

A Situated or a Metaphysical Body? Problematics of Body as Mediation or as Site of Inscription

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A common feature of much recent work done in a variety of disciplines is the foregrounding of embodiment. Thinking in terms of a situated body, however, brings up a complex problem which has often been overlooked: the re-importation of a kind of metaphysics of the body, or a covert idealism, which stubbornly persists in many such discussions. This is seen in treatments of the body as a mediation or as a site for inscription of socio-cultural codings. We will briefly show how even such an influential account of ritualization practices, that of Catherine Bell, shows traces of these problems. The corrective strategy to such conceptions is a properly situational ontology as suggested by Merleau-Ponty's later philosophy and Tim Ingold's critical work on environments.

Experience, the Mesoscopic, and Embodiment

In considering the metaphysical stories which have been told in the Western tradition one factor seems consistent. This factor is the tendency to posit a singular structure upon which or to which various elements are organized or referred. Variants on the same theme of singularity can be identified whether this structure is considered to a logical structure of relationships which persists regardless of the elements that are structured, a structure which is indifferent to the materials so structured, and which is understood by formal permutation of the structure without consideration of the qualities and character of the elements involved; or the content-less a priori formal structures of consciousness, the transcendental combinatorial of Kant's transcendental subject; or even the notions 'givenness' and 'gift' in 'le tournant théologique' of French phenomenology.¹

With the turn to life as it is lived, the flux of human lived experience is for the first time taken as a fundamental. One of the ramifications of this is that although we may appear to know from science that physical matter is really made up of atoms, molecules and particles, or that the universe is a vast and indifferent vessel in which human beings are an in-consequent, accidental and minor element, what is of significance is that our lived experience is not of this kind. The microscopic levels of biology and physics, the macroscopic levels of astronomy and cosmology are, in the end, abstract views of reality which may serve to explain underlying causes and factors of

matter and biological life, or the vast matrix of modern cosmology, but they do not explain our experiential or lived life. The massive contradiction at the heart of the formulation of microscopic and macroscopic explanations is that these explanatory frameworks are themselves posited within another framework, that of the mesoscopic.² This is the common world in which we live our lives, the world of our environment as we experience it, the character of our localities, something which we encounter in our everyday intercourse and involvements.

This mesoscopic world is that which is taken as primary by a praxeological approach. This 'primariness' is not that of a metaphysical 'first' but simply that we must always begin here. It is a world of our common surroundings, a world which is bound up with techniques of the body; with motility; with bodily and social involvement with entities: things, artifacts and the complex ways in which these diverse elements of material and social reality are involved with one another and with our experience of them as phenomena; a world crisscrossed by bodily and social practices and networks of sociality. However, in emphasizing the practices which disclose the complex and interwoven character of phenomenal life, we are still in need of a cohesive account of how the diversity of practices and phenomena 'fit together'. A praxeological approach, as Jean-Pierre Warnier points out, provides "what is missing in phenomenological anthropology..."³ but it does not supply us with this 'connection' between situations, practices, experience and the flux of life.

Given that we start from the basis that the flux of life, a complex continuum, is how our experience is structured and how it appears to us, then it is with this that we must be concerned in philosophical description.⁴ In order for this description to occur, one can proceed with the notion that there is only one adequate ontology which will provide this basis. Ultimately this is what the metaphysical tradition has always claimed. A certain kind of metaphysics has provided the contours of this ontology. There was only one true metaphysical picture of reality because this reality was conceived as a single reality and therefore there was only one single description of this reality adequate to it, whether objectively 'realist' or subjectively 'constituted'. Alternatively, one can proceed with the attempt to overcome 'ontology' altogether, an attempt driven more or less by a reaction against the shortcomings of the metaphysical approach. Such attempts, resulting in the influential contemporary philosophies tending towards the pluralist and relativist, and shunning absolutes and absolute descriptions, clearly have something

right in their suspicion of such a singular account of things. However, the problem at the core of such pluralistic and relativistic philosophies is that they must still claim some sort of normative validity for their position. It is very difficult to maintain a properly pluralistic account of things when one is maintaining that this account of things is more true than other accounts, which is basically what must be held, either maximally or minimally, by pluralistic accounts.⁵ What is apparent in many such critical accounts is that they are still often undergirded by a strategy of an implicitly metaphysical or idealistic kind, something which is a consequence of proceeding from a reaction against the metaphysical approaches.

One way that this has played itself out is discernible in certain philosophies of embodiment, where the positing of a mediational or inscriptional role to the body strips embodiment of its properly situational complexity in favor of a schematic approach which is strikingly similar to such approaches in idealism and philosophies of consciousness.⁶ These problems will have to be addressed by first examining what is involved in attempting to avoid such implicit metaphysical problems, and then by turning to specific examples of the subtle shifts necessary in contemporary theorizing to clarify what such problems inherently lead to.

The Shift from Mediation to Situation in Merleau-Ponty's Late Philosophy

Many recent accounts of embodiment have their roots in a phenomenological approach developed most fully by Merleau-Ponty. However the roots of a stubborn idealism and metaphysics of the body can also be discerned in the way his work has been appropriated, especially those approaches which overlook the essential turn in Merleau-Ponty's own thought. This turn is that which shifts away from some principle themes of the *Phenomenology of Perception* and substantially rejects and reformulates their basis in the later ontology as sketched in *The Visible and the Invisible*.⁷

It is a consistent factor in much of the work done on embodiment that Merleau-Ponty is invoked in order to support either a so-called philosophy of the body or a conception of the body as a site of inscription of some kind. We think this invoking of Merleau-Ponty to be misguided, because the prevalent method is to use the insights of his earlier philosophy. To do so, however, overlooks that in his later philosophy Merleau-Ponty rejected much of this early work in favor of a different conception not only of philosophy itself but of the ontological contours implied by it. Current

work which continues to invoke insights from the earlier texts often falls foul of precisely those issues which Merleau-Ponty saw in his early work and substantially, if incompletely, corrected in his latest writings. The shift which is discernible between the early and the later writing is that which is captured by a comment in *The Visible and Invisible*: “The problems posed in *Phenomenology of Perception* are insoluble because I start there from the ‘consciousness-object’ distinction.”⁸

