

CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL DATA

1. First and Family Names : **LAURA SPARACI**
2. Address : Istituto di Scienze e Tecnologie della Cognizione (ISTC) -
CNR, Via Nomentana 56, 00161, Rome, Italy
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5. Fax : +39 06 44161513
6. Place and Date of Birth : Rome, 7 April 1978
7. Nationality : Italian
8. Languages : English, Italian

EDUCATION

1. Graduate Degree : 1997 - 2003 University of Rome “La Sapienza”
Degree in Philosophy
Philosophy Department
Final Grade: 110/110 cum laude
Final dissertation: *La Modularità della Mente. L'euristica della scomposizione e della localizzazione e l'architettura della mente*
2. Master : 2003-2004 University of Sussex
MA in Philosophy of Cognitive Science
School of Science and Technology
Final Grade: 73.50/90 with distinction
Final dissertation: *A Conceptual Approach to the Enactive Program*
3. Graduate Certificate : 1/2006-12/2006 University of Central Florida
Graduate Certificate in Cognitive Sciences
Final Grade: 70.50/72
4. PhD : 2004-2007 University of Siena
PhD in Cognitive Sciences
Date completed: July 8th 2008
Final dissertation: *Embodiment, intersubjectivity and autism: Looking into primary social interactions*

OTHER QUALIFICATIONS

- TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) Computer Based Test – Score: 283/300
- GRE (Graduate Record Examinations) Computer Based Test – Score: Verbal 570; Quantitative 460; Analytical 4.5
- TSE (Test of Spoken English) Computer Based Test – Score: 60

- COGS affiliate, Centre for Research in Cognitive Science, University of Sussex
- A.D.O.S. (Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule) Certificate, Azienda Ospedaliera San Paolo, Milano

SCHOLARSHIPS

1. 9/2002-12/2002 Studentship from the University of Roma “La Sapienza”
2. 10/2003-9/2004 AHRB Postgraduate Scholarship to undertake a full-time program of study leading to the MA at the University of Sussex (awarded by: “The Arts and Humanities Research Board”, Whitefriars, Lewins Mead, Bristol, BS1 2AE, UK)
3. 10/2004-10/2007 Postgraduate Scholarship from the University of Siena to undertake a program of study leading to the PhD in Cognitive Sciences.
4. 1/2006 -12/2006 Postgraduate Scholarship within “The Fulbright Program”

WORK EXPERIENCE

- 08/2007 – 02/2008 Research activity at the University of Parma, Faculty of Medicine, Department of Neurosciences, Italy;
- 02/2008 - 02/2010 Postgraduate researcher at the University of Parma, Faculty of Medicine, Department of Neurosciences, Italy;
Research title: *Analyzing Intentionality in Children with Typical Development and Autistic Spectrum Disorder*
Research Supervisor: Prof Giacomo Rizzolatti.
- 03/2008 – 03/2009 Visiting Research Fellow at the University of Hertfordshire, School of Humanities, Philosophy Department, UK;
Supervisor: Prof Daniel Hutto.
- 03/2010 – 11/2010 Research Assistant at the Children’s Hospital ‘Bambino Gesù’ Rome, Neuroscience Department, Child Neuropsychiatric Unit
- From 12/2010 – to date Researcher (fixed term) at the Institute of Cognitive Sciences and Technologies (ISTC) of the National Research Council Italy (CNR) as project leader for the FIRB-MIUR project (n. RBFR086HEW): The Other Understanding in Movement (TOUM).

EARLY RESEARCH INTERESTS

- Decomposition and localization as possible heuristics toward understanding the mind’s architecture (with reference to studies on the modularity of mind, dynamical systems and functionalistic approaches in the history of neurophysiology) – graduation dissertation.
- Representational systems in cognition (with reference to studies on insect navigation, Brook’s robots, omeostatic behavior and the cybernetic literature).
- The enactive approach as applied to studies on visual perception, its background within the philosophy of Merleau-Ponty and the role of the body image (with reference to studies on sensory-motor contingencies, TVSS, mirror neurons and phantom limbs – MA dissertation.

