect’. When elaborating on these feelings, Jasmine reports that getting her driver’s license “*means I can finally bring my children to a mall or to the McDonald’s every now and then. I can also take the car shopping, so that my family doesn’t have to carry heavy groceries anymore*” (ibid., p. 597, italics added).

Although De Leersnyder *et al.*’s study does not employ the affordance-concept, I think we can for present purposes reframe their findings by asking what a driver’s license *affords*. Or more

5 It goes beyond the scope of this paper to provide a thorough discussion of ‘action identification theory’ [AIT] (but see Vallacher & Wegner 2011 for an overview of research). Moreover, the point is not that AIT can replace an affordance-based view. Rather, I believe that psychological research including AIT, which tends to focus on high-level meaningful identifications of action, should be reconciled with ecological or affordance-based research which tends to focus on low-level concrete identifications of action (see Dings, in preparation).

6 In Dings (2018) I discussed in what respects this agent’s phenomenology might differ (e.g. in terms of mineness, valence and force). With the example of picking up trash and contributing to society, a moral ‘felt demand’ might also be part of the phenomenology, where the agent does not feel solicited, but feels that she *ought* to pick up the trash or contribute to society (cf. Nörenberg 2019).

7 Although this too falls outside of the scope of this paper, it is noteworthy that there is again a wealth of psychological research on exactly the purposiveness of our actions (see e.g. Deci & Ryan 1985), much of which originated from phenomenological considerations (cf. deCharms 1968).

generally, we can ask how Peter and Jasmine's field of affordances has changed after they have attained their license. Then it seems plausible that in the case of Jasmine, the driver's license is not experienced *merely* as affording 'legally driving a car', but is also experienced in terms of "in-order-to's" (e.g. to bring one's children's to the mall) as well as in terms of a "for-the-sake-of-which" (e.g. being a caring parent). Conversely we can also make sense of Jasmine's experience as the driver's license affording her the action of "being a good parent" by affording her the action of "taking my children to wherever they want to go" and so forth. At any rate, what is crucial is that Jasmine's experience contains a broad form of self-referentiality, where her diachronic concerns (e.g. of wanting to be a good parent) are reflected in her experience. It is precisely because of who Jasmine is -namely someone who cares for her family- that she has the experience she has. To use the phrase that Ratcliffe & Broome use, Jasmine's phenomenology is affected by her "range of different commitments, values, habits and projects". De Leersnyder *et al.* come to a similar conclusion:

Both Peter and Jasmine considered the situation of getting a driver's license 'emotional' and 'positive' because it was both relevant and conducive to a goal they had set for themselves. Yet, the situation was relevant to Peter because he had accomplished a personal goal, whereas it was relevant to Jasmine because it enabled her to help her family. Peter and Jasmine thus differed in the concerns they considered to be at stake in getting a driver's license (ambition and success vs. loyalty and helping others) – a difference we hypothesize to be linked to the difference in the emotions they experienced (pride for Peter, but pride, closeness and respect for Jasmine). (De Leersnyder *et al.* 2018, p. 598)

6. Broad self-referentiality, authenticity and autonomy

To briefly recap the last sections: I have highlighted that (broad) self-referentiality may be useful for clinical practice (in line with Glas, 2019). I then showed that we can find such broad self-referentiality in the by-by and in-order-to structures of human agency, as these shed light on how the acting bodily agent in the here-and-now is related to its diachronic concerns that stretch beyond the current context. Affordances, as possibilities for *action*, may similarly be experienced with respect to these by-by and in-order-to structures. And so a complete analysis of agents' fields of affordances, if it were to be of more use in psychiatric contexts, should include *meaningful* and abstract affordances in addition to concrete or 'low-level' affordances. In particular, the broad self-referentiality of affordances becomes important when we try to make sense of issues of *authenticity* and *autonomy* in psychopathology, as such issues tend to be more intimately connected to diachronic concerns.

Here is an example: with regard to the autonomy of psychiatric patients who received deep brain stimulation (DBS), Gallagher (2018b, p. 9) writes: "we can think of [their] autonomy in terms of the affordances available to any particular agent in any particular situation". Similarly, authenticity or authentic self-experience of a DBS patient may be seen as an instance where "their field of affordances now *reflects* what *really matters* to them" (De Haan *et al.* 2013, p.8, italics added).

But a field of affordances, by definition, consists of possibilities for action that *matter* to the agent (in the sense of being relevant, cf. Rietveld & Kiverstein 2014). But as Ratcliffe (2015) emphasized, things can matter in different ways. So how to flesh out the intuitively plausible idea that some objects or their affordances *really matter* to someone? What does it mean to 'really matter' as opposed to mattering more generally? I would argue that what is at stake in issues of authenticity (and, to a lesser degree perhaps, autonomy) are the affordances with a broad self-referential character. That is, those that are identified at a higher level of abstraction and are relevant to our diachronic concerns, values, habits and narratives. To return to the example