It points to the problem to which Merleau-Ponty returned again and again: the attempt to show how perception and the body serve as the mediation between consciousness and world. Even in considering this problem under the parameters of an intentionality construed in terms of bodily activities rather than simple mental activities the same error occurs. Whereas in philosophies of the subject, consciousness is a center around which activities of perception occur, and in Kantian philosophies consciousness also organizes and imposes a structural cohesion onto perceptive experience, at this early stage Merleau-Ponty simply displaced this notion of consciousness as a center and organizing principle onto the body itself. Even though cast in terms of bodily or operative intentionality, this displacement in the *Phenomenology* did not resolve the essential difficulty. *The Visible and the Invisible* thus indicates the direction that Merleau-Ponty was taking in the development of a revisionary ontology.⁹

The shift from the early to the later philosophy can be understood from the perspective of a shift in the way in which Merleau-Ponty conceives of the place of embodiment, in relation to ‘mind’, ‘world’ and ‘language’. The shift is apparent if one compares two possible interpretations of the position set out in the *Phenomenology*. The first is to substantialize the body as the mediation of experience and so to come up with something like a philosophy of the body. This is a tempting approach, since one way of compensating for the over emphasis on ‘consciousness’ or ‘mind’ would seem to be to privilege ‘body’. But this simply compounds the problem. The other possible interpretation, and the one closest to what Merleau-Ponty himself sets out in the *Phenomenology*, is not a substantialization of the body but a displacement of the role played by consciousness in philosophies of the subject. This displacement is not onto the body itself but upon bodily intentionality and motility. The displacement occurs from acts of consciousness—a ‘cognitive’ intentionality—to bodily intentionality, the operative level of bodily motility. But, as Merleau-Ponty himself realized in the later philosophy, in this case the problem is still not resolved, since it is not the issue of consciousness

per se that is the issue: it is the role played by consciousness and activities of consciousness that require interrogation. The simple displacement of the organizational central role played by consciousness and acts of consciousness onto the body and activities of the body construed as bodily motility, still retains this role, which is the role of a metaphysical center. These issues are only clear in the light of *The Visible and the Invisible*.

The issue here is that in order to get away from a philosophy of consciousness—even a displaced ‘philosophy of consciousness’ masquerading under the name of ‘bodily motility’—Merleau-Ponty had to figure out what element within the philosophical tradition had been maintained that still required this particular role. The metaphysical center around which perceptive experience revolves and, in its Kantian version which organizes experience, is the problem. Whether this role is played by the mental or the bodily is not the problem. It is this role itself which is misleading, and it is precisely this role which is still retained in philosophies of the body or of embodiment which do not take seriously Merleau-Ponty’s own revisionist ontology developed in the later philosophy. In order to understand such a revision, one must first of all be clear that it is not ‘the body’ or ‘motility’ which is primary in this later work, but a reformulation of the notion of inhabitation, an important strand of the early philosophy which is developed in new ways in the later work.

The development of the notion of inhabitation can be usefully used to critique the way in which a covert idealism will tend to treat what is a dynamic, flux-like continuum of experience, a life which is characterized by movement and exploration, as something more like a noetic object or structure, a cognitive achievement of some sort or another. This structural role—whether played by ‘body’, ‘motility’ or ‘language’—tends to lose the essentially dynamic character of inhabitation or indwelling, and takes on the character of being separate from the continuum of life, no matter what this role is called. Barbaras points out this tendency:

With the word ‘body’, a new concept of experience seems to be announced, a new concept which makes no recourse to the notion of consciousness... a new concept which brings forward another definition of the subject... Implicitly... the body is considered by means of the duality of the organic and the psychic. The body becomes ‘the mediator of the world’, mediator for a consciousness which is itself only ‘the being-toward-the-thing through the intermediary of the

body'. The body comes to mediate the opposition between the subject and the object, thereby forbidding one from conceiving, in an intellectualist way, the belonging of the object to the subject... The very terms of the opposition, however, are not called into question... Merleau-Ponty oscillates therefore between a unitary conception of the body and a dualistic vision which turns the body into the 'means' of consciousness.¹⁰

Bodily inhabitation is a complex and multivalent affair: we do not 'inhabit' our bodies, but we as persons inhabit the world. This inhabitation is characterized by motility and movement but it is not, as a life continuum, principally about the achievement or fulfillment of cognitive knowledge, or about the organization of this continuum: it is principally about living it, inhabiting it, indwelling. The shift from an understanding of life as something which we do to something that we understand is one which depends upon a fixation of the continuum into those objects or structures which are posited as organizing it. It turns life from the personal into the noetic and it does so by the objectification or abstraction of partial aspects of a complex, a process which leads to the illusion of schemata independent of the practices in which such schemata are generated:

...it would be naive to seek solidity in a heaven of ideas or in a ground of meaning—it is neither above nor beneath the appearances, but at their joints, it is the tie that secretly connects an experience to its variants.¹¹

Thus, in approaching the topic of embodiment, Merleau-Ponty continually asks us to consider what it means to be an incarnate person. This focus does not change in the later work, but it does imply a shift in the way in which the topic is approached philosophically. It requires us to address both what it means in general to be incarnate, what the general condition of human *être-au-monde* might be, and the question of the concrete situation of human incarnation. This relation between general structural issues and the specific and concrete is a prominent feature of Merleau-Ponty's later philosophy.¹² These questions involve the general structure of human involvement in the world and the expansion of an understanding of this involvement towards transformative engagement with concrete situations.

As M.C. Dillon points out, what is essential to grasp about Merleau-Ponty's later philosophy is that it has as a primary aim the development of an ontology which avoids polarization.¹³ One main target of Merleau-Ponty's critical work is the oppositional structure of subject and object.¹⁴ His later philosophy seeks a way of articulating an ontology which does not require any sort of polarization, but the way in which it is achieved in these later texts as compared to the earlier phenomenology is significant.

