

UNIVERZITA KARLOVA

Fakulta tělesné výchovy a sportu

DISSERTATION THESIS

2023

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Fakulta tělesné výchovy a sportu

**Phenomenological notion of the body and its possible
consequences for practice of body-oriented disciplines**

PhD Thesis

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Prague 2023

I declare that I have prepared the final dissertation independently and that I have listed all information sources and literature used. Neither this thesis nor any substantial part of it has been submitted for another or the same academic degree.

Prague, 2023

Student's signature

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deep gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Jim Parry, and my consultant, Doc. Irena Martínková, for their generous and patient guidance and support throughout my long PhD studies. Special thanks belong to Mgr. Honza Halák, Ph.D., who supported me and helped me in difficult moments purely out of his good will. Lastly, I thank my wife for not divorcing me despite my sacrifice of an enormous amount of time to something, the purpose of which is so foreign to her.

ABSTRACT

Title: Phenomenological notion of the body and its possible consequences for practice of body-oriented disciplines

Objectives: This thesis aims to clarify the possible projection of phenomenological findings about the body into the body-oriented disciplines. The interpretation of René Descartes, Edmund Husserl and, above all, Maurice Merleau-Ponty comes to the postulate that the body itself is not an object, but rather it is that by which objects exist as objects in the first place. From this phenomenological postulate there follows the deep opposition of the phenomenological notion of the body to the notion on which body-oriented disciplines commonly (but usually only implicitly) base their theory and practice. The thesis thus presents not only the interpretation of positive phenomenological concepts, but also the interpretation of phenomenological criticism of the physiological and psychological (or psychologizing) concept of the body, which stand on the flaws and prejudices of the empiricist and intellectualist traditions of Western thought. Subsequently, the possible impacts of both phenomenological criticism and phenomenological concepts on the practice of body-oriented disciplines are discussed.

Methodology: This dissertation is a philosophical treatise. The first part is a philosophical interpretation of the key authors who contributed to the phenomenological notion of the body. When examples are used, it is only for the purpose of illustrating a certain principle or idea. The second part deals on a theoretical level with the possible implementation and projection of the presented philosophical ideas into the treatment of the body. This is achieved solely by fictitious examples of situations that could occur within these disciplines.

Results: In the light of phenomenological criticism and in relation to the phenomenological notion of the body, the physiological notion of the body and the evidence-based approach as its derivation (as well as the psychological notion) have been shown to be inappropriate. The objectification of the body, whether as a machine-like object or as a representation in the consciousness of its “owner”, fundamentally deviates from the immediate bodily experience in which the body is the subject, and which is our original manner of reaching the world. The commonly used objectifying techniques of treating the body are therefore only secondary, derivative and thus insufficient. Phenomenology offers some concepts that could challenge this situation. The concepts of body-schema and bodily intentionality draw the attention of the body-oriented experts to the body as an intentional subject, which differentiates, adapts and varies in order to achieve the intended practical task. The concept of bodily habit, unlike objectifying approaches, offers an entirely different basic element of working with the body, namely the meaningful core of the movement, which is not further divisible. The concepts of bodily empathy and bodily dialogue name phenomena that are common in practice but not explicitly developed precisely because they are not thematised, although they are from a phenomenological point of view more original and should therefore be the basis of treating of the body in the disciplines concerned.

Keywords: body, phenomenology, Merleau-Ponty, criticism of science, body-oriented disciplines

ABSTRAKT

Název: Fenomenologické pojetí těla a jeho možné důsledky pro praxi oborů pracujících s tělem

Cíle: Tato disertační práce si klade za cíl osvětlit možné promítnutí fenomenologických poznatků o těle do oborů pracujících s tělem. Interpretací klíčových tezí Reného Descartesa, Edmunda Husserla a především Maurice Merleau-Pontyho dochází k postulátu, že vlastní tělo není předmět, nýbrž to, díky čemu vůbec předměty existují jako předměty. Od tohoto fenomenologického postulátu se dále odvíjí hluboká opozice fenomenologického pojetí těla vůči pojetí, z kterého obory pracující s tělem běžně (obvykle však pouze implicitně) vycházejí ve své teorii i praxi. Práce proto předkládá nejen interpretaci některých pozitivních fenomenologických konceptů, nýbrž i interpretaci fenomenologické kritiky fyziologického a psychologického (či psychologizujícího) pojetí těla, stojících na omylech a předsudcích empiristické a intelektualistické tradice západního myšlení. Následně jsou diskutovány možné dopady obojího – jak fenomenologické kritiky, tak fenomenologických konceptů – na praxi oborů pracujících s tělem.

Metodologie: Tato disertační práce je filosofickým pojednáním. První část je filosofickou interpretací klíčových autorů, kteří přispěli k fenomenologickému pojetí těla. Jsou-li použity příklady, je to pouze za účelem dokreslení určitého principu či myšlenky. Druhá část se v teoretické rovině zabývá možnou implementací a promítnutím prezentovaných filosofických myšlenek do zacházení s tělem. Toho je dosahováno výhradně smyšlenými příklady situací, ke kterým by v rámci těchto oborů mohlo dojít.

Výsledky: Ve světle fenomenologické kritiky a ve vztahu k fenomenologickému pojetí těla se fyziologické pojetí těla a z něj vycházející evidence-based přístup (stejně jako psychologizující přístup) ukázaly jako nevhodné. Objektivizace těla, ať už jako jakéhosi stroje či jako reprezentace ve vědomí jeho „vlastníka“, se zásadním způsobem rozchází s bezprostřední

tělesnou zkušeností, v níž je tělo subjektem a která je původním způsobem dosahování světa. Běžně používané objektivizační techniky zacházení s tělem jsou proto pouze sekundární, odvozené, a tudíž nedostatečné. Fenomenologie nabízí některé koncepty, které by tuto situaci mohly změnit. Koncept tělesného schématu a tělesné intencionality obrací pozornost odborníků pracujících s tělem na tělo jako intencionální subjekt, který se diferencuje, adaptuje a variuje ve snaze dosazovat zamýšleného praktického cíle. Koncept tělesného návyku nabízí na rozdíl od objektivizujících přístupů zcela jiný základní element práce s tělem, a sice významové jádro pohybu, které je dále nedělitelné. Koncepty tělesné empatie a tělesného dialogu pojmenovávají fenomény běžně se již v praxi vyskytující, avšak explicitně nerozvíjené právě proto, že nejsou tematizované, ač jsou z fenomenologického pohledu původnější a měly by proto být základem práce s tělem v oborech které se tím zabývají.

Klíčová slova: tělo, fenomenologie, Merleau-Ponty, kritika vědy, obory pracující s tělem

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*Es ist mehr Vernunft in deinem
Leibe, als in deiner besten
Weisheit. Und wer weiss denn,
wozu dein Leib gerade deine beste
Weisheit nöthig hat?*

*(There is more sagacity in thy body
than in thy best wisdom. And who
then knoweth why thy body
requireth just thy best wisdom?)*

*Friedrich Nietzsche,
Also Sprach Zarathustra
(Nietzsche 1983)
(Thus Spake Zarathustra
(Nietzsche 1930))*

INTRODUCTION – CURRENT NOTION OF THE BODY

The primary goal of this thesis, as its title announces, is to present a phenomenological notion of the body and to draw some consequences for the practice with the body. Offering an alternative could indicate a dissatisfaction with the current state of play. Moreover, proposing a change assumes a thorough and extensive description of *what* should be changed. Although the following text is indeed partially motivated by the author's dissatisfaction with the understanding of the body encountered in the literature and in everyday situations, this is certainly not enough to justify an all-encompassing critique of current conditions. For the everyday experience cannot be generalized and the study of the relevant literature can lead to only one conclusion: it is impossible to determine *what* the current notion of the body is, against which it would be possible to offer a definition. Instead of structuring the thesis expectedly as an extensive description of the current notion in the first part, and then fitting the proposed one into it in the second part, it will therefore be more appropriate to arrange the thesis differently.

Namely, to give up the ambition to justify or substantiate the dissatisfaction with the current state, and rather to stay at the level of pure philosophical speculation.