CURRENT RESEARCH INTERESTS

- The embodied approach to cognition and its theoretical background in Continental Phenomenology especially in relation to the theme of intersubjective understanding.
- Intention understanding and emotional attunement in children with autistic spectrum disorders and Williams syndrome.
- Analysis of early developing sensory-motor abilities in children, with specific reference to development of early non-verbal communicative forms, such as gestures and their impairment in autistic spectrum disorders.

PUBLICATIONS

- Sparaci, L. (2006) Due modelli di spiegazione in scienza cognitiva: modularismo e dinamicismo. In: *L'architettura della mente. Saggi sulla modularità*, F. Ferretti and M. Marraffa (Eds.), Catanzaro: Edizioni Abramo, pp. 273-298.
- Sparaci, L. (2006) Autismo, simulazione incarnata e neuroni-specchio. In: *Élites. L'ordine della diversità e del molteplice*, 4, ottobre-dicembre, Catanzaro: Rubbettino Editore, pp. 67-78.
- Sparaci, L. (2008) Intersubjectivity Interrupted. Motivating and reviewing the literature on gesture behavior in autism through a phenomenological approach. In: Tarozzi, M. & Bertolani, J. (Eds.) Proceedings of the 2007 International Human Science Research Conference, Unitn I.
- Sparaci, L. (2008) Embodying Gestures. The Social Orienting Model and the study of early gestures in autism. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 7(2), pp. 203-223.
- Romano, G. & Sparaci, L. (2009) Il problema dell'intersoggettività negli studi sull'autismo. In: *Atti del Convegno Internazionale di Studi "Filosofia della medicina. Ontologia, Modelli, Metodo clinico, Metodiche ed errori"*, Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Sinigaglia, C. & Sparaci, L. (2008) The Mirror Roots of Social Cognition. *Acta Philosophica*, 17 (2), pp. 307-330.
- Sparaci, L. (2009) Rappresentazioni orientate all'azione: il ruolo delle rappresentazioni deittiche in contesti sociali, *Teorie e Modelli*, XIV(1):119-134.
- Boria, S., Fabbri-Destro, M., Cattaneo, L., Sparaci, L., Sinigaglia, C., Santelli, E., Cossu, G. & Rizzolatti, G. (2009) Action Understanding and Autism, *PLoS One*, 4(5): e5596.
- Sparaci, L. (2010). Discourse and action: analyzing the possibility of a structural similarity. In: *SILFS. New Essays in Logic and Philosophy of Science*, London: College Publications.
- Sinigaglia, C. & Sparaci, L. (2010) Emotions in action through the looking glass. In *Journal for Analytical Psychology*, 55: 3-29.
- Sparaci, L. (2011). Approccio fenomenologico e scienze cognitive. *Sistemi Intelligenti*, XXIII (1):75-92.
- Sparaci, L., Stefanini, S., D'Elia, L., Rizzolatti, G. & Vicari, S. (2011). Intersubjectivity and Understanding Motor Intentions: Evidence From Autism and Williams Syndrome, Poster

presentation at the International Meeting for Autism Research (IMFAR), at:
<http://imfar.confex.com/imfar/2011/webprogram/Paper8118.html>

TRANSLATIONS (from English to Italian)

Gazzaniga, M.S. (2009) Human. Quel che ci rende unici. Milano: Raffaello Cortina Editore.