In the earlier writings, the body functions as a mediation between objects and consciousness: bodily motility traces out some sort of intentional structure, which Merleau-Ponty calls 'operative intentionality'. Consciousness is then said to 'prolong' the bodily exploration of inhabited space, an exploration which has the character of motility. In this, Merleau-Ponty was still very Husserlian, which can be gleaned from the number of footnote references to Husserl's *Ideas II* in these sections of the *Phenomenology*.¹⁵ In *The Visible and the Invisible* Merleau-Ponty rejects this earlier picture as still being wedded to a distorting picture of our bodily involvement with the world. Though the body had been made more central than in prevalent philosophies, it is not a question of making the body more central: it is precisely the notion of a center that is in question. This center is still conceived as a kind of consciousness, a center around which other elements are organized. For Merleau-Ponty, a philosophy which focuses on incarnation must be situated, but this situation is something which is all encompassing yet multiple in its articulations. The notion of a center is therefore misleading since it leads us to think in terms of organization of phenomena around a coherent point or identity.¹⁶ In making clear that the notion of a center, whether described as 'consciousness' or as 'body', is in question, and simultaneously seeking some other way of articulating the appropriate ontological structure, Merleau-Ponty returns to the significance of Husserl's distinction between identity and manifold, whereby the appearance of phenomena takes on a manifold of aspects, and yet there is a unity or identity of which these manifold aspects are the appearance. For Merleau-Ponty, this issue is not really one of identity, as some sort of positive essence. He emphasizes that it is one of invariance. The multiplicity of phenomenal manifestation which finds articulation in the notion of a manifold is related back to a situation in which we are involved, since this invariance is inherently related to our involvement with phenomena in the acts of variation and reduction. For Merleau-Ponty, then, one cannot isolate this invariance as an identity without keeping it bound up with the acts by which it appears.¹⁷

In order to set out what this could mean, we might usefully see Merleau-Ponty performing two significant shifts in emphasis. From the notion of an 'object' to that of 'involvement', and from the notion of 'center' to that of 'invariance'. To be incarnately is to be situated 'inside' involvement; similarly involvement is situated 'inside' a recursive structure, a recursivity which is invariant. The contrast between the general and the specific here is that which obtains between the ontological role played by invariance and its recursive structural character. This structural character of recursivity Merleau-Ponty names *chiasm*, a structure which is an inherently complex interweaving.¹⁸ We will return to the ramifications of this shortly, but for now it is sufficient to point out that this is a radical subversion of certain traditional metaphysical structures that Merleau-Ponty has performed, something that is achieved by philosophical questioning of the status of 'flesh'.

Thus, Merleau-Ponty also asks us to consider whether we can understand our own incarnation metaphysically, whether certain metaphysical pictures are capable of making sense of incarnation. Here is one such issue: the notion of a general sense of incarnation must give way to a focus on the concrete situation in which we are incarnate. This means being critical of approaching incarnation from a consideration of the body, conceived as a generality, to consideration of fleshliness. This fleshliness is not a generality but a specificity. This shift is necessary in order to remove the tendency of thinking of the body as a center: a tendency which leads to thinking in terms of a metaphysical body, a metaphysical center simply serving as a substitution for 'consciousness'. The motif of chiasm or fleshly-interweaving, which emerges as the most striking feature of *The Visible and the Invisible*, is designed to anchor a concrete situational ontology in which the body, the flesh and the motility of human bodily and social activities are all inherently a part. This motif has a recursive or reversible character. Thus the project of a general inquiry into the status of our own incarnation turns back on itself, implicating our embodiment and our involvements in the world as the very basis of an ontology which is concrete and specific, and yet capable of generating larger and more general structural definitions.¹⁹

This reflexive move suggests an analogous one for all modes of thinking which attempt to think in a metaphysical way.²⁰ The same issues are in force: what appears at first to be a general question, one that involves the relation of a certain universality to a certain particularity, or of questions of transcendence or immanence, must be tackled primarily by a focus on the concrete and specific. What is in question, then, is what we mean by

‘metaphysical’ in this instance, what sorts of tasks and roles metaphysical entities are supposed to play in our philosophy. The critique of a metaphysical center, of positive essences and identities, is one such example.

This critique, then, of the problem of attempting to think incarnation metaphysically, can be developed further by examining an issue which is connected with understanding our own incarnation. This issue involves the concept of incarnation. This critique of the ‘concept’ is perhaps better understood if we look closely at our use of the concept ‘incarnate’. Rather than the question of what it means to be ‘incarnate’, we ask what it is ‘to be’ incarnately. This latter shift towards the adverbial preserves the emphasis that to be ‘incarnately’ is a way of being which is a specifically active way of being. In Merleau-Ponty’s terminology, it is a ‘style’ of being. In this sense, the ‘style’ of human being—incarnately—is inherently connected with the style of being of the world. The two styles are interwoven with one another.

The proper character of incarnation remains to a large extent conceptually under-determined. This proper character is a dynamic and active involvement. The way in which concepts subsequently organize our fleshly experience cannot be confused with the way in which concepts arise out of and remain involved with our embodied engagement with the world. The emergence and continuing life of the conceptual is itself an aspect of our active involvement.²¹

Thus, what we have critically referred to by metaphysical, is that type of thinking in which a concept takes on the character of an object whose genesis and continuing life in an enfolded and engaged life context is passed over, the creation of independent entities which are severed from their inherence in situations. In an attempt to survey our situation from an elevated perspective, what Merleau-Ponty calls ‘*la pensee survol*’ or the attitude of the *kosmotheoros*²², we effectively condemn our thinking to a conceptual apparatus which is severed from the life in which those concepts are given shape and used in particular contexts and situations, the very *topos* where concepts have any sense.

Merleau-Ponty’s development from the description of the body as a mediation to that of chiasm is the philosophical trajectory where this become clear. Chiasm functions as a kind of guiding or shaping motif for a reflexive philosophy. The active side of this reflexivity Merleau-Ponty calls ‘interrogation.’ All activities of interrogation, which involve the use of concepts, are themselves interwoven with that which they purport to interrogate.²³ Chiasm, as the motif of incarnate involvement, is the specificity

of being incarnately which gives rise to the generality, and to freedom from the illusion of independence, of the invisible concept. It is about how we conceive of generality. But this specificity is:

...not the positing of a content, but the opening of a dimension that can never again be closed, the establishment of a level in terms of which every other experience will henceforth be situated. The idea is this level, this dimension. It is therefore not a *de facto* invisible, like an object hidden behind another, and not an absolute invisible, which would have nothing to do with the visible. Rather it is the invisible of this world, that which inhabits this world...²⁴

In a strong sense, the fleshly interweaving that is chiasm always exceeds the capacity of its being thought, and it cannot, in principle, be grasped completely.²⁵ It is the involvement which gives all other involvements, whether bodily, linguistic or conceptual, their sense. This involvement is a lived relation in which the body is always already implicated by the facticity of fleshly incarnation, with worldly flesh and with the flesh of others. This is its mute character out of which language emerges as its articulation and expression. Moreover, these movements arising out of lived involvements are involvements of the whole person, a way of being which is incarnate involvement with the visible and the invisible.