This thesis is thus going to be primarily *philosophical*. Consequently, its critical position towards the current notion of the body will not be based on how it is discussed in textbooks, how it is taught at universities, or how various samples of respondents (body-oriented experts, patients, athletes) would describe it in interviews, and not even on the basis of an historical analysis of how the body was conceived in the past. The analysis will arise *from within* the presentation of a phenomenological notion of the body in the sense that if the phenomenological notion is found to be demonstrably coherent, consistent, appropriate, sufficient, adequate etc., it follows that any other, the current one (whatever it is) included, must necessarily be incoherent, inconsistent, inappropriate, insufficient, inadequate etc. This applies at least to the first part of the thesis, which tries to meticulously adhere to maximal philosophical generality. But still, it will be constantly launching attacks against the so-called scientific notion, against so-called common sense, against philosophical traditions, from which various premises about the body arise, while I shall argue are unsustainable in confrontation with the phenomenological findings presented here. These general constructs are nevertheless impossible to fit into the immeasurably wide range of ever-changing everyday knowing about and dealing with the human body. For in addition to the professional treatment of another's body, each of us also constantly struggles not only with the bodies of others, but also with our own body. Consequently, everyone has their own notion of the body, and it would be preposterous to accuse everyone of standing for an inappropriate notion and to offer them a different one. Hence, it is necessary to emphasize that all criticism in the first part serves only as a strawman against which it is possible to more easily render the outlines of a positive contribution of this thesis – a phenomenological notion of the body.

Nevertheless, the audacity of the chosen must necessarily manifest itself in drawing consequences for practice, the content of the second part. How can it sound to body-oriented experts that they have to radically change the way they work according to “from-practice-detached” philosophical considerations? Although this question may seem a rhetorical one, answering it can be considered the second, implicit goal of this thesis. For philosophy, from the point of view of this thesis should never be detached from practice, but exactly the opposite: *every human action that has the ambition not to be an empty routine must be constantly philosophically revised*. Put another way, apart from the presented discrepancies of the current notion of the body, its fundamental deficiency consists in being critically “under-philosophised”. This may sound paradoxical, given that I indicated in the pre-previous paragraph that there is, too much literature dealing with the current notion of the body. But firstly, solving the general problem of oversaturation of academic texts is not the aim of this thesis (which in fact expands it itself), and secondly, the argument about under-philosophizing was meant to aim directly at the practice of body-oriented experts rather than at the sphere of academic literature.

The question therefore is *how to get more philosophy into the practice with the body*. Should there be philosophers behind the backs of all body-oriented experts, who would tirelessly ask the question why do they do what they do? Perhaps it would be more practical if all experts cultivated in themselves a bit of a philosopher and at least occasionally asked this question themselves. This thesis wants to show that it pays off, even if it means changing the standard education of these experts.

Although the questions of the philosopher uneducated in the body-oriented disciplines might sometimes sound absurd, they can in fact often reveal the absurdity of established routines. Just to give one example: Is there a general theory of what the body is and how to affect it? Or in other words: Are there any universally accredited textbooks or guidelines? Is there a consensus

among researchers? And if not (because actually there is not), what does it mean for practice? When speaking of research, what does the incantation "evidence-based" actually mean? How is it possible to mingle the exactness that should emerge from evidence-based research with the creativity of the process of conceptualization and operationalization? Or the strictness of statistical procedures with subsequent diverse interpretation of results? And if we wanted to ask a higher-level question, a philosopher might ask on what is the practice of the experts really built? Is it upon officially recognized methods, vaguely defined concepts, demonstrations of reliable techniques, the experience gained under the guidance of masters of the discipline, or upon their own experience? Is such an experience subjected to universal logical reasoning, their common sense, or their intuition? Do they feel more like scientists, craftsmen or artists? And what do they draw from their mistakes and accidental successes? According to this thesis, it would be beneficial for all body-oriented experts, physicians, surgeons, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, nutritional therapists, gym teachers, sport trainers, sport consultants, masseurs, spa employees etc., to ask these questions themselves. Hopefully, this thesis could be something to guide them to at least some of the answers.

The announced dissatisfaction of the author of this thesis, himself more a body-oriented expert than a philosopher, depends in the perceived discrepancy between the theory taught and the practice subsequently widely implemented among the body-oriented experts within his reach. But it is surely not just his feeling – it is being heard from many sides and, among other things, it is manifested by the sharp increase of various alternative methods. As already mentioned, the literature defining the current notion of the body in the need to criticize it as inadequate has increased so much in recent decades that it is no longer possible to contain it. Without the ambition to generalize, for the purposes of this introduction, it may nevertheless be instructive to notice two of the most common subjects of criticism: Cartesian dualism and evidence-based research.

René Descartes is usually considered to be the villain who separated the body from the mind. His role will be clarified in the beginning of the first part of this thesis; however, here it is less about what he actually meant, but more about what is deeply rooted in his contribution to the so-called body-mind dilemma or dualism. This consists in the belief that there are two essentially distinct substances, and while the mind belongs as *res cogitans* to the one, the body as *res extensa* belongs to the other. The body is conceived as extended and divisible and thus equivalent to other extended and divisible things perceptible by the senses. And such a body is supposed *somehow* to house the unextended and indivisible mind. Descartes is therefore understood as the philosopher who justified the notion of the body as an object for the needs of science. The natural sciences could then apply their universal tool, *causality*, even to the human body, while the study of the mind was expelled first to the competences of philosophy and later to the humanities. Instead of dealing with it “somehow” or with asking the question of how the senses can be both perceiving and perceived, scientists constructed the machine-like model of the body, which began to be justified not by Descartes’ accounts, but by the fact that “it works”. Against all those who refer to Cartesian dualism when trying to find out what is wrong with the current concept of the body, it is therefore appropriate to say together with one of the phenomenological classics that the problem is rather that “the science itself does not think” (Heidegger, 1968, 8). And that is why it is actually naive to try to find the philosophical foundation of the current dominantly scientific notion of the body – the only criterion that qualifies any knowledge as scientifically valuable is whether it works or not. In the case of the human body, it simply means that if it could be empirically proved that such and such treatment causes desirable observable consequences, it must be right. This banal principle more or less coincides with what is usually called the common sense (of which science is in fact a mere extension), which requires of us not to overthink anything and to act as simply as possible to make it work.

Evidence-based research can be understood as a term for this banal principle. The machine-like model of the body is endlessly developed into smaller and smaller details by statistically proven causal relations between objectively observable extended parts of the bodies of research participants. To objectively observe means to be purified from the human factor of the researcher, and this is supposed to be a virtue. Evidence-based findings have gradually become the most weighty in deciding what is good for the human body and what is not. And, indeed, many great historical achievements can be attributed to them, especially in general medicine, because nobody says that it could not *partly* work. However, this “partly” closely relates to the mentioned “somehow”. There are other disciplines in which the body behaves less as an object (according to causal laws) and in which it is more relevant *how* the mind inhabits the body. Although it is in fact a big deal even for general medicine, the disciplines in which the body behaves less objectively suffer more from internal contradiction between the noble evidence-based endless machine-like model of the body and everyday practice, in which such a disembodied and “from-practice-detached” knowledge is almost useless. From the author’s experiences in discussions with his colleagues, it seems that, although they refer to the scientific notion of the body and use its vocabulary, they in fact rely much more on their own experientially developed conceptions and their own bodily experiences. They are thus employing precisely the human factor condemned by science and resorting to the questions as those presented in one of the previous paragraphs of this introduction.

It is probably this schizophrenic situation of theory inevitably detaching from practice that conditions the rise of the alternative methods and techniques. If the educational process requires an ever-increasing accumulation of knowledge about the body as a machine, and evidence-based findings are applicable only at the cost of a greater and greater reduction of the complexity of the encounters between the experts and the subjects of their treatment, it is more than understandable that there will arise closed (esoteric) circles which teach about the body in

a way that shows their internally coherent theoretical accounts to be closer to their recommended practical techniques. This development also corresponds to the description of the third phase of Thomas Kuhn's (Kuhn 1972) structure of scientific revolutions, in which normal science increasingly fails to explain anomalies and which he calls a "crisis". From the (phenomenological) position of this thesis, this crisis primarily consists in a divergence from the primary source of all knowledge, from our immediate experience, which is inescapably embodied. In order to get out of the crisis it is therefore necessary to reconsider the pros and cons of an approach that is demonstratively based on disembodiment. It is undoubtedly advantageous when the objectification of the success of a certain standardized procedure allows its generalization, but it is concurrently useless if this success can only be achieved in completely unrealizable conditions and circumstances. And it is appropriate to admit that even what cannot be objectified, measured, standardized or generalized is not automatically reprehensible, but can even be more useful and successful.