of Jasmine and Peter receiving their driver's license, what *matters* to Jasmine, in terms of her autonomy and authenticity, is not the affordance of 'legally driving a car', but rather the more abstract affordance of the license enabling her to take care of her family. That is the 'for-the-sake-of-which' at stake, and it is because of this that the license is experienced as *meaningful*. So the suggestion would be for affordance-researchers to devote more attention to elucidating the high-level, abstract and meaningful forms of human behavior, for several reasons. First, it puts us in a better position to address Ratcliffe & Broome's criticisms that the 'content' of affordances is unclear and that it has not been shown how the notion of affordances ties in with someone's "range of different commitments, values, habits and projects". Second, it enables us to accommodate the *active* stance that people may adopt towards their own behavior. That is, people self-regulate and may thus actively reflect on and, based on their diachronic concerns, try to *shape* their field of affordances (Dings, 2018; 2019). The third point is connected to the previous one and particularly relevant for present purposes: reflecting on and changing the construal or identification of someone's actions appears to be a major component of many forms of psychotherapy. More generally, levels of identification play a role in understanding and treating psychopathology and psychopathological experience (Watkins, 2011; Vallacher & Wegner, 2011).

To illustrate, patients suffering from Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) might obsessively wash their hands. Being sensitive to the various levels of description of the act of washing one's hands allows us to better understand the complex phenomenology associated (cf. Dar & Katz, 2005). On the one hand, many of these patients adopt a relatively high or abstract description of their actions (e.g. washing hands *in order to* avoid bad things from happening; avoiding bad things from happening *by* washing hands). So if you ask them why they wash their hands so often, the answer will likely include such a high level description. But on the other hand, these patients are also very much concerned with washing their hands *right*. That is, they also appear to use low-level descriptions of what they are doing - how to do it properly (e.g. stroking the hands a particular number of times). For treating this type of OCD, it is common to try to 'bring down' the identification level of an act such as to facilitate changing (habitual and rigid) behavior (ibid.).

In conclusion, Ratcliffe & Broome are right to point out that the affordance-concept should not become an empty phrase, a placeholder for further explanation. Yet they are too pessimistic, I believe, as there are many researchers who are precisely trying to fill in what our experiences of affordances consist of. I have offered some thoughts on how these researchers might proceed. Specifically I have argued that taking into account some structural features of human agency (by-by relation and in-order-to relation) can help us to better understand the phenomenology of actions and solicitations to act. This is particularly relevant to understanding psychopathological experiences, due to the broad self-referentiality that these features of human agency entail. As such, they offer precisely the sort of advancement of the affordance concept that Ratcliffe & Broome seem to require. Finally, I have suggested some theories and schools of thought (e.g. motivational psychology, hermeneutic phenomenology) that might be relevant for this research. Once more, these suggestions need to be fleshed out in future research. As such, this paper is an invitation to act.

7. Conclusion

REFERENCES

- Bruineberg J., Chemero A. & Rietveld E. (2018). General ecological information supports engagement with affordances for 'higher' cognition. *Synthese*, pp. 1-21;
- Constant A., Bervoets J., Hens K. & Van de Cruys S. (2018). Precise Worlds for Certain Minds: An Ecological Perspective on the Relational Self in Autism. *Topoi*, pp. 1-12;

- Dar R. & Katz H. (2005). Action identification in obsessive-compulsive washers. *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, 29(3), pp. 333-341;
- deCharms R. (1968). *Personal Causation. The Internal Affective Determinants of Behaviour*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc;
- Deci E. & Ryan R.M. (1985). *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-determination in Human Behavior*. New York: Plenum;
- 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;
- De Haan S., Rietveld E., Stokhof M. & Denys D. (2017). Becoming more oneself? Changes in personality following DBS treatment for psychiatric disorders: Experiences of OCD patients and general considerations. *PLoS One*, 12(4), e0175748;
- De Haan S. (2020). *Enactive Psychiatry*. Cambridge University Press;
- De Leersnyder J., Koval P., Kuppens P. & Mesquita B. (2018). Emotions and concerns: Situational evidence for their systematic co-occurrence. *Emotion*, 18(4), pp. 597-614;
- Dings R. (2018). Understanding phenomenological differences in how affordances solicit action. An exploration. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 17(4), pp. 681-699;
- Dings R. (2019). The dynamic and recursive interplay of embodiment and narrative identity. *Philosophical Psychology*, 32(2), pp. 186-210;
- Dings R. (in preparation). Meaningful affordances;
- Fuchs T. & Schlimme J. E. (2009). Embodiment and psychopathology: a phenomenological perspective. *Current opinion in psychiatry*, 22(6), pp. 570-575;
- Fuchs T. (2007). Psychotherapy of the lived space: a phenomenological and ecological concept. *American Journal of Psychotherapy*, 61(4), pp. 423-439;
- Gallagher S. (2018a). The therapeutic reconstruction of affordances. *Res Philosophica*, 95(4), pp. 719-736;
- Gallagher S. (2018b). Deep brain stimulation, self and relational autonomy. *Neuroethics*, pp. 1-13;
- Gibson J. J. (1986). *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*. New York: Psychology Press;
- Glas G. (2019). *Person-centered care in psychiatry. Self-relational, contextual and normative perspectives*. London: Routledge;
- Glas G. (2017). Dimensions of the self in emotion and psychopathology: consequences for self-management in anxiety and depression. *Philosophy, Psychiatry, & Psychology* 24(2), pp. 143-155;
- Goldman A. I. (1970). *Theory of human action*. Princeton University Press;
- Hellendoorn A. (2014). Understanding social engagement in autism: being different in perceiving and sharing affordances. *Frontiers in psychology*, 5, p. 850;
- Heidegger M. (1962). *Being and time*. 1927. Trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. New York: Harper;
- Heidegger M. (1993). Gesamtausgabe Band 58: *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie (1919/1920)*. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann;
- Heidegger M. (1994). Gesamtausgabe Band 61: *Phänomenologische Interpretationen zu Aristoteles. Einführung in die phänomenologische Forschung*. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann;
- Horgan T. E., Tienson J. L. & G. Graham (2003). The phenomenology of first-person agency. In: S. Walter & H-D Heckmann (Eds). *Physicalism and Mental Causation*. Imprint Academic, pp. 323-341;
- Kiverstein J. (2015). Empathy and the responsiveness to social affordances. *Consciousness and cognition*, 36, 532-542.
- Kiverstein J., van Dijk L. & Rietveld E. (2019). The field and landscape of affordances: Koffka's two environments revisited. *Synthese*, 1-18;