The complex that we are dealing with here is indicated by the term situation. This use of the term must not be understood, as it often is, as occasionalistic. Samuel Mallin, for instance, emphasizes that situation in the sense in which Merleau-Ponty develops it must not be understood in this occasionalistic sense, since “situation is not just one kind of thing among others, but is the ground or source of every form of existence.”²⁶ This understanding of situation is, according to Mallin, at the heart of Merleau-Ponty’s ontology. Situation in this sense indicates the relation that is held to occur between human beings and their surroundings, the involvement with and active concerns motivated by those surroundings, as well as the activities which articulate and express such involvements and concerns: “... situations are to be taken as the real constituents of the world... the primary source of the real... the ontological possibility of every other type of entity...” Any ‘structure’ is a “...way of referring abstractly and formally to situations without explicitly considering their concrete inherence in otherness or actual possession by a particular subject.”²⁷ For Mallin, therefore, a structure is

parasitic on a situation. If structures are parasitic on situations, one is forced to acknowledge that the positing of structure is something that arises out of human involvements in situations.

Yet as Merleau-Ponty makes clear, so often what appears in philosophy as simply a methodological decision hides within it a metaphysical one:

Our inquiries should lead us finally to a reflection on this transcendental man... which appears through the movement of history —to a reflection on this Logos which gives us the task of vocalizing a hitherto mute world... they should lead us to a study of the Logos of the perceived world... Here we rejoin the classical questions of metaphysics, but by following a route which removes from them their character as problems... as difficulties which could be solved cheaply through the use of a few metaphysical entities constructed for this purpose.²⁸

This critique of the positing of ‘cheap metaphysical entities’ is one that should be taken seriously. The tendency to import back into a descriptive philosophical project metaphysical functions, whether ascribed to the ‘body’, to ‘language’, or to socio-cultural schemata, is one which potentially skews any analysis. That is the danger of simply re-branding such functions and roles under terminological reformulations without thinking through the ontological implications of situatedness.

Situation and Embodiment: Of Inscription or of Generation?

The anthropologist Tim Ingold has pointed out much the same thing in his critique of socio-cultural and cognitive anthropologies which miscast situatedness. This he ascribes to a strong tendency to polarize in the ways in which we set out the relationship between human beings and world, a tendency which persists in contemporary disciplines of various kinds. Ingold notes that this tendency, whether in philosophy, sociology, anthropology or geography, usually conceives the relation between human beings and world as a relation between two planes, co-extensive and infinitely extended in their own kind of ‘space’, which are somehow connected together.²⁹ Differentiation within these planes is conceived in terms of spatial segmentation, dividing what is a continuum into discrete units. Connection between the two is accomplished by attaching one discrete unit to another, whether as ‘references’ or ‘significations’. The structural variants of this approach are

legion. Two difficulties persist in these accounts however. The first is that no coherent account has been given as to exactly what that attaching between the two planes consists of.³⁰ The second is that this kind of scheme is very hard to apply to the way in which human beings interact with their lived environment. Ingold suggests that this idea of a discrete segmentation of planes which are continuous and connected with one another is difficult to sustain once one starts to think through the problems involved in an analysis of place and locality, central categories for thinking about our lived environment:

A place owes its character to the experiences it affords to those who spend their time there... And these, in turn, depend on the kinds of activities in which its inhabitants engage. It is from this relational context of people's engagement with the world, in the business of dwelling, that each place draws its unique significance. Thus whereas with space, meanings are attached to the world, with the landscape they are gathered from it.³¹

Place and locality, as important dimensions of our lived experience, are about dwelling. As places for dwelling, places emphasize our embodiment and our movement in and through them. Ingold points out that although the notion of embodiment has been much in fashion in recent debates, embodiment itself is often treated within the same discrete theories of segmentation. Embodiment is thus treated as a form of inscription, whereby our bodies 'realize' or actuate some pre-existent formal pattern often conceived as 'genetic' or 'cultural'. These sorts of pattern are both variants on the notion of a transcendental logical form or transcendental schema which we have noted to be a major feature of singularist accounts of 'reality'.

Ingold's revisionary paradigm is that embodiment in place is a specific kind of incorporation. We do not transcribe form onto material, but our embodiment is a movement whereby forms themselves are generated.³² Forms are not imposed upon a material continuum of experience but are gathered up from it, arise out of it. It is in this revision of the relationship between imposition or attachment upon experience and happening in or arising and gathering from experience, which suggests a tentative starting point for engaging with the problem of what the connection is between different aspects of experience: the setting out of a situational, concrete and practical framework amenable to work done in a variety of disciplines.

What is apparent here is that we must begin to make some distinctions that have, perhaps, not been made as clearly as they might have been in the phenomenology of the *Lebenswelt*. Concrete situations have their own logic and this logic is bound up, not with a transcendent structure 'above' the world nor with transcendental structures of 'consciousness': all these are, in the end, re-tooled idealisms of a sort, transcendental structures *imposed* onto an experiential continuum of complexity.

Ingold's approach suggests that we focus instead on the situated and incarnate involvement of human beings in and with their environments. This involvement is articulated in an array of practices which thereby form a 'world'. The practices which articulate human situatedness are first of all the development of embodied skills. For instance, Ingold explores questions of this kind by interrogating the whole notion of 'mapping' and of 'maps'. Ingold's emphasis is on that mode of human being from which everything else arises, which Ingold calls the 'dwelling perspective'. By this Ingold means "a perspective that treats the immersion of the organism-person in an environment or lifeworld as an inescapable condition of existence."³³ Ingold's work in this regard is an attempt to undermine one prevalent orthodoxy in cultural and social sciences which supposes that people 'construct' the world before they can act in the world, a view which Ingold calls the 'building perspective'. Ingold contrasts these perspectives as follows:

...the assumption has persisted that people construct the world, or what for them is 'reality', by organizing the data of sensory perception in terms of received and culturally specific conceptual schemata... this assumption has been challenged by advocates of 'practice theory', who argue that cultural knowledge, rather than being imported into the settings of practical activity, is constituted within these settings through the development of specific dispositions and sensibilities that lead people to orient themselves in the ways that they do.³⁴