Such a consideration returns in a circle to the initial idea that, thanks to the indefinability of the current notion of the body, all criticism serves mainly to positively define the offered alternative. If it is sometimes a little sharper, as in the previous paragraphs, it is more to create space for any alternative at all, to show that the that science's monopoly on knowledge is only spurious. For this is not to say that all scientific knowledge is completely wrong, but rather that it is in our interest to better understand what are its limits and where are the boundaries of its scope. In awe of its historical successes, we tend to extrapolate science to all areas of human life and thus make it impossible to develop approaches that are distinct from it. This thesis is going to present and promote one such distinct approach, one that returns to immediate bodily experience and draws from the embodiment of body-oriented experts: the phenomenological notion of the body.

METHODOLOGY

Before the actual text of the thesis begins, it is appropriate to make a short methodological note. The following text is a *philosophical treatise*. Its aim is to express, present, clarify and defend thoughts related to the selected topic – the body in body-oriented disciplines.

The first part is an *interpretation* of works of key phenomenological philosophers (Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger and Maurice Merleau-Ponty), and predominantly of selected parts of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception*. In order to achieve maximum methodological purity and clarity, all the implications and consequences for theory and practice are reserved for the second part. If examples are used in the first part, they are exclusively examples taken from interpreted philosophers and serve not as examples of how to implement a given philosophical finding into theory or practice, but only to facilitate its understanding. It can therefore be argued that the first part is purely *theoretical* and *non-empirical*.

The second part considers on a theoretical level possible implications and consequences of presented findings for the theory and practice of body-oriented disciplines. Such considerations are illustrated with examples of how presented findings could be *potentially* implemented into the practice of body-oriented experts, that is, they are never related to the situations that *actually* happened to *existing* people, but to the cases that *might* occur within bodily treatment. In this sense, the thesis rests at a non-empirical level, although it has an ambition to revise the practice of body-oriented disciplines. Although the author is himself a physiotherapist, his practical experience is therefore never used in the form of examples on which philosophical findings could be substantiated, but only in the form of impulses that prompted him to agree with certain philosophical arguments and to reject others.

I. PHENOMENOLOGICAL NOTION OF THE BODY

After a brief indication of what might be understood as the current notion of the body, the phenomenological notion as its opposition will be introduced thoroughly in the following extensive part of this thesis. In more than a hundred years, phenomenology gained weight in philosophical circles and became well established despite many internal inconsistencies and controversies. However, outside of these circles it is still regarded as incomprehensible or even intricate. Despite such reputation, it has in last few decades permeated many non-philosophical disciplines. This process is nevertheless connected with various complications, misinterpretations and ambiguities. This thesis is one of many attempts to release some key phenomenological thoughts from purely philosophical level, to implement them into the theories of body-oriented disciplines and to demonstrate how their practices could or should be affected by these thoughts. To be successful, it is necessary to interpret chosen phenomenological motifs in the most accessible and comprehensible (but at the same time not misleading) way. Hence, this part is going to be purely philosophical to keep the argumentation compact. The first half of this section will be circumscribed by the question whether one's own body is or is not an object, and the second half will expose two classical approaches built upon two philosophical traditions against which phenomenology defines itself and develops its original notion of the body. This will create a compact image thanks to which the current approach to the body will appear as untenable. Second part will then indicate the course which the body-oriented disciplines could or should head according to presented phenomenological discoveries about the body.

A. The body as an object and the body as that by which there are objects

In order to introduce the phenomenological notion of the body in the most comprehensible way, this part will begin by putting the opening question: *Is one's own body an object?* Before engaging phenomenology into answering, it will be instructive to briefly expose the position of René Descartes, who, as is widely considered, defined the cornerstones of modern knowledge. These cornerstones were after centuries questioned by the founder of phenomenology, Edmund Husserl. Some of disclosed ambiguities were precisely related to the problematic of the objectivity of one's own body. Critical analysis of Husserl's attempt to solve these ambiguities will finally bring us to Merleau-Ponty's thorough and most consistent answer, through which the most important phenomenological motives will concurrently arise.

René Descartes

In the introductory part of this thesis Cartesian dualism was mentioned as constitutional for our current notion of the body. Indeed, the conclusion and usual interpretation of Descartes' key treatise, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (Descartes 2008) is the distinction between the unextended and indivisible mind from the extended and divisible body. However, there are also some ambiguities and unsolved discrepancies, which were later revised from a phenomenological perspective. Most important for the purposes of this thesis is that Descartes is not consistent in defining the body in the Second Meditation (Descartes 2008, 17-24) and in the Sixth Meditation (Descartes 2008, 51-64). In the Second Meditation, aptly entitled "Of the nature of the human mind; that it is more easily known than the body", Descartes first focuses on thoughts about his body he has *spontaneously and by nature's prompting*. He finds it as a

“mechanism of limbs, such as we see even in corpses” and the knowledge of its nature as quite distinct, describing it as:

“... capable of being bounded by some shape, of existing in a definite place, of filling a space in such a way as to exclude the presence of any other body within it, of being perceived by touch, sight, hearing, taste, or smell, and also of being moved in various ways.” (Descartes 2008, 19)

What, according to Descartes, does not seem to belong to the nature of the body is the ability of moving itself, sensing or thinking – that must be something else “by which the body is touched” (Descartes 2008, 19). However, no matter how distinct he finds all what does appertain to the body, applying his radically sceptical method it could be doubted, and it could be an illusion, a deception, or a dream.

In contrast, among the attributes of the mind, which might first seem as something “rarefied and subtle” to him when compared with the distinct nature of the body, Descartes distinguishes *thinking* as something necessary and inseparable from his existence: *as long as he thinks, he exists*. Other attributes ascribed to the mind– movement, sensation and imagination – does not take place without the body, whose existence could be doubted, so he withdraws his mind from them to keep its own nature as distinct as possible. To prove that these attributes belong to it he uses the famous experiment with wax, from which he concludes that perception of it is not sight or touch of it, but the *judgement* we have about what we see or feel, the understanding of it, which could not be false. In other words, what senses give us could be false, for we could be dreaming, but our judgement about what they give us, no matter if they are true or false, could not be false, but confused or clear. All these faculties are therefore interpreted as various modes of thinking.

To sum up, in the Second Meditation the body is defined exclusively as something extended, reachable by senses, distinct from the mind, and doubtable. Sensing itself, as well as imagination and ability to move, although unthinkable without body, is, on the other hand, assigned to the mind and found as modes of thinking and therefore undoubtable.

In the Sixth Meditation, named “Of the existence of material things, and the real distinction between mind and body”, Descartes thoroughly examines faculties of imagination and sensation in order to prove the existence of material things. While examining sensation, he notices that the particular body he calls his own belongs more to him than any other body (Descartes 2008, 54), for, as he claims, “I could not ever be separated from it, as I could from the other bodies; I felt all my appetites and passions in it and for it; and finally I was aware of pain and pleasure in parts of it, but not in any other body existing outside it” (Descartes 2008, 54). Although these sensations are in certain respect “closer” to the mind, Descartes demonstrates that judgements about sensations from his body could be similarly confused as sensations about other corporeal things, as for example in the cases of people who still feel pain in amputated limbs (Descartes 2008, 54). He thus does not find any other understandable affinity between sensations and the way he judges about them than that his “nature teaches that it is so” (Descartes 2008, 54), in which, as his reason often proves, we should not place much faith. Although he noticed how the body is conjoined with him, he keeps a distinct and clear idea of himself, in so far as he is a thinking and not an extended thing, and a distinct and clear idea of the body as an extended and not a thinking thing, without which he could exist.

Nevertheless, the Second Meditation already proved the existence of faculties of thinking which are not understandable without extended, bodily substance – namely sensation, imagination and movement (“changing place and assuming various postures”). Descartes’ ultimate argument for the existence of such substance arises from his certainty that God is not a deceiver and thus he would not give us so strong a propensity to believe that ideas we have about corporeal things

really depend on them while not giving us a faculty to disclose they do not. Bodily things thus do exist, although not necessarily in the way the senses give them, and God gave us a faculty by which this discrepancy could be corrected, and which leads in discovering the truth. And if God is not a deceiver, in all that nature teaches there must be at least an element of truth, because by “nature” Descartes means here “either God himself, or system of created things established by God” (Descartes 2008, 57) including the ability to proceed from what is given by senses to the truth.