CONFERENCES/PRESENTATIONS

- 27-28/10/2006
Milan, Italy
Primo Incontro Italiano dei docenti e degli studiosi di Filosofia della Mente
Facoltà di filosofia, University of Milan 'Vita-Salute San Raffaele', Palazzo
Arrese- Borromeo, Cesano Maderno
Discussant
- 9-11/2/2006
Orlando, Florida
BROKEN MINDS/BROKEN BODIES: What cognitive science can learn
from neuro- psycho-pathologies, University of Central Florida
Session Moderator and Discussant
- 4-7/12/2006
Reggio Emilia,
Italy
XVII Convegno Nazionale dei Dottorati di Ricerca in Filosofia – Istituto
Banfi
Presentation title: *Gestualità, intersoggettività e autismo nella prospettiva
della mente incorporata*
- 8-10/2/2007
Verona, Italy
Convegno Internazionale di Studi "Filosofia della medicina. Ontologia,
Modelli, Metodo clinico, Metodiche ed errori", University of
Verona, Polo didattico "Zanotto"
Presentation title: *Il problema dell'intersoggettività negli studi sull'autismo*
- 5/3/2007
Siena, Italy
Workshop "Roots of Intersubjectivity: The Complex Paths Towards
Understanding Others" University of Siena
Organization committee
Presentation title: *Gesture studies & autism: building a new method*
- 8-9/6/2007
Dublin, Ireland
UCD Graduate Philosophy Conference "Perspectives on the Body and
Embodiement" University College Dublin
Presentation title: *Embodying Gestures. Motivating the importance of an
embodied approach to the analysis of gesture emergence in intersubjectivity*
- 13-16/6/2007
Rovereto, Italy
International Human Science Research Conference (IHSRC) "New frontiers
of phenomenology. Beyond postmodernism in empirical research" hosted by
University of Trento
Presentation title: *Intersubjectivity interrupted. How can the
phenomenological method inform studies on autism*
- 12-15/7/2007
Hertfordshire, UK
Centre for Normativity and Narrative Conference "Narrative Alternatives to
Theories of Mind" University of Hertfordshire
Presentation title: *Missing Narratives. An embodied
approach to the analysis of gestures in autism*
- 8-10/10/2007
Milan, Italy
Italian Society for Logic and Philosophy of Science (SILFS) International
Conference, University of Milan

Presentation title: *The Social Orienting Model and gesture studies*

- 13/11/2007
Parma, Italy
Workshop “I problemi dell’empatia tra fenomenologia e neuroscienze”
Philosophy Department, University of Parma
Presentation title: *Intersoggettività Interrotta. Un approccio fenomenologico allo studio dell’autismo*
- 16-19/1/2008
Brixen, Italy
Giornate di Neuropsicologia dell’età evolutiva
Poster presentation: *La comprensione del what e del why dell’azione nel bambino con autismo* (Boria S., Fabbri-Destro M., Sparaci L., Cossu G., Rizzolatti G.)
- 7-13/7/2008
San Marino
IHSRC Collegium/Summer School “Social cognition and social narrative”
University of San Marino
Presentation title: *Embodied perspectives on gesture* (M. Andr n, L. Quaeghebeur and L. Sparaci)
- 12/3/2009
Hertfordshire, UK
PAUR Workshop
University of Hertfordshire
Presentation title: *Intersubjective understanding: grasping motor intentions from action observation*
- 30/9/2010
Heidelberg, Germany
International Conference ‘Embodiment, Intersubjectivity and Psychopathology’, Department of General Psychiatry, University of Heidelberg
Poster presentation: *Sociability out of grasp: understanding others’ motor intentions in Williams syndrome and autism* (L. Sparaci, L. Marotta, S. Stefanini, S. Vicari, G. Rizzolatti)
- 12-14/5/2011
San Diego, California
International Meeting for Autism Research (IMFAR), Manchester Grand Hyatt
Poster presentation: *Intersubjectivity and Understanding Motor Intentions: Evidence From Autism and Williams Syndrome* (L. Sparaci, S. Stefanini, L. D’Elia, G. Rizzolatti, S. Vicari)
- 11-12/7/2011
Hertfordshire, UK
“Embodied and Narrative Practices: Clinical and Practical Applications”
University of Hertfordshire
Presentation title: *Embodied motor practices: a developmental perspective*
- 21-22/10/2011
Castel’Ivano, Italy
“Imitazione tra sviluppo motorio e sviluppo sociale nei disturbi dello spettro autistico”, University of Trento
Presentation title: *Imitazione e modelli di sviluppo dell’intersoggettivit * (G. Valeri & L. Sparaci)

TEACHING EXPERIENCES

- MASTER UNIVERSITARIO di II livello PROFESSIONISTI NEL TRATTAMENTO DELL’AUTISMO Approccio sistemico e metodologia neocomportamentale
Lecture theme: **Modelli teorici in neuropsicologia dello sviluppo** (dimensione intersoggettiva e cognitiva)