Elsewhere, Ingold critically takes on a prevalent model of 'social and cultural meaning' in which meaning is "attached to action as a signified to signifier". Rather, Ingold proposes, meaning is immanent in the relationships between people and their environments. The relationships of persons to surroundings are the condition for their skilled performances of actions. In this model, perspectives of the world are perspectives in the world and are not simply representations of the world. Perspectives are generated in

the practices in which people are involved. Ingold's critique is ultimately about taking on the assumption that "...human practitioners inhabit worlds of intersubjective meaning caught up in 'webs of significance' over and above the level of their material interactions."³⁵

In his essay "To journey along a way of life: Maps, wayfinding and navigation," Ingold raises, from an anthropological perspective, questions of philosophical import about the nature of human situatedness as it is articulated by skills and artifacts and, moreover, how these skills and artifacts are deeply implicated in the way that we 'know'. Ingold's essay depends upon the viability of a major conceptual distinction which carries with it the capacity to insightfully inform our discussion. This distinction is that between wayfinding and mapping. 'Wayfinding' includes in its range the usual connotations of navigation and map-using. 'Mapping' includes in its range the connotations of cartography and of map-making. What is important to notice from the outset is that Ingold's distinctions both involve activities. Though the idea of a map is invoked, the map itself plays no role in the conceptual scheme: the point of the distinction is to highlight the difference between making and using and the way in which these activities are involved with the territory in which they are embedded. The image of a 'map' and the tendencies of thinking according to an abstract model of the map is invoked here because it points to so much that is wrong with prevalent ways of thinking in a variety of disciplines. These are confusions which result from the detachment of an artifact or 'objective' phenomenon out of its involvement in a set of activities. This is of considerable importance:

To use a map is to navigate by means of it... to plot a course from one location to another in space. Wayfinding... is a matter of moving from one place to another in a region... there is a certain parallel to be drawn between the processes of knowing and mapping. Both are environmentally situated activities, both are carried out along paths of travel, and both unfold over time. Just as wayfinding has to be distinguished from navigation... so also mapping must be distinguished from mapmaking. For the designs to which mapping gives rise... are not so much representations of space as condensed histories... knowing is like mapping, not because knowledge is like a map, but because the products of mapping (graphic inscriptions), as those of knowing (stories), are fundamentally un-maplike.³⁶

The emphasis in this aspect of Ingold's work is upon focusing on the practices of wayfinding and mapping rather than on the results of such practices. The 'map' serves as a representation of wayfinding activities and the mapping of those activities, but is quickly moved into a place of primary significance over and against those original activities. Moreover, in this shift from activities to artifact, the movement about and in environments that is local engagement with the terrain and surroundings is passed over so that the mapping of one domain—the terrain and territory explored—into another—a 'spatial' representation of that terrain—overlooks the bodily movement of exploration which is a condition of mapping in the first place. It is in this overlooking that we find the remnants of a stubborn idealism.

We can also trace the problems of a stubborn idealism lurking in some places where one would not expect to find them. For instance, in Catherine Bell's influential theory of ritualization, Bell sets out four features of practice which are pertinent for understanding ritual practice.³⁷ For Bell these four features of practice are that practice is situational; strategic; embedded in a misrecognition of what it is in fact doing; and able to reproduce or reconfigure a vision of the order of power in the world, what she calls "redemptive hegemony."³⁸

Bell's emphasis on the always situational character of practice means that "much of what is important to it cannot be grasped outside of the specific context in which it occurs." For Bell, then, this situational character means that a practice or activity taken out of its context transforms the character of that practice. This we do not dispute. However, Bell seems to understand 'situational' as primarily contextual. Such an understanding is likely to lead right back into the grip of a stubborn idealism of a sort. The problem is that thinking in terms of a context tends towards understanding it as a variant of text, perhaps as a kind of socio-cultural text, which can be read or interpreted.

This produces confusions since it leads to the tempting line of thinking that practices are primarily socio-cultural constructions that occur within certain socio-cultural formations. This is likely to be very misleading. We must start to think of practices not as primarily but as secondarily socio-cultural phenomena, since the properly situational character of practice is that it generates such socio-cultural contexts. Hermeneutic practices are principally a matter of interpretation, and interpretation is a skill which must be learned and developed in practice. It is the job of a contemporary phenomenology to describe the conditions in which such skills are developed:

this is the ontology of situation. In other words, socio-cultural contexts are not the matrix in which practices are formed, but socio-cultural contexts are themselves generated by practices. These practices, at their root, are a fundamental aspect of human situatedness per se. The prominent problem in situational thinking is not just contextual but ontological.

The problems with the former approach can be seen in Bell's analysis of 'the ritual body.' Bell makes clear that her focus is an attempt to draw together many strands of recent scholarly attention to the 'body' across a number of different fields of interest.³⁹ Bell emphasizes the general tendency in much work on the 'socio-cultural body' or the 'situated body', of treating the body as a kind of material medium for inscription, as a kind of experiential 'tablet' upon which socio-cultural codes and signs are inscribed.

Bell sets out her notion of the ritual body in terms of two main foci, using broadly Bourdieuan terminology.⁴⁰ Firstly she focuses on the dialectical movement between objectification and incorporation in which the body serves as the primary locus.⁴¹ This bodily locus serves to "co-ordinate" a variety of levels of experience—bodily, social and "cosmological"—and it is in practice that such localized coordination is effected.⁴² This latter understanding then serves as Bell's basis for the description of a "ritualized body environment" which she introduces to show how "the implicit dynamic and 'end' of ritualization... [is]... the production of a 'ritualized body'...invested with a 'sense' of ritual... Ritualization produces this ritualized body through the interaction of the body with a structured and structuring environment."⁴³ Bell notes that a focus on a 'ritual environment' is not anything particularly new.⁴⁴ What is new in Bell's formulation is that "a focus on the acts themselves illuminates a critical circularity to the body's interaction with this environment: generating it, it is molded by it in turn."⁴⁵ Ritualization serves then as "an act of production... of a ritualized agent able to wield physically" certain schemata which the ritualized environment itself provides. Thus it becomes clear why Bell has focused on ritualization as having a strongly situational aspect, even if she does tend to interpret it more as a context than in the strongly ontological sense that we prefer. For as she says, "ritualization cannot be understood apart from the immediate situation, which is being reproduced in a misrecognized and transformed way through the production of ritualized agents."⁴⁶ She then goes on to analyze how such a ritualization is structured. It is here that she moves towards that overly linguistico-structural interpretation that we have pointed out is always latent in the socio-cultural contextual emphasis. For

she immediately moves from the notion of the ritualization of agents in a ritual environment, to describing this process as one which is structured primarily by “ritual oppositions and hierarchies.”⁴⁷ From the notion of oppositions and hierarchies, Bell sets out all sorts of applications of such a schema, the opposition of “interior-exterior” being a primary example. She concludes with what is the theoretical core of her notion of ‘ritualization’ as a set of strategies:

The specific strategies of ritualization come together in the production of a ritualized social body, a body with the ability to deploy in the wider social context the schemes internalized in the ritualized environment... I use the term ‘ritual mastery’ to designate a practical mastery of the schemes of ritualization as an embodied knowing.⁴⁸

So for Bell, the telos of ritualization is the inculcation in individual bodies of a socialized body via the internalization of certain conceptual, categorial and interpretative schemata which serve as a bodily knowledge. The problem is that the dialectical relation within a ritualized environment is itself situated within a larger socio-cultural environment, and yet this socio-cultural environment is itself generated by other practices with which the ritualized practices must share some commonality. These practices issue from a situatedness not reducible to socio-cultural terms alone, but also to an ontology of place, environment and engagement with ‘world’ which is at the root of situatedness. This is highlighted by the problem of discerning what makes ritualized practices distinctive from non-ritualized ones.

Bell’s appropriation of Pierre Bourdieu is important enough for these cautious critical points to be necessary, for it is clear that Bourdieu is often interpreted as being someone who clearly believes that the body is at the mercy of socio-cultural codes. This is far from the case however, as his position is one that emphasizes that bodily *hexis* (posture) and *habitus* (sedimentation of structures in dispositions) work together to incorporate ‘objective’ structures. Some understand this as the body having social norms imposed upon it. This overlooks that the body is also *involved* in the generation of the fields in which such imposition is supposed to occur. Bourdieu’s ‘body’ is one which *practically generates* and in turn is *molded* by such social fields. We spot a tendency in Bell’s analysis of Bourdieu’s work on the body, a tendency which is duplicated in the work of other theorists, to focus solely on the early Bourdieu. This means that appropriation of Bourdieu’s work

tends to focus on the structural oppositions which Bourdieu works with in his earlier writings. This means, for instance, that Bell's appropriation of much of Bourdieu's work on the ritual body emphasizes such oppositional structures. The later Bourdieu is much more complex in these matters, dissolving the oppositional structures of the early work in favor of a nexus of fields and social forces not exclusively explicable in terms of bare oppositions. It is this tendency to focus analysis around such oppositional structures that permeates those approaches that we are pointing out in this paper: stubborn idealisms of the body perpetuate an ontology which is *determined* by such oppositions, and within this framework it is very difficult to perceive that what is being set out *upholds* certain metaphysical picturings of reality, conceptions which also conceal such leanings towards idealism. The later Bourdieu works to undermine such determinations by developing a more nuanced 'site ontology', one which refuses such oppositional structures, effectively undermining the notion that socio-cultural codings are inscribed on the body.⁴⁹

Tim Ingold stridently critiques such an 'inscription' oriented philosophy of the body and of a theory which privileges socio-cultural schemata said to somehow adhere to our embodiment:

...much work in this field is marked by a tendency to treat body praxis as a mere vehicle for the outward expression of meanings emanating from a higher source in culture or society... to conceive of it as a movement of inscription, whereby some pre-existing pattern, template or programme, whether genetic or cultural, is 'realised' in a substantive medium.⁵⁰

As Ingold points out, rather than undermining a logocentric emphasis, as many of the proponents of this embodiment and inscription thesis suppose, this position actually supports it. It is, in the end, the same inclination to "prioritize form over process." Rather, we should think of embodiment in terms of incorporative practice, "not the transcribing of form onto material but a movement wherein forms themselves are generated."⁵¹ The purpose of such an emphasis is that a theory of a 'socio-cultural' or even a 'socio-biological' body, upon which nature and culture are said to inscribe certain patterns, does not take into account the condition to which both natural and cultural patterns owe their generation: our situatedness in an environment. Ingold's reformulation of this notion is a subtle and important shift of con-

cerns often missed by the focus on the socio-cultural formation of ‘bodies.’ The latter conception of distinct socio-cultural ‘worldviews’ or ‘ideologies’, transmitted in schemata of one sort or another and to which the body gives expression, overlooks that all bodies are situated prior to their socio-cultural positioning by the chiasmic interwovenness of bodiliness and environment. This situatedness is first articulated in the very practices and skills which are necessary for the generation of such socio-cultural schemata.

Both the later philosophy of Merleau-Ponty and Ingold’s anthropological critique suggest that careful work needs to be done in working out any philosophy of embodiment which thinks situationally. The route back into a metaphysics of the body or a strangely displaced idealism is a tendency that haunts even those who stridently oppose logocentricism. Situatedness has an ontology which includes both somatic involvement in an environment, the psycho-somatic involvement of desire and concern, as well as the socio-cultural sitedness of all our doings and sayings, which may well include but which is not exclusively, the patterns of socio-cultural schemata. What needs much more careful analysis is the multi-valent complexity of this situational ontology. What needs to be avoided is the temptation towards thinking in terms of a singular structure—even one disguised functionally—which merely mimics a philosophy of consciousness or a metaphysics inadequate to taking such complexity into account.

