

# Keim and *Bereitschaft*: Readiness and Embodiments

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On the ground of a remark Wittgenstein made in his *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology on *Bereitschaft**, and discussing the readiness at stake in cognition defined by Varela as embodied, this contribution supports a plea for a better understanding of readiness in embodiment.

Bach y Rita's (1962) paradigmatic experience has emphasized the fact that skill is a must. For a blind person to experience "visual" content when using a camera that can stimulate points in the skin by electrically activated vibration, images formed with the camera made to correspond to patterns of skin stimulation, the individual must actively direct the camera. Varela's "preliminary formulation" of enaction, is drawn in two points: "(1) perception consists in perceptually guided action and (2) cognitive structures emerge from the recurrent sensorimotor patterns that enable action to be perceptually guided." (Varela et al., 1991)

Yet, the former paragraph that explains what is meant by the phrase *embodied action*, and justifies the use of both terms put together, synthesizes the intuition slowly unfolded by Varela from the very first lines of his book: as much as cognition is enacted, action is embodied. Because it is the case, he urged "for a sense of common ground between cognitive science and human experience" (*Ibid.*) that would reach a more satisfying and complete level of understanding of cognition. In studying embodied action, his intention was "to study cognition not as a recovery or projection" (*Ibid.*) but as such. When *embodied* is meant to highlight the dependance of cognition "upon the kinds of experience that come from having a body with various sensimotor capacities" (*Ibid.*), themselves "embedded in a more encompassing, biological, psychological, and cultural context" (*Ibid.*), action emphasizes the inseparability of the sensory and motor processes, perception and action, as well as their co-dependant evolution.

Attention paid to a change in description, such as the one blind persons coming to experience a content as "visual" through Bach y Rita's apparatus made, may sound familiar to Wittgenstein readers: alteration is described like a perception "quite as if the object had altered before my eyes" (Wittgenstein 1953). Ultimately, using "Varelian" terms, an evolution of both motor and sensory processes altogether is experienced in embodied action. Would at *the same time*, its expression be that of a new perception as much as of a perception been unchanged? If so, in setting forth the formulation of enactive approach, the evolutive feature of embodied action has been dismissed. Current models favor debates on skills, change blindness, filling-in of visual perception blind spot. Yet, I would like to open a possible approach of enaction thanks to the evolution embodiment is granted in embodied action that is, cognition.

In his *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, Wittgenstein writes: "It might be said that one experiences *readiness* for a particular group of thoughts. (The germ of them.)" It is often in terms of readiness that the codependency of sensory and motor capacities relation to context or environment are discussed. Contra Dennett, who

proposed the brain actively occurring "filling-in to make up for the absence of information at the blind spot" (Noë, 2001), region in the retina where there are no light sensitive receptors, Alva Noë argues for example "It is outrageous to suppose that it seems to us, naïve perceivers, as if there is filling-in at the blind spot. It is true that we take ourselves, even with one eye shut and our gaze fixed straight ahead, to be aware of the uniform expanse of the red wall." (*Ibid.*) The germ of the uniform expanse of the wall is, whatever the case, an experience of awareness, readiness. Be it the variations of its sensorimotor capacities – here: the fixation of the gaze, the eye shut – or context, environment, the experienced germ of lived cognition is the readiness experienced of embodiment itself, from which recurrent sensorimotor patterns enable the perceptually guided action enaction is.

To conclude, questioning the implications of readiness and accordingly enactive, such an open trend of attention to germs can be found in Hintikka's *Principles of Mathematics Revisited*, when the distinction is drawn between two epistemic statements, the former:

$K (\exists x)S[x]$

Depending only "on what is true in different worlds considered alone [...] enough to specify the semantics of *knowing that*, but not to compare different worlds" (Hintikka, 1996) compare embodiment's readiness to another, a germinating  $x$  for instance. The latter:

$K (\exists x/K)S[x]$

Depending "also on what counts as the same individual in different worlds [...]" specifying "the semantics of *knows+wh-* constructions needed to determine what counts as *knowledge of individuals*" (*Ibid.*).

Not fixed by what is true in each world taken alone, but related to a cross-world identity criteria, such a statement can also be understood as a means for the necessary reconciliation of embodied readiness and plurality or changes in embodiments and contexts, a theory of enaction that gets rid of embodied action simply makes the economy of.

## Literature

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