So, there must be some truth in the most basic teaching of our own nature, which is that we have a body in which we feel pain, thirst, hunger, etc. And at this point Descartes encounters the key discrepancy of the division of body and mind, while noticing that he is not present in his body “only as a pilot is present in a ship”, but that he is “very closely conjoined to it and, so to speak, fused with it, so as to form a single entity with it” (Descartes 2008, 57). He explicitly admits that, despite his judgements about what he perceives from his body, perception itself is inseparable from him as a thinking thing:

“For otherwise, when the body is injured, I, who am nothing other than a thinking thing, would not feel pain as a result, but would perceive the injury purely intellectually, as the pilot perceives by sight any damage occurring to his ship; and when the body lacks food or drink, I would understand this explicitly, instead of having confused feelings of hunger and thirst.” (Descartes 2008, 57)

Pain, hunger, thirst and other bodily feelings are now explained as “confused modes of thinking” arising from the newly found “union and, so to speak, fusion of the mind with the body” (Descartes 2008, 57).

In the final part of this meditation, Descartes revises how he formerly understood his own nature and its fallibility according to new findings about his own body. On the example on dropsy,

when the sick people desire to drink which make their disease worse, he distinguishes two ways of understanding of our nature. On one hand, we can say that the nature of the sick people is corrupted, and on the other hand, we can say that their nature makes an error. The difference consists in that in the former understanding of the nature is an “extrinsic denomination” (Descartes 2008, 60) of a thinking mind, while the latter is “something actually found in things” (Descartes 2008, 60). And if he considers “the mind as united to the body in this state (thirsty when drink would be harmful to it)” (Descartes 2008, 60) he identifies it as an error of nature. The explanation of how is this possible despite the “goodness of God” Descartes finds in the arrangement of the divisible body and its connection to the indivisible mind. The nerve ordained by nature to affect the mind by the feeling of pain in the foot could be stimulated not only in the foot, but wherever on its conduction to the brain, where there is somewhere, according to Descartes, a point in which the body coheres with the mind. And since the stimulation of the nerve must lead to one and the same sensation in the mind, “it is entirely plain that, notwithstanding God’s immense goodness, the nature of man, as a composite of mind and body, cannot but be liable to error at times” (Descartes 2008, 62). At least, the God gave us thinking to reveal and avoid these errors.

In both, definition of what is meant by the nature and explanation why it could be fallible, Descartes returns to the notion of the body as extended and divisible object as it was set in the Second meditation, although he has just discovered that it is in very specific way different from other objects and inseparable from the mind. He even uses the analogy between the body suffering from dropsy (and thus fallibly desiring for drink) with the badly made clock (indicating the time inaccurately although obeying the laws of nature):

“And I can likewise consider the body of a human being as a kind of machine made up of bones, nerves, muscles, veins, blood, and skin so fitted together that, even if there were

no mind within it, it would still have all the movements it currently has that do not result from the command of the will (and hence the mind).” (Descartes 2008, 60)

In summary, the Sixth Meditation is built up gradually, step by step, to prove the existence of bodily things and to explain the ambiguous character of one’s own body and faculties of thinking which are dependent on the bodily substance. To be able to do so, Descartes makes an arc from the notion of one’s own body as an extended, divisible and non-thinking object different from the mind, comparing it with a corpse or a clock, to the notion of own body as exceptional among other bodies and inseparable from, united to or fused with the mind, and back. This arc is necessary to enable the explanation of the duplexity of sensation (and implicitly the imagination and movement as well), which belongs both to the body and to the mind. The discussion surrounding this inconsistency in Descartes' argumentation is of course very broad, but there is no need to go into further details. It was only necessary to point out that, although Descartes is seen as the originator of dualism, he was actually more the one who first pointed out *exceptionalities that distinguish the body from other objects*.

Edmund Husserl

Almost three hundred years after, in 1931, Edmund Husserl followed on Descartes’ ideas explicitly in his *Cartesian meditations* subtitling it “An introduction to phenomenology”. In the introduction he explains that Descartes’ meditations influenced the development of transcendental phenomenology so much so “one might call it neo-Cartesianism, even though it is obliged – and precisely by its radical development of Cartesian motifs – to reject nearly all the well-known doctrinal content of the Cartesian philosophy” (Husserl 1982, 43). Husserl finds the contemporary situation in philosophy splintering as well as it was in Descartes' youth and feels the need to restore Descartes’ radicalness of new beginning, the need to follow his path

again, but without aberrations in which he and later philosophers strayed. Not only *Cartesian Meditations* should fulfil this task, but this also seems to be the inherent mission of transcendental phenomenology.

Accordingly, to a certain point in the First Meditation, Descartes' methodological scepticism coincides with a phenomenological reduction: refraining from "doing any believing that takes 'the' world straightforwardly as existing" and directing the regard on the "consciousness of 'the' world" (Husserl 1982, 21). However, later Husserl reveals a gap in Descartes' doubt, an unexplained presupposition, caused, apparently, by his admiration for mathematical science, his attempt to create a solid foundation for "deductively 'explanatory' world-science, a 'nomological' science, a science *ordine geometrico*" (Husserl 1982, 24). To make it possible, he keeps in the meditating ego "a little tag-end of the world" as the sole unquestionable but *experientially unsupported* island, from which the whole objective world is inferred according to the principles innate to the ego (Husserl 1982, 24). Husserl observes that Descartes' meditating self is deluding itself, that it conducts reflection without realizing its limits given by the announced strict scepticism. As well as we see an object only from our one perspective and cannot immediately (without assumptions) speak of its form from other perspectives, our own selves are experienced only as the living presence of ourselves, whereas memories, images, and opinions are obscure, present only assumptively. What brings light into them is the reflection of our psychological, not transcendental, self. Thus, not the solid ground from which Descartes originally launched his meditations, but the ground of an apperceived, objectified, separately considered psyche. Husserl's phenomenological reduction is therefore stricter in that it reduces even "purely internal experience" to phenomena, the realm of "psychological self-experience" into the realm of "transcendental-phenomenological self-experience" (Husserl 1982, 26). This distinction is important not only as a key diversion from Descartes, but also as an objection

against all what Merleau-Ponty (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 28-51) (reference) later subsumes under intellectualism.

So, the first and essential contribution of Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations* is the disclosure of Descartes' inconsequence in doubting that enables him to presuppose the objective world researchable by deductive science. Husserl proceeds in revision of Descartes' meditations and brings many more remarkable findings but given the purpose of this thesis it will suffice to expose the moment in which he explicitly deals with his own body and discovers it being "uniquely singled out" among other bodies of Nature (Husserl 1982, 97). This is because it is "only one of them that is not just the body", but "the sole Object" to which he ascribes "fields of sensation" and in which he can "'rule and govern' immediately" and thereby "'act' somatically" (Husserl 1982, 97). As we saw, Descartes has already exposed the same exclusivity in similar terms, especially when considering sensation. Husserl, however, in this moment immediately follows up with a new motif, which turns out to be crucial. He observes that in active perception we can, in addition to all of Nature, experience our own corporeality, as for example when touching one hand by the other, or, in general, while "the functioning organ must become an Object and the Object a functioning organ" (Husserl 1982, 97). This idea is, however, not further developed in the *Cartesian meditations*, but Husserl analyses it more in detail later in the third chapter of the second section of his *Ideas on Pure Phenomenology II* (2000).

In this work, investigating the constitution of corporeality of one's own body, Husserl returns to the case of hands touching one another, in which the body (*Körper*) perceived by means of one's own body (*Leib*) is the corporeal body itself (*Leibkörper*), because he notices that this is, too, like other objects, "perceived from outside, although with certain limits" (Husserl 2000, 152) (which will be analysed later). His interpretation of this special case is in fact quite confusing and ambiguous, which could evoke an assumption that this might be the key node in

the body-mind problem. Husserl notices that, in relation to other kinds of perception, touching plays an exceptional and, as it turns out, a constitutional role. Although he does not express that explicitly, from his description of touching one's own body as well as other bodies follows an important fact, that the *touching can always be touched*. This remains hidden behind complicated descriptions of "touch-sensations" and "touch-appearances" he has while touching either his own body or any other object. In both cases, the touching hand experiences properties (appearances) of what is being touched and the sensations of being touched by something. The sensation of pressure when his hand is lying on the table is apprehended at one time as perception of the table's surface and as sensation of digital pressure at the other. Which "stratum of apprehension" is actual depends, according to Husserl, on "direction of attention" (Husserl 2000, 154), although there is a necessary bond between them, an important nexus between two "thinghoods" that are being constituted. The stratum of sensations of touching something is constitutive of properties of touched things such as roughness or smoothness, coldness or warmth. The stratum of sensations of being touched is constitutive of the properties of one's own body in the way that they are "localized in it" (Husserl 2000, 154), arising "there *where* it is touched and at the time *when* it is touched" (Husserl 2000, 156).