Notes

¹ See Dominique Janicaud, *Le tournant théologique de la phénoménologie française* (Paris: Éditions de l’Éclat, 1991); included in *Phenomenology and the Theological Turn: The French Debate*, translated by Bernard G. Prusak (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), 16-103

² On the relation between the common world and the ‘mesoscopic’ see Barry Smith, ‘The Structures of the Common Sense World’, *Acta Philosophica Fennica* 58 (1995), 290-317; and ‘Objects and Their Environments: From Aristotle to Ecological Ontology’, in *The Life and Motion of Socio-Economic Units*, edited Andrew Frank, Jonathan Raper and Jean-Paul Cheylan (London: Taylor and Francis, 2001), 79-97

³ Jean-Pierre Warnier, ‘A Praxeological Approach to Subjectivation in a Material World’, in *Journal of Material Culture* 6:1 (2001), 5-24; this quote 10

⁴ For an interesting contrast between the notion of a ‘continuum’ and a tendency towards thinking ‘discretely’, see John N. Bell, ‘Divergent Conceptions of the Continuum in 19th and early 20th century Mathematics and Philosophy’, in *Axiomathes* 15 (2005), 63-84

⁵ One can maintain that ‘all views about reality are equally valid’ but this claim is deeply flawed in two ways. Firstly, it assumes a primarily epistemological relation with the world,

that of a 'view' upon it; secondly, it is a normative claim which does not sit easily within what it claims to be the case as a 'view'. This is effectively the aporia of post-modernity. For expansion of this in current cultural theory see Paul Cillers, 'Complexity, Deconstruction and Relativism' in *Theory, Culture, Society* 22, 5 (2005), 255-267

⁶ My approach here may well bear useful comparison with the critique of 'socio-cultural' determination as situatedness, or the way in which socio-cultural positioning is conceived as 'perspective.' David Simpson, *Situatedness, Or, Why We Keep Saying Where We're Coming From* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), a book I had not consulted during the original work on this paper. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for pointing out this possible connection.

⁷ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, translated Colin Smith (London: Routledge, 2002); originally published as *Phénoménologie de la perception* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945); *The Visible and the Invisible*, translated Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968); originally published as *Le Visible et l'invisible* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964)

⁸ Merleau-Ponty, *Visible and the Invisible*, 274

⁹ Many commentators on his philosophy have been reluctant to pin too much interpretation on this material, since it is still far from being fully formed, which merely points to a philosophical preference for only giving consideration to completed works or the linear arrangement of a completed book and says nothing about the philosophical importance of unfinished or unusually organized materials. Merleau-Ponty's own philosophy contains an emphasis on the, in principle, incomplete nature of any kind of philosophical inquiry, and so to use his incomplete work seems to be a way of pushing forward with an approach he himself saw as important. There are exceptions, Renaud Barbaras being a notable one, see *The Being of the Phenomenon: Merleau-Ponty's Ontology*, translated Ted Toadvine and Leonard Lawlor (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004) originally published as *De l'être du phénomène: l'ontologie de Merleau-Ponty* (Grenoble: Editions Jérôme Millon, 1991). Other commentators who have seen that the emphasis on an interpretation of Merleau-Ponty's work must grapple first with the later work as this effectively recasts the early work are Mauro Carbone and, in some sense, M.C. Dillon. See Carbone, *The Thinking of the Sensible* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2004); also essay of the same name in *Chiasms: Merleau-Ponty's Notion of Flesh*, translated Fred Evans and Leonard Lawlor (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 121-130; Dillon, *Merleau-Ponty's Ontology* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1989), though Dillon's approach is oriented towards demonstrating a philosophical thesis in Merleau-Ponty's work rather than an exposition. Critical of those interpretations which focus mostly on the early phenomenology without paying attention to the way in which Merleau-Ponty himself pointed out the shortcomings inherent to it, Barbaras focusses his interpretation on a variety of texts from this late period and develops a reading which includes elements from the working notes which significantly illuminate various aspects of other texts. By doing so, certain themes emerge which help to give us some sense of the place marked out by the nascent sketches of thinking evident in the working notes.

¹⁰ Barbaras, *Being of Phenomenon*, 7

¹¹ Merleau-Ponty, *Visible and Invisible*, 116

¹² In this way, Merleau-Ponty takes up again some essential driving questions of Heidegger's *Being and Time*, particularly those in Division 1, Section 18 and Division 2, Section 60, but they are given a different emphasis. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*. Macquarrie and Robinson translation. (London: SCM Press, 1962) from *Sein und Zeit, Seventh Edition* (Tubingen: Neomarius Verlag); Division 1, Section 18 deals specifically with

the notion of 'involvement' or '*Bewandtnis*'. This section is notoriously hazardous in translation, as Macquarrie points out, 115n2. What is essential for our purposes is the emphasis that Macquarrie notices here: "...the kind of involvement with which we are here concerned is always an involvement in some activity, which one is performing, not an involvement in circumstances in which one is 'caught' or 'entangled'". (Authors italics.) Division 2, Section 60 concerns Heidegger's phenomenological understanding of 'situation' which appears in two guises: as *Lage*, or the general situation, which he connects with the irresolute; and as Situation, or the concrete situation, which he connects with the resolute. On this latter distinction see the recent paper by Hubert Dreyfus "Could Anything Be More Intelligible than Everyday Intelligibility: Reinterpreting Division I of *Being and Time* in the light of Division II" unpublished, but posted on Dreyfus' UC Berkeley website.

¹³ Dillon, *Merleau-Ponty's Ontology*, introduction.

¹⁴ For Merleau-Ponty, the privileging of the object automatically commits one to a view of a subject, a view that almost always turns into some sort of philosophy of consciousness.

¹⁵ See Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, Second Book: Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*, translated by R. Rojcewicz and A. Schuwer (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1989); *Edmund Husserl, Collected Works Volume III*. The sections of interest to Merleau-Ponty to which he refers in the *Phenomenology* are taken mainly from Sections 49e; 50; 55; in the *Phenomenology* see Chapter 3 'The Spatiality of One's Own Body and Motility', especially 140n54, 146n62, 159n92, this latter being of particular interest: "Consciousness is in the first place not a matter of 'I think that' but of 'I can'".

¹⁶ This point has been missed by many commentators who orient their interpretations on Merleau-Ponty's early work. That he himself clearly states that this work had a fundamental error which prevented it being followed through seems not to have been taken seriously. See *Visible and Invisible*, 200. Commentators still write about Merleau-Ponty's 'philosophy of the body' and continue to treat the body as a mediation or as a kind of central organizing principle. Edward Casey, though perhaps giving the impression of doing this, makes a distinction which is helpful here, between the objective body and the living body, a distinction found in Husserl (*Körper* and *Leib*). See Casey, 'Between Geography and Philosophy: What Does It Mean to Be in the Place-World?' in *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 91.4 (2001), 683-693. The living body is the whole person and their intentional life, affectivities and so on, involved in an environment, the topos of lived life. Substituting 'body' for 'mind' or 'consciousness' in this ontology is misleading. See also note 12, on Heidegger and concrete Situation.

