

‘The Problem of the Body’

Preface to part I (‘The Body’)

Theme: Perception and its object

‘Objects’: tension between

(i) perspectival vision (etc.)

(ii) but object seen as non-perspectival, as if ‘seen from everywhere’

Constitution of conception of purely ‘objective’ view of the world – ‘view from nowhere’

But is that the best way to think of things?

Not: at least as far as the body is concerned.

Back to SB

Familiar contrast between causal realism and rationalist idealism

Physics vs. biology

Psychology?

Study of Behaviour?

‘Existence’

Animal behaviour

Importance of species-specific ‘world’

Gestalt

Against S-R theory and causal reductionism

Animal’s way of ‘being-in-the-world’

More complex models?

Human behaviour

What’s special here?

Not ‘representations’ (i.e. intellectualist analysis)

Capacity for ‘orienting oneself towards the possible’

Explains: culture etc.

Between ‘for-itself’ and ‘in-itself’

A priori/empirical

Part of rejection of intellectualist position?

a priori isn’t separate component?

But M-P affirms a priori categories, and adds

intersubjectivity

language

Final metaphysics?

Neither materialist realism
Nor idealist intellectualism
But 'dialectic' of 'orders'
A 'restructuring' of preceding one
Teleology?
Better: emergentism?

Back to PP Part I

Chapter I 'The Body as Object ...'
Main theme: phenomena such as 'phantom limb' and 'anosognosia'
Not: just causal or intellectual
Better understood from within existential approach which emphasises being-in-the-world and its fragility.

Phantom limb and anosognosia

Not just a matter of neural 'memory', though it is dependent on neural circuits.
Instead: a 'personal' dimension to the injury
How so? M-P alludes to animal's world and bodily being-in-the-world
and thus to a 'pre-objective' view of things.

Model of repression

Phantom limb etc. – failure to accept the injury at the level of practical intentionality
Retention of the practical field, though 'frozen'
M-P's model: repression in psycho-analysis
Personal life is arrested: advent of impersonal.

Impersonal/personal

Body as quite generally 'inborn complex'
Habits and the impersonal
Freedom and the intermittent 'tides' of personal existence
Saint-Exupery fn. 20,21 – compare final page.
'Existence' as bodily dialectic of habit and spontaneity.

PP Part I Chapter 3
'The Spatiality of One's own Body and Motility'

Basic structure

112-7 Introduction
118-28 Schneider's case; 'concrete' vs. 'abstract' movement
129-38 Inadequacy of causal empiricist approach
138-50 Inadequacy of intellectualist approach
150-59 M-P's positive existential account
160 -9 New understanding of the body
170 Conclusion.

Themes from the introduction

Body-image
Spatiality
Body as: being-in-the-world
Perspectival space vs. objective space
Transformations
 action/movement
 but morbidity

Schneider

Goldstein (and Gelb)
Abstract vs Concrete movements
Matrix of habitual action vs objective setting
Body: phenomenal vs. objective
fn. 17 (p. 121) re Sartre.
'reckoning with the possible'
Motor intentionality

Beyond causal and intellectual analysis

Abstract/concrete vs. Mind/Body
Illness and consciousness
The task: neither reduction nor subsumption
Power of living in new worlds
'Intentional arc' (p. 157)

'Motor intentionality'

'I can' not 'I think'
Husserl: fn 54 p. 140
Body as vehicle of being-in-the-world
Against representations
Body image as 'system' (body schema?)

Extending the body

Using a probe
Driving a car
Wearing a high hat (?); shoes?
Bodily habits
 the organist

Final conclusion

‘Bodily imposition of meaning’