Although Husserl begins the analysis by the case of touching one hand by the other, its exceptionality and contribution is not evident until he makes these (later) discoveries. While touching the left hand by the right hand, he first notices that except perception of touching something by the right hand he also perceives in the left hand that it is being touched. The right hand perceives the properties of what it touches, the left hand perceives in exact localization that it is being touched. The fact that these sensations could be switched Husserl describes as being "doubled", such that they are both at the same time for each other "an external thing", and of one's own body. From this follows that "(a)ll the sensations thus produced have their localization, i.e., they are distinguished by means of their place on the appearing Corporeality,

and they belong phenomenally to it” (Husserl 2000, 153). Hence, according to Husserl, one’s own body is “constituted in a double way: first it is a physical thing, a matter; it has its extension” (*Körper*) and secondly, he can “sense ‘on’ it and ‘in’ it” (Husserl 2000, 153) (*Leib*). After this claim, Husserl analyses the cases of touching other things or bodies and discovers that there are those two different strata of apprehension, which now, applicated to the case of touching one hand by the other, became “more complicated, for we have then two sensations, and each is apprehendable or experienceable in a double way” (Husserl 2000, 154), being not only double but quadruple sensations.

From the analysis of the role of tangibility in the process of constitution of corporeality Husserl turns his focus into the visual realm to find a striking difference: in the case of object constituted purely visually there are no such double sensations. Because when we see our own body “it is not something seeing which is seen” (Husserl 2000, 155), as was the touched body at the same time touching. And the same, according to Husserl, applies to hearing. Visual and audible sensations are attributed to our own body indirectly through the properly localized sensations, i.e., through the sensations of touch and through kinetic sensations (with which the sensations of touch are “constantly interlacing” (Husserl 2000, 158)). It means that although we can see our body as well as other things, it becomes our own only by incorporating tactile and kinetic sensations, and the fact that this seeing participates on the localization is only through coincidence between visual and tactual body.

According to Husserl, this difference between the roles of various sensations in constitution of corporeality and material thinghood shows an important fact, that the localization of sensations “is in fact something in principle different from the extension of all material determination of a thing” (Husserl 2000, 157). They as well “spread out in space, cover, in their way, spatial surfaces, run through them, etc.” (Husserl 2000, 157), but “this spreading out and spreading into are precisely something that *differs essentially from extension* [emphasis added] in the

sense of all the determinations that characterize the *res extensa*” (Husserl 2000, 157). Thus, in comparison with Descartes, to which explicitly belongs this reference, Husserl discovers that sensations, primarily the touch-sensations, constitute *another spatiality* besides extension. Even more precisely and to use his own words, it is not the experience of physical occurrences, the sensation of touching something, which is constitutive, but the experience of specifically Bodily occurrences, the sensation of being touched, which he calls “sensings” (*Empfindnisse*) (Husserl 2000, 153). Our material body (*Körper*, body) is for him an object as other objects at least for being extended, tangible, visible, etc. Our sensing, experiencing body (*Leib*, Body) belongs, on the other hand, to the mind:

“The touch-sensing is not a *state* of the material thing, hand, but is precisely the *hand itself*, which for us is more than a material thing, and the way in which it is mine entails that I, the “subject of the Body”, can say that what belongs to the material thing is its, not mine. All sensings pertain to my soul; everything extended to the material thing. *On this surface of the hand I sense the sensations of touch, etc. And it is precisely thereby that this surface manifests itself immediately as my Body.*” (Husserl 2000, 157)

In summary, Husserl’s investigation of role of perception in the constitution of the corporeality of one’s own body leads him to distinguish the material body from the sentient Body. The former is, however, exceptional among other material things primarily¹ by the fact that *in comparison with other material things we can feel it being touched*. This makes the important

¹ It is important here to express that the primacy of this exceptionality arises from the constitutiveness of touching: it is the touching which constitutes the stratum of localized sensations. All other sensations are mediated, which are, except mentioned vision and hearing, “sensations belonging to totally different groups, e.g., ‘sensuous’ feelings, the sensations of pleasure and pain, the sense of well-being” (Husserl 2000, 160) etc., which have a bodily localization too.

nexus between two thinghoods, which according to Husserl remain thinghoods of different kinds. One's own body is thus presented as a material thing with some exceptional additional ability. At the same time Husserl describes the body as not being fully explorable as other material things – as mentioned above: it could be “perceived from outside, but with certain limits” (Husserl 2000, 152). These limits arise from his subsequent investigation of other exceptionalities of own body among other material things, which lead him to postulate that “(t)he same Body which serves me as means for all my perception obstructs me in the perception of it itself and is a remarkably imperfectly constituted thing” (Husserl 2000, 167).

Things present themselves in perception characteristically in certain orientation, from certain perspective. They show certain side from certain distance in certain direction. This mode of appearing implies a *here* to which all these orientations could be related. And it is precisely our own body which has “the unique distinction of bearing in itself the zero point of all these orientations” (Husserl 2000, 166). We situate somewhere to our body the ultimate here, in relation to which there is no other here, but only *there*. Moreover, this here remain here even when the body actively moves: “whereas the subject is always, at every now, in the center, in the here, (...) the Objective place, the spatial position, of the Ego, or of its Body, is a changing one” (Husserl 2000, 166). It is worth noting that at this point Husserl firstly outreaches the investigation of perception to engage this exceptionality of own body with motricity. The importance of the “faculty of free mobility” for perception was neglected in previous investigations of constitution of corporeality. Now it comes into consideration when one's own body “alters the position” (Husserl 2000, 167) in the space and is presented, contrariwise, as if this exceptionality does not count for body's passive relocation. Nevertheless, Husserl defines the important difference between one's own body and other material things – *own body is always here for the subject while other things are there*. The announced limits thus consist in inability to distance the subject from its material body (or the body from the subject) and

“accordingly the manifolds of appearance of the Body are restricted in the definite way” (Husserl 2000, 167) compared to other things, which are fully explorable. In this part of Husserl’s text, it is not always evident when he considers just seeing and when perception in general. This will be exposed more in detail later, together with Merleau-Ponty, who is more precise in elaboration of this motif.

Another exceptionality that follows from Husserl’s investigations of constitution of corporeality, that own body is an “organ of free will” and a “seat of free movement” (Husserl 2000, 159), is given surprisingly little space, not even a page. It is understandable from the point that Husserl comprehends our own body being a field of localized sensations as a *presupposition* and *precondition* also for the exceptionality of our own body among other material things that it “is an *organ of will*, the *one and only Object* which, for the will of my pure Ego, is *moveable immediately and spontaneously*” (Husserl 2000, 159). However, it becomes less understandable after only few sentences, where Husserl acknowledges to the ability to move “freely” the essential importance in constitution of world of objects as such:

“It is in virtue of these free acts that (...) there can be constituted for this Ego, in manifold series of perceptions, an Object-world, a world of spatial-corporeal things (the Body as thing included). The subject, constituted as counter-member of material nature, is (as far as we have seen up to now) an Ego, to which a Body belongs as field of localization of its sensations. The Ego has the “faculty” (the ‘I can’) to freely move this Body (...) and to perceive an external world by means of it.” (Husserl 2000, 159-160)

From this key passage follows that the spontaneous motricity is a *presupposition* and *precondition* for perception of external world, including own body as a material thing. The relation between perception and motricity is thus at least equivalent. Nevertheless, the role of motricity in constitution of one’s own corporeality is not investigated more in detail.

