

Helmut Heit, Berlin

Becoming Reasonable Bodies – Nietzsche's Philosophy of Mind

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Introduction

"Body am I, and soul"—so saith the child. And why should one not speak like children?
But the awakened one, the knowing one, saith: "Body am I entirely, and nothing more; and soul is only the name of something in the body."

Nietzsche: Zarathustra 1: Despisers of the Body

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Introduction

"Now, it plainly will not do to suggest that each of us 'sits behind' his personal battery of measuring instruments (sense organs), observes their sensational outputs and *uses* an interpretation function in formulating his perceptual judgments"

Paul M. Churchland, 1979: 39

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Introduction

Essential philosophical problems "will not be solved short of an intellectual revolution in our conception of ourselves as intellectual beings"

PMC, 1979: 4

"Churchland aims little less than a 'transvaluation of values'"

B.v.Fraassen, 1981: 555

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Folk Psychology

"Eliminative materialism is the thesis that our common sense conception of psychological phenomena constitutes a radically false theory"

PMC, 1981: 67

Folk Psychology is a theory, that has made no progress for millennia. leaves relevant phenomena mysterious. provides a misleading sketch of inner dynamics. refers to non-existing phenomena should be eliminated (like phlogiston-theory)

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Folk Psychology

"For just as the popular mind separates the lightning from its flash and takes the latter for an action, for the operation of a subject called lightning, so popular morality also separates strength from expressions of strength, as if there were a neutral substratum behind the strong man, which was free to express strength or not to do so. But there is no such substratum; there is no "being" behind doing, effecting, becoming; "the doer" is merely a fiction added to the deed—the deed is everything. The popular mind in fact doubles the deed"

GM I,13

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Propositional Attitude

"propositional attitudes [...] form the systematic core of folk psychology" PMC, 1989: 3

"the 'sentential' or 'propositional attitude' model that has dominated philosophy for the past 2500 years" PMC, forthcoming: 1,12

"give up the linguaformal 'judgment' or 'proposition' as the resumed unit of knowledge or representation" and replace them by "conceptual resources of modern neurobiology and cognitive neuromodelling" Ibid.: 1,4

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Propositional Attitude

Beware the "seduction of language" GM I,13

I think – one thinks (Lichtenberg, Liepmann...)

"After all, one has even gone too far with this "one thinks"--even the "one" contains an interpretation of the process, and does not belong to the process itself. One infers here according to the usual grammatical formula--"To think is an activity; every activity requires an agency that is active; consequently ..."

BGE I,17

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Naturalised Epistemology

1. "microconfiguration of the brain's 10^{14} synaptic connections" - space of possible activation patterns among the neuronal population: "a *conceptual framework*".
2. "Bluntly, the brain's neural activities are *self-modulating* in real time, thanks to recurrent or feed-backwards architecture of so many of its axonal projections"
3. cognitive representation of cultural change language and community "techniques of individual and collective *evaluation* of the conceptual novelties produced at the first two levels of learning" PMC: Forth: 1,29

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Naturalised Epistemology

"A nerve stimulus, first transposed into an image—first metaphor. The image, in turn, imitated by a sound—second metaphor. And each time there is a complete overlapping of one sphere, right into the middle of an entirely new and different one."

TL 1

Dynamic continuity
Process-ontology
Functional organisation

Abel 2001

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Realism vs. Interpretation

"Eliminative materialism is the thesis that our common sense conception of psychological phenomena constitutes a radically false theory, at theory so fundamentally defective that both the principles and the ontology of that theory will eventually be displaced, rather than smoothly reduced, by completed neuroscience"

PMC, 1981: 67

"gain a taste of how *better* we might apprehend the world, perceptually" PMC, 1979: 25

"Where (roughly) we learn 'is warm', they learn 'has a mean molecular KE of about 6.5×10^{-21} kg m²/s²'" Ibid: 29,

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Realism vs. Interpretation

"We cannot adopt an instrumentalist or other non-realist attitude towards the doctrines and ontologies of novel theoretical frameworks, unless we are prepared to give up talk of truth, falsity, and real existence right across the board"

PMC, 1979: 2

"I remain committed to the idea that there exists a world, independent of our cognition, with which we interact, and of which we construct representations"

PMC, 1989: 151

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Realism vs. Interpretation

Ignorabimus – we will not know!

“Whether we will ever understand the mental events by referring to material conditions is one question that differs completely from another, i.e. whether these events are the product of material conditions. One can deny the first question, without deciding about the second, not to mention denying it”

E. Du Bois-Reymond: *Ignorabimus* 1872: 75

cf. F.A Lange: *Geschichte des Materialismus* 1866: 15

Agnostic ontological realism and epistemological interpretationism

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Realism vs. Interpretation

“that all Interpretations so far are perspectival evaluations, by means of which we succeed living – this goes through my works. The world, insofar as it concerns us, is wrong i.e. is no matter of fact but a poetic work (*Ausdichtung*) and upronding of a marginal sum of observations; it is moving (*‘im Flusse’*), as a Becoming, as a continuously changing falsehood, which never approximates truth: because – there is no truth”

Nachlass: autumn 1885: 2 [108]

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Realism vs. Interpretation

“There is a different world to discover – and more than one!
On the ships, my philosophers.”

GS: § 289

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Reasonable Bodies

“Instruments and playthings are sense and spirit: behind them there is still the Self. The Self seeketh with the eyes of the senses, it hearkeneth also with the ears of the spirit. Ever hearkeneth the Self, and seeketh; it compareth, mastereth, conquereth, and destroyeth. It ruleth, and is also the ego’s ruler. Behind thy thoughts and feelings, my brother, there is a mighty lord, an unknown sage—it is called Self; it dwelleth in thy body, it is thy body. There is more sagacity in thy body than in thy best wisdom. And who then knoweth why thy body requireth just thy best wisdom?”

Z I: *Despisers*

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Reasonable Bodies

“Assume, this is also an interpretation only – and you will be keen to object that – well even better—”

BGE: § 22

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Thank you very much!

Dr. Helmut Heit
Helmut.Heit@tu-berlin.de
www.nietzsche-colloquium.de