

## The Fragility of Sense: The Twofold Temporality of Embodiment and Its Role for Depression

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**Abstract :** This paper aims to investigate to what extent Merleau-Ponty's philosophy of body memory serves as a viable resource for the enactive approach to cognitive science and its first-person experience-based research on 'recurrent depressive disorder' coded F33 in ICD-10. In pursuit of this goal, the analysis begins by revisiting the neuroreductive paradigm. This paradigm serves biological psychiatry to explain the condition of vital contact in terms of underlying neurophysiological mechanisms. It is demonstrated that the neuroreductive model cannot sufficiently account for the depressed person's episodic withdrawal in causal terms. The analysis of the irregular loss of vital resonance requires integrating the body as the subject of experience and its phenomenological time. Then, it is shown that the enactive approach to depression as disordered sense-making is a promising alternative. The enactive model of perception implies that living beings do not register pre-existing meaning 'out there' but unfold 'sense' in their action-oriented response to the world. For the enactive approach, Husserl's passive synthesis of inner time consciousness is fundamental for what becomes perceptually present for action. It seems intuitive to bring together the enactive approach to depression with the long-standing view in phenomenological psychopathology that explains the loss of vital contact by appealing to the disruption of the temporal structure of consciousness. However, this paper argues that the disruption of the temporal structure is not justified conceptually. Instead, one may integrate Merleau-Ponty's concept of the past as the unconscious into the enactive approach to depression. From this perspective, the living being's experiential and biological past inserts itself in the form of habit and bodily skills and ensures action-oriented responses to the environment. Finally, it is concluded that the depressed person's withdrawal indicates the impairment of this application process. The person suffering from F33 cannot actualize sedimented meaning to respond to the valences and tasks of a given situation.

**Keywords :** depression, enactivism, neuroreductionsim, phenomenology, temporality

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