It is thus unquestionable that Husserl contributed to disentangle certain discrepancies in Descartes' meditations, but he made it in the way that brings new ambiguities. While Descartes hesitated between two distinct realms of extended divisible body and unextended indivisible mind when assigning to them faculties of sensation, imagination and movement, Husserl discovered two bodies – one on the side of object, extended, material one, and second on the side of subject, the sentient one, with different kind of spatiality, constituted through localized sensations. However, the fact that Descartes' inconvenience with the body is not solved but only rearranged follows from Husserl's prevarication when describing the relation between these two bodies. In some parts of the chapter, he describes them as opposites, claiming that the localization of sensings is “in principle different” or that its spreading “differs essentially” (Husserl 2000, 157) from the extension of a material thing, our material body included. The already cited claim that sensings and though the sentient body (*Leib*) “pertain to soul” (Husserl 2000, 157) contrasts with postulate that his own body could be as well as other material things “perceived from outside” (Husserl 2000, 152). On the other hand, there is an evident endeavour to overcome the pre-set dualism by expressing their relation as “most intimately interwoven” (Husserl 2000, 97), “intertwined” (Husserl 2000, 97, 164, 229) “unified” (Husserl 2000, 98) or “mutually penetrating” (Husserl 2000, 97), they are “in correspondence” (Husserl 2000, 173) or “in consistent parallel” (Husserl 2000, 162), as “two-fold unity” (Husserl 2000, 170), in which “physical and aesthesiological strata” are separable only in abstraction, while “(i)n the concrete perception, the Body is there as a new sort of unity of apprehension” (Husserl 2000, 163).

Another discrepancy appears in the fact that Husserl *never calls into question that the body is an object*, although he observes some exceptionalities when compared with other objects. On one hand it is a remarkably imperfectly constituted thing, because it resists to be explored from all perspectives, but still, it is an object. On the other hand, it is a thing with some extra features,

such as immediate movement according to will or ability to feel localized sensations on it and in it, but still, it is an object. One's own body remains an object despite the fact that it does not fulfil Husserl's own definitions of objects. Only in this way could it mediate the world of objects to the meditating Ego. Despite a verbally proclaimed unity, Husserl backslides to Cartesian dualism. The discovered sentient body (*Leib*) stays in opposition to perceived material body (*Körper*) despite his verbal constructions (*Leibkörper*). The specifics of *the experience of one's own body* are degraded into exceptionalities of an objective body among other objects². It was exactly Husserl's adherence to the objectivity of one's own body, despite its exceptionalities, which later inspired Merleau-Ponty to fundamentally rework the phenomenological understanding of the body.

This section has demonstrated that Husserl was inspired and concerned by the mentioned discrepancy in Descartes' argumentation, which required him to further elaborate the exceptional features of one's own body as experienced. Husserl's contribution to this topic directly influenced Maurice Merleau-Ponty. They all attempted to deal with how one's own body is experienced. However, while for the first two, Descartes and Husserl, the body in fact

² In his analysis, Halák (2014) points out the moment, which precludes Husserl to overcome Descartes' dualism. In order to retain the body as an object, he resorts to abstraction when touching himself – he constitutes an abstract hand-thing into which he then inserts the corresponding sensations. In real experience, however, it is impossible to separate the sensations from the touching and the touched hand (Halák 2014, 347) – "I find both the objective qualities and subjective sensations of my hands on the ground of my subjectivity" (Halák 2014, 346). If we renounce Husserl's forced abstraction, our body shows to us entirely in the "field of our selfhood" (Halák 2014, 346), and what makes it perceptible to itself (and thus the mediator of the world) is precisely the fact that it is multiply perceptive, that its touched part is always concurrently touching (Halák 2014, 349).

remained at first an object (although it has some special features), Merleau-Ponty was the first one to bring the objectivity of the body into question.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty

This section of the thesis is the beginning not only of how Merleau-Ponty contributed to the question of the objectivity of the body, but through it also of his phenomenological account of the philosophy of the body. The ambition is to expose his key thoughts and motifs for its later integration into (or with?) a theory of bodily-oriented disciplines. Merleau-Ponty's work creates a complex system (which was unfortunately unfinished, due to his sudden death) in which the body is a central focus. This system could be approached from various sides according to what is the focus of one's investigation. To keep the argumentation in line with previous chapters about Descartes and Husserl, this one will begin, after short recapitulation of their positions, by explicitly following up on the topic of whether one's own body is or is not an object, just as any other, or, in other words, which exceptionalities one's own body has in comparison to other objects in perception. From that alone could be formulated Merleau-Ponty's essential shift from Husserl, which will be then supported (in an interlude) by his thought-experiment with the experiencing of an object.

For Descartes, the body is an object, just as any other, and the only and thus original undoubtable way of knowing is thinking, while other faculties of mind, that are mixed with the body, are second-order, dubitable, but correctable by thinking. To explain its exceptionalities the body has compared with other extended things, Descartes makes an arc through the metaphor of a "pilot of the ship", in which the body becomes inseparable, fused or conjoined with it and forming a single entity with it. So, he opened the question of whether the body is or is not different from an object, but he did not pursue the matter. The key moment is when he

defined the body as undoubtedly extended in his Second meditation, which precluded him from drawing philosophical consequences from what he had discovered in the experience of one's own body in his Sixth meditation.

In the question of the objectivity of the body, Husserl departed from the situation of touching himself, realizing that the touching is concurrently what is being touched. Out of that he deduced the primacy of touching within perception and in the constitution of one's own body. He distinguished the material body belonging to the objective world and one's own Body belonging to the mind, the former being extended, the latter having another type of spatiality, built from localized sensations. At this point Husserl was a short step from designating the sentient body as constitutional for extension as such, but he retained the division into two realms, albeit with a verbally proclaimed unity. So, he insisted on the body being an object (among others), even though in some respects it does not fulfil his own definition of objects. One point was already mentioned: while being touched, it feels. Another point is that it is always here, and finally, that it is moveable immediately and spontaneously. This final point is on the one hand presented as derived from localized sensations, whilst on the other hand as also constitutional.

When Merleau-Ponty was writing his *Phenomenology of Perception*, Husserl's *Ideas II* had not been published yet, but he had access to it in depository in Louvain. One of the references mentions Husserl's remark about the body as being not "completely constituted". For him it was just one of the peculiarities of the body. For Merleau-Ponty it is more than just a peculiarity – it is an ontological turning point through which he disclaims that body is in full sense an object. It is exactly the sentence with the rare reference to Husserl's *Ideas*, which announces the key principle of his ontological turn: "what prevents it [own body] from ever being an object or from ever being 'completely constituted' is that my body is that by which there are objects" (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 94). This principle emerges throughout whole Merleau-Ponty's thinking,

in various context revealing its full meaning. The aim of next paragraphs is to show how this turn manifests in what Husserl described as exceptionalities of own body.

Permanence

The reference to imperfect constitution of the body in our experience relates to the inability to explore our own body from all possible perspectives when compared with other objects. Merleau-Ponty stresses that possibility to have a object in front of us, “situated at our fingertips or at the end of our gaze”, not only characterizes the object but *defines* it: “(i)t is only an object in front of us because it is observable” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 92). Own body is, on the contrary, “always near to me or always there for me”, which means that “it is never truly in front of me” (93). It is true that even objects always hide some of their sides, showing at one moment only one side, but this is merely the result of factual or physical necessity, so it changes or at least could be changed by rearrangement of the situation. But the invariable perspective of one’s own body is not a factual necessity, because it is exactly one’s own body that originally imposes a perspective on the world and though enables any factual necessity to happen. The reason why an object is visible only from one side is exactly because there exists certain place from which it can be seen and which itself cannot be seen. *The physical necessity of objects to show only one side is presupposed by the metaphysical necessity of invariable perspective of one’s own body.* The turn thus consists in the fact that “(n)ot only is the perspective upon my body not a particular case of the general perspectives upon object, but rather the perspectival presentation of objects itself must be understood through the resistance of my body to every perspectival variation” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 94-5).

For Husserl, the impossibility of full exploration of one’s own body was tied to its constant presence – impossibility of distancing the subject from its body means not only that it is always

here, but also that it is *always* here. Merleau-Ponty defines this aspect as “permanence” of the body (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 92). His argumentation against Husserl is analogical as in the case of perspectivity. He stresses, that possibility to lose the object from our reach is not just one of its characteristics, but something that defines it: “(i)ts presence is such that it requires a possible absence” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 92). It is again true that also objects have their permanence, the fact that they disappear from our perceptible field does not mean that they cease to exist. But the ability to understand that it persists out of reach is conditioned exactly by the permanence of one’s own body, which is not a permanence in the world, but permanence on the side of the subject – the “absolute permanence” of own body “serves as the basis for the relative permanence of objects that can be eclipsed, that is, of true objects” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 93-94). Or, in other words, *presence or absence of objects in perception are only variations in primordial field of presence of own body*. Considering the permanence, Merleau-Ponty formulates the turn as: “(n)ot only is the permanence of my body not a particular case of the general permanence of external objects in the world, but moreover this latter can only be understood through the former” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 94).