- Kim N. G. & Kim H. (2017). Schizophrenia: An Impairment in the Capacity to Perceive Affordances. *Frontiers in psychology*, 8, 1052;
- Kronsted C. (2018). The self and dance movement therapy—a narrative approach. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, pp. 1-12;
- Køster A. (2017). Mentalization, embodiment, and narrative: Critical comments on the social ontology of mentalization theory. *Theory & Psychology*, 27(4), pp. 458-476;
- Loveland K. A. (1991). Social affordances and interaction II: Autism and the affordances of the human environment. *Ecological psychology*, 3(2), pp. 99-119;
- Nelson B., Whitford T. J., Lavoie S. & Sass L. A. (2014). What are the neurocognitive correlates of basic self-disturbance in schizophrenia?: integrating phenomenology and neurocognition: part 2 (aberrant salience). *Schizophrenia research*, 152(1), pp. 20-27;
- Nörenberg H. (2019). Moments of recognition: deontic power and bodily felt demands. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, pp. 1-16;
- Ratcliffe M. (2015). *Experiences of depression: A study in phenomenology*. Oxford University Press;
- Ratcliffe M. & Broome M.R. (in press). Beyond ‘salience’ and ‘affordance’: Understanding anomalous experience of significant possibilities. In: *Salience: A philosophical inquiry*. London: Routledge;
- Rietveld E. & Kiverstein J. (2014). A rich landscape of affordances. *Ecological Psychology*, 26(4), pp. 325-352;
- Roberts T., Krueger J. & Glackin S. (2019). Psychiatry beyond the brain: externalism, mental health, and autistic spectrum disorder. *Philosophy, Psychiatry & Psychology*, 26(3), pp. 51-68;
- Röhricht F., Gallagher S., Geuter U. & Hutto D. D. (2014). Embodied cognition and body psychotherapy: The construction of new therapeutic environments. *Sensoria: A Journal of Mind, Brain & Culture*, 10(1), pp. 11-20;
- Sass L. (2004). Affectivity in schizophrenia a phenomenological view. *Journal of consciousness studies*, 11(10-11), pp. 127-147;
- Seniuk P. (2015). *Phenomenology of Depression: the lived-body and the silence of salience* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Otago);
- Strijbos D. & Glas G. (2018). Self-knowledge in personality disorder: Self-referentiality as a stepping stone for psychotherapeutic understanding. *Journal of personality disorders*, 32(3), pp. 295-310;
- Krueger J. & Colombetti G. (2018). Affective affordances and psychopathology. *Discipline Filosofiche*, 2(18), pp. 221-247;
- Krueger J. (2018). Schizophrenia and the Scaffolded self. *Topoi*, pp. 1-13;
- Vallacher R. R. & Wegner D. M. (2011). Action identification theory. In: Van Lange, P.A., Higgins E.T., & A.W. Kruglanski (Eds.) *Handbook of theories of social psychology*, 1, pp. 327-349;
- Van Dijk L. & Rietveld E. (2017). Foregrounding sociomaterial practice in our understanding of affordances: The skilled intentionality framework. *Frontiers in psychology*, 7, 1969;
- Van Dijk L. & Rietveld E. (2018). Situated anticipation. *Synthese*, pp. 1-23;
- Watkins E. (2011). Dysregulation in level of goal and action identification across psychological disorders. *Clinical psychology review*, 31(2), pp. 260-278;
- Withagen R. (2018). Towards an ecological approach to emotions and the individual differences therein. *New Ideas in Psychology*, 51, pp. 21-26;
- Withagen R., De Poel H. J., Araújo D. & Pepping G. J. (2012). Affordances can invite behavior: Reconsidering the relationship between affordances and agency. *New Ideas in Psychology*, 30(2), pp. 250-258.
- Withagen R., Araújo D. & de Poel H. J. (2017). Inviting affordances and agency. *New Ideas in Psychology*, 45, pp. 11-18.