¹⁷ cf. "I am only a field of experience where there is sketched out the family of material things and other families and the world as their common style... In order to pass from this to the essences, it is necessary for me to actively intervene, to vary the things and the field, not through some manipulation, but... by supposing changed or putting out of circuit such and such a relationship or such and such a structure... so as to locate those relationships and structures that are separable from the thing, and those on the contrary that one could not suppress or change without the thing ceasing to be itself. It is from this test that the essence emerges --it is therefore not a positive being. It is an in-variant...", *Visible and Invisible*, 110-111; Merleau-Ponty is indicating this when he refers to the 'topological' sense of Being. See *ibid.*, 210-11; 213-14; 216-17. The whole of Chapter Three of this book is dedicated to careful critique of Husserl's eidetic work.

¹⁸ The notion of 'recursivity' is a clearer way of expressing the notion of 'reversability' as

Dillon sets it out. See Dillon, *Merleau-Ponty's Ontology*, chapter 9 and "Merleau-Ponty and the Reversibility Thesis" in *Merleau-Ponty: Critical Essays*, edited Henry Pieterma (Washington DC: University Press of America, 1989), 77-100.

¹⁹ Merleau-Ponty suggests this when he says "Take topological space as a model of being... a milieu in which are circumscribed relations of proximity, of envelopment..." and "...the primordial space as topological (that is, cut out in a total voluminosity which surrounds me, in which I am, which is behind me as well as before me...) *Visible and Invisible*, 210; 213-4

²⁰ This clearly has some overlap with Heideggerian issues over metaphysics, but Merleau-Ponty's concerns in this critique are very different from those of Heidegger, something that we will not go into here.

²¹ This is an important feature of Merleau-Ponty's concern to maintain the proper relationship between language, expression and worldly involvement, as seen in *The Prose of the World*, in which translator John O'Neill sees the emergence of an 'incarnate logic'. Merleau-Ponty, *The Prose of the World*, edited Claude Lefort, translated John O'Neill (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973); originally *La Prose du Monde* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969); O'Neill's introduction, xlii

²² *Visible and Invisible*, 13; 113: "If I am kosmotheoros, my sovereign gaze finds the things each in its own time, in its own place, as absolute individuals in a local and temporal disposition. Since they participate in the same significations each from its own place, one is led to conceive another dimension that would be a traversal to this flat multiplicity and that would be the system of significations without locality or temporality."

²³ The problem of the concept, as Mauro Carbone points out, is that it emerges as both an inherent development of interrogation of a situation, but also gives the illusion of independence. Contrasting the conceptual with the conceptless, conceptuality with the always 'carnal' configuration of sense, Carbone makes a distinction which harks back to our earlier distinction between the general and the specific. If for Merleau-Ponty "every concept is first a horizontal generality, a generality of style", then what is at issue here is the difference between the specificity of the visible and the generality of the invisible. Carbone, 'The Thinking of the Sensible', in Evan and Lawlor, *Chiasms*, 121-124; Merleau-Ponty quote, *Visible and Invisible*, 237

²⁴ *Visible and Invisible*, 151

²⁵ This excess should not spill over into substitutional metaphysical entities or processes, as for instance in the recent work of Jean-Luc Marion. See for instance how Marion deals with the notion of 'flesh' without a single reference to Merleau-Ponty's work. In *Excess: Studies of Saturated Phenomena*, translated Robyn Horner and Vincent Berrand (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), Chapter Four. Originally, *De Surcroit: Études sur les phénomènes saturés* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2001).

²⁶ Samuel B. Mallin, *Merleau-Ponty's Philosophy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 17

²⁷ *ibid.*, 24

²⁸ Merleau-Ponty, *Primacy of Perception*, edited J. Edie, translated A.B. Dallery (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 11; originally 'Un inédit de Maurice Merleau-Ponty' in *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* 4 (1962), 409

²⁹ This tendency is seen clearly in the linguistics of de Saussure, where language is conceived of as two planes, one consisting of 'thought' and the other of 'sound', which are continuous with one another, and consist of mental and phonic substance respectively. This two-sided continuous plane is then cut up into discrete chunks, on the mental side 'concepts',

on the phonic side 'sounds. Ingold makes the point that this same Saussurean model is also seen in the analysis conducted by anthropologists and geographers with regards to how they conceive of the relationship between human beings and their world.' Tim Ingold, *The Perception of the Environment: Essays of Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* (London: Routledge, 2000), 192

³⁰ See also Todd May, *Our Practices Our Selves* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 129-130

³¹ Ingold, 192

³² *ibid.*, 193

³³ Ingold, 153

³⁴ *ibid.*

³⁵ Tim Ingold, foreword to *The Social Dynamics of Technology: Practices, Politics and Worldviews*, edited Marcia-Anne Dobbes and Christopher R. Hoffman (Washington DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1999), xi

³⁶ Ingold, *Perception of Environment*, 219-220

³⁷ Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992)

³⁸ *ibid.*, 82

³⁹ For instance: George Lakoff, *Women, Fire and Other Dangerous Things* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Mark Johnson, *The Body in Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Gabriel Josipovici, *Writing the Body* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982)

⁴⁰ Compare, for instance, Bourdieu's position in *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977) with that in *Pascalian Meditations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999) or *Science of Science and Reflexivity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003)

⁴¹ This is where many will automatically move into 'displaced consciousness' thinking: by treating this locus as somehow a mediation.

⁴² Bell, 97

⁴³ *ibid.*, 98

⁴⁴ She notes, for instance, that Van Gennep, Eliade, Jonatham Z. Smith and Turner have all worked with such a notion. *ibid.*, 99

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, 99. Bell has effectively appropriated Bourdieu here to think further about how the ritual 'environment' might be involved with the body. We should also notice how similar this notion of 'circularity' is to Merleau-Ponty's formulation of chiasm. This 'circularity' for Bell is like Bourdieu's "logic of ritual" which is embedded in the physical movement of the body and in some way elludes the grasp of explicit articulation, and, moreover of consciousness.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, 100

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, 101-104

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, 107

⁴⁹ This terminology of a 'site ontology' is suggested by Theodore Schatzki. See his *The Site of the Social* (University Park PA: Penn State Press, 2002)

⁵⁰ Ingold, *Perception of Environment*, 169;193

⁵¹ *ibid.*, 193

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