The permanence and perspectivity of objects, our belief in their hidden sides and their persistence out of our reach, is conditioned by the fixed perspective of our own always present body, which is engaged with them through many relations, although itself not being an object, because it is that by which they exist for it. Yet these two features of own body thus convert the notion of body from being an object in the world into being a means of communication with it, and the notion of the world from being a sum of determinate objects into being a latent horizon of our experience (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 95).

Sensation

Quite paradoxically, the motif which so thoroughly investigated in both Descartes and Husserl, the ability of own body to perceive itself, is in this part of *Phenomenology of Perception* (that explicitly deals with the exceptionalities of own body among other objects) peculiarly undeveloped. In the beginning of the short chapter Merleau-Ponty announces that sensation is “for the same reason (...) no less interesting” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 95) characteristic of own body, but then follows only a brief interpretation of Husserl’s analysis of hand-touching-hand situation. Under the “same reason” the reader could expect that even in the case of sensation it is possible to apply the general claim that one’s own body is not an object because it is that by which there are objects. However, here Merleau-Ponty only rejects Descartes position by supporting Husserl’s idea of double sensations in hand-touching-hand and localized sensations by the example of the nail causing pain, which is “constitutive of a ‘pain-space’” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 96). Even in the part about permanence he expresses himself slightly ambiguously about sensation, saying on one hand that body is “neither visible nor tangible insofar as it sees and touches” or that it is unobservable (ibid.,94), and on the other that the parts of the visual body which are far from eyes enough to be visible certainly are an object as well as that the parts of the tactile body which can be touched (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 94). Although he implicitly takes his ontological turn even in case of sensation into consideration in other parts of *Phenomenology of Perception*, the explicit follow-up in his argumentation is better to be found in his last and unfinished work *The Visible and the Invisible*.

In the chapter named ‘The Intertwining – The Chiasm’, Merleau-Ponty claims, analogically to the previous arguments, that the body is not an object visible or tangible “in fact” (it is not a factual necessity) but that it is visible and tangible “by right” (it is a metaphysical necessity) (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 137). It sets up the element, which Merleau-Ponty calls “the flesh” (*la*

chair) (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 133), in which objects can exist as objects. To put it differently, it is precisely *the tangibility of the touching and the visibility of the vision that makes the tangibility and visibility of objects even possible*. To deal with Husserl's "strata of apprehension", Merleau-Ponty tries to reformulate the ingrained duality of the body, for "[t]o speak of... layers is still to flatten and to juxtapose, under the reflective gaze, what coexists in the living and upright body" (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 138). Rather he uses a metaphor of obverse and reverse, or of "... two segments of one sole circular course which goes above from left to right and below from right to left" (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 138). These (and some more) visual metaphors cohere with unusual expressions as that the body sees and touches objects, because "they are about it" or "within it", using its own being "as a means to participate in theirs, because each of the two beings is an archetype for the other" (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 137). Such language is necessary to break through the dualistic ontology – if the body as an important component of human existence persistently reveals as a paradox in subject-object ontology, it is necessary to develop a new one in which the body is thinkable without paradoxes³. And this is exactly Merleau-Ponty's aim, which remains only implicit in *Phenomenology of Perception*, but becomes explicit in his later works, especially in the *The Intertwining – The Chiasm* as its title announces.

But what is intertwining with what? More thorough explanation of this culmination point of Merleau-Ponty's philosophy will take place in later sections of this thesis. Here it is important to briefly expose the radical turn from Husserl's still dualistic understanding of sensation of

³ This emphasis of ontological difference between Husserl and Merleau-Ponty is taken from Halák's analysis from the previous note (Halák 2014). Based not only on his widely known works but also on interviews with Merleau-Ponty and his unpublished notes, Halák demonstrates the depth of ontological transformation of the role of the body in Merleau-Ponty's philosophy.

one's own body. According to Merleau-Ponty, while perceiving, there "are not things first identical with themselves, which would then offer themselves to the seer, nor is there a seer who is first empty and who, afterward, would open himself to them" (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 131). We could never perceive things "all naked", because the gaze itself envelops them, clothes them with its own flesh" (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 131), obtrudes them its own style or manner. When speaking about vision, the look "envelops, palpates, espouses the visible things" as if it was "in relation of pre-established harmony with them, as though it knew them before knowing them" (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 133). And thus, it could not be said with certainty whether the act of perception is being conducted by things or by the look. This description nicely illustrates the dialectical character of Merleau-Ponty's notion of body-mind or subject-object dichotomy. While Husserl in fact (despite verbal proclamations) presupposed two different realms and only tried to explain how it is then possible that they impact one another through some kind of overlapping or interlacing, Merleau-Ponty from the beginning acknowledged that the division is ostensible and that its two sides are thinkable exactly only as one conditioned and constituted by the other.

To complete the exposition of the difference between Husserl and Merleau-Ponty in the question of sensation and objectivity of the body it is necessary to clarify the relation between various senses. For Husserl the touch was original and constitutive for other senses, which he had no problem to distinguish. Its primacy was derived from the fact that touching is concurrently what is being touched, while other senses perceive something that is not of their kind. According to Merleau-Ponty, such "delimitation of senses is crude" (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 133). He notices with Husserl that the touching hand takes place among the things it touches, but for Merleau-Ponty it is no different for the vision (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 133). Firstly, he distinguished more subcategories (touching of the sleek or rough, passive sentiment of body, veritable touching of touch, etc.) between which he sees differences comparable to those we

recognize between traditionally and commonsensically defined senses. And secondly, he points out that “every visible is cut out in the tangible, every tactile being in some manner promised to visibility, and that there is encroachment, infringement, not only between the touched and the touching, but also between the tangible and the visible” (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 134). Hence, it is the same body that touches and sees, and it is not a coincidence that the vision is totally dependent not only on the movements of eyes but on the displacement of the body in general. Thus, expressions about the look palpating, grasping or fixating things should be understood literally: “vision is the palpation by the look” (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 134). Unlike Husserl, Merleau-Ponty attributed the doubleness even to vision, because the seer must be himself visible, even though he doubles his vision with another complementary vision.

From this analysis of sensation follows not only that the delimitation of senses is abstract and dissolves when considering the immediate experience, but implicitly that the dichotomy of perception and movement is abstract too. It is again most obvious in the case of touching. Merleau-Ponty asks how is it possible that one knows how to give the hand, in particular, that degree, that rate, and that direction to make the feeling of the textures as the sleek or the rough? (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 134) Prior to the abstract division there must be an original relationship, a “kinship”, between the movements of exploration and what they teach. It is inadequate to think of any kind of perception without taking the aspect of movement into account and vice versa: the movement is always dependent on what is concurrently perceived and is unthinkable without it.

This claim will logically resonate also in the next chapter about movement. However, the discrepancy between phenomenological emphasis on inseparability of movement and perception and exact scientific division of them will take place in the part about phenomenological critique of mechanistic notion of the body. For the purpose of this part of the thesis it was only necessary to support Merleau-Ponty’s interpretation of hand-touching-

hand situation by more explicit formulations from his later works to stay in line with the argumentation why the body is not an object. For Merleau-Ponty, the perceiving body is in the deepest sense the same as the perceived one, and this fact should be constitutive in our understanding of what is an object as well as what is a subject, which is inseparably embodied.

Movement

Even in the case of movement one must base on the short chapter, which Merleau-Ponty devotes to motricity in the question of the body being an object or not, at least to other parts of *Phenomenology of Perception*. Here he formulates, in accordance with Husserl, only the obvious observation of the difference between moving one's own body and moving external objects: while one can move another object only with the help of one's own body, one's own body itself is movable "directly" (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 96). Of course, one can give an internal command to the hand to move this way or that way in certain speed and then perform precisely that action. This is nevertheless not a spontaneous and natural way of controlling the body. Usually, there is "no need of directing it toward the goal of the movement, in a sense it touches the goal from the very beginning, and it throws itself toward it" (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 97). According to Merleau-Ponty, such a relation between one's own body and one's decision to move is *magical* (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 97; Merleau-Ponty 1964, 5).

In subsequent chapters, where Merleau-Ponty develops the phenomenological understanding of the spatiality of the body, he comes to the notion of the motor experience of own body as of the original *manner of reaching the world and the object* (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 141). One is first "introduced" into the world through one's own body, "... which must have given us the first model of transpositions, equivalences, and identifications that turns space into an objective system and allows our experience to be an experience of objects" (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 143).

