

Riccardo Manzotti

Riccardo Manzotti (born 1969) is an Italian philosopher, cognitive scientist, and professor of AI and Robotics at IULM University in Milan. He holds a PhD in robotics and previously worked in artificial intelligence, which shaped his interdisciplinary approach to consciousness. His research merges philosophy of mind, neuroscience, and technology, challenging traditional boundaries between the mind and the external world.

Key Philosophical Contribution: The Spread Mind Theory

Manzotti is best known for his "Spread Mind" theory, which argues that consciousness is not confined to the brain but is instead a process extending into the physical environment. This radical externalist view opposes both dualism (mind-body separation) and internalist neuroscience, proposing instead that objects and perception are co-constitutive. His ideas align with enactivism and process philosophy, drawing comparisons to thinkers like Alfred North Whitehead.

Collaboration with Tim Parks

In 2017, Manzotti co-authored *Dialogues on Consciousness* with British writer Tim Parks, a series of accessible conversations exploring consciousness, free will, and the nature of reality. The book presents Manzotti's ideas in a debate format, making his complex theories engaging for a broader audience.

Reception in the US

While Manzotti's work is more widely discussed in Europe, his ideas have gained traction in the US among philosophers and cognitive scientists interested in embodied cognition and non-representational theories of mind. Critics question his rejection of internalism, but proponents praise his innovative approach to bridging phenomenology and science. His talks at institutions like NYU and engagement with thinkers like David Chalmers have helped his influence grow in American academia.

Major Books

- The Spread Mind: Why Consciousness and the World Are One (2017)
- Dialogues on Consciousness (with Tim Parks, 2022)
- Hashagen, A., Manzotti R. , Ich Denke, Aber Wer Ist Ich?, Bucher-Verlag, 2021