This, again, fits to the scheme of ontological turn expressed in general claim about body being that by which there are objects: Merleau-Ponty situates bodily experience beneath the subject-object division considering it is its *condition*. Motricity is not a servant of consciousness (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 142), the body is not being moved through objective space as a puppet according to its representation in mind; motricity itself has a direct, immediate access to objects – it is an *original intentionality* (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 139). Through motricity one’s own body grasps (Merleau-Ponty 1964, 5) and embraces time and space and fits itself to them (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 141) and the “scope of this hold measures the scope of [one’s] existence.” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 141). This whole-body-grasp of a situation irradiates from the body as a complex of incorporated possibilities of postures and movements, which constantly provide a “standard of measure” of the environment (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 140). The mug of tea on my desk is so easy to grasp, not thanks to some representational map of the space in one’s consciousness, but because the mug is embraced into the meaningful web of possible motor tasks. The body itself (or more aptly “the body-schema”, as will be later clarified) has to “catch” or “understand” (*kapieren*) the movement to be capable of performing it (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 144). According to Merleau-Ponty, the consciousness is thus “originarily not an ‘I think that’ but rather an ‘I can’” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 139). In other words, one does not perceive environment as a collection of neutral objects and then consider what is possible to do with those objects: rather, a meaningful object appears *originally* as what one can do with it bodily. This brings us back to the previous finding about the close kinship between motricity and perception: the movement carries the perception, and the perception opens the space for the movement.

Originality of appearance of objects as something with what should be treated bodily is in accordance with Husserl’s claim that in virtue of the faculty (the “I can”) to freely move own

body there can be constituted a world of spatial-corporeal things⁴. However, at the end of Husserl's sentence containing such an important claim there are brackets in which he adds: "the Body as thing included". But the world constituted through the free movement of one's own body could never include itself as an object. The impression that one's own body is an object, that it has some object-like attributes, is caused by the abstraction from the immediate experience of a thing to the idea of it – while the object is once posited, it becomes absolute and is then spontaneously taken for granted as a standard, under which one's own body, based on some of its attributes, could be subsumed. Discovering of the world through movement and perception leads to construction of its model, idea, representation, to which own body, through which it was discovered, is finally incorporated. Indeed, the immediate connection between the

⁴ Since this is the key motif of the whole thesis, it is necessary to admit and at least briefly mention another important phenomenologist, namely Martin Heidegger, with whose ideas it resonates significantly. Although Heidegger did not explicitly deal with the corporeal aspect of existence, his analyses of the way of being in the world implicitly contain it. In particular, this applies to the whole part of the *Worldliness of the world* of his canonical work *Being and Time*, where, in a similar vein to Husserl and especially Merleau-Ponty, he argues against Descartes' meditations. The revision of the understanding of spatiality that he develops, is noticeably similar to some aspects of Merleau-Ponty's notion of spatiality (which will take place below in the chapter on the concept of the body-schema) – the inspiration is obvious at this point. Maybe their most significant overlap is Heidegger's "being at hand" (Heidegger 1996, 95-105), which expresses principally the same idea as Merleau-Ponty's whole body grasp (probably both originally inspired by Husserl's "I can"). Especially Merleau-Ponty's claim that objects appear to us originally as what we can do with them bodily resonates with Heidegger's: "what is at hand in the surrounding world is, after all, not objectively present for an eternal spectator (...), but is encountered in the circumspect, heedful everydayness" (Heidegger 1996, 98), or "the objective distances of objectively present things do not coincide with the remoteness and nearness of what is at hand within the world" (Heidegger 1996, 99).

decision to move and the body may seem magical while presupposing that the subjective will must somehow master some object, the body, which is of a different kind. Although Merleau-Ponty himself designs this connection as magical, he is the one who postulates that it is contrariwise: the immediacy of this connection should be understood as a point of departure, from which everything should be derived, and therefore it is not magical, but original or constitutive.

To sum up, in this part I followed the structure of argumentation of Descartes and Husserl in the question whether own body is or is not an object. They both pointed out some exceptionalities it has when compared with other objects. Merleau-Ponty noticed the same attributes of one's own body, however, philosophical conclusions he draws from them are more radical than those of his predecessors. He understands them no more as mere exceptionalities of one's own objective body, but rather as a sign that the body is not an object, and that by which there are objects. In particular it means that the absolute presence and permanence of one's own body enables the relative permanence and presence of objects, that the resistance of one's own body to every perspectival variation enables the perspectival presentation of objects, that the ability of the body to perceive itself enables the perception of objects, and that moving toward objects and with objects is possible only if they exist for one's own body, which has introduced us to the world through its motor experience. This was one of the possible ways how to answer the question about the objectivity of own body. Another possible way is through analysis of how objects become objects in experience, which will form the following interlude.

Interlude: Experience and objective thought

The opening sentence of the first part of Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* aptly catches the key thought of the whole analysis: "Our perception ends in objects, and the object, once constituted, appears as the reason for all the experiences of it that we have had or that we could have" (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 69). The following Merleau-Ponty's text as well as this chapter should lead the reader to understand this claim.

We never perceive objects *themselves* – in certain moment, we always have only *appearances* of them. When Merleau-Ponty observes a neighbouring house, he realizes that he sees it only from one perspective and that it would look different from another place around, from inside or from an airplane. But the house itself is not one of these appearances (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 69). It is something independent on our sight. But concurrently it is our seeing which provides the experience with the house. And the inseparable attribute of seeing, as we saw in one of previous sections, is that it is only possible from certain place, from certain perspective.

To see an object means primarily to focus on it, to grasp it by the gaze, or to anchor myself in it, to respond to its solicitation to be seen – as was described above, the look is literally palpating what it sees, and it is impossible to determine whether it is the look or the object which conducts it, which is active and which passive. Secondly, to see an object could also mean to have it in the margins of the visual field. This aspect is usually called the peripheral vision and is explained as something that is caused by factual necessity, by the contingencies of my bodily organization, as the structure of the retina. However, in the line with previous Merleau-Ponty's argumentation, the physical necessity of bodily organization is presupposed by the metaphysical necessity of the way the seeing happens. And it happens in "figure-background" or "object-horizon" structure, which means, that we must suspend the surroundings to get the

object clear, to “lose in the background what is gained in the figure” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 70). The background nevertheless remains there, although “dormant”.

No matter how we describe what is seen peripherally, it remains composed of objects among which our gaze has a power, because it can easily grasp them – so it is the horizon which assures the identity of the object. This could not be provided by express memory or explicit conjecture as between two takes in a film scene (which has no horizons). In actual perception, objects offer themselves as dwellings for our gaze and to look at them means to inhabit them, to be “virtually situated in them” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 71). And this spontaneous step of perception, proceeding from having single appearance of an object to inhabiting it, to having it as a whole, positing the object as an object, this ecstasy (*extase*) of going beyond our actual experience, is exactly what makes every perception a perception of something (ibid., 73). The appearance we have in our experience becomes a fully realized object, which is “translucent, it is shot through from all sides by an infinity of present gazes intersecting in its depth and leaving nothing there hidden” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 71).

Analogically with this spatial perspectivity of perception, the figure-background structure applies also to its temporal perspective. To see a house means to see it only in the present moment – it could look differently yesterday or twenty years ago and it will look differently tomorrow or in twenty years. Again, in actual perception we do not see the house *itself*, the house in its duration in objective time. We only have the actual temporal perspective, the house shows itself from a certain point of our own duration, but this presence “still holds in hand the immediate past” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 71). And this retention is one of the horizons of its actual appearance, while the other one is protention, the imminent future which is nothing else than extension of retention, because the present appears as a future of the past. However, this again is just an ecstasy of what is actual in our perception. We could have quite clear idea about something from our past, but it is never the past itself and it could be altered. Merleau-Ponty

points out that “the synthesis of horizons is but a presumptive synthesis, it only operates with certainty and precision within the object’s immediate surroundings” and that “it leaves the object incomplete and open, as it in fact is in perceptual experience” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 72).

The spontaneous act which makes objects complete, lasting, absolute for us is thus an act of belief. We derive this belief from our previous experience, which is undoubtedly advantageous and convenient. It is nevertheless important to point out that we are forgetting that it is *just a belief* and not a truth about world. In Merleau-Ponty’s words, the positing of the object as absolute “takes us beyond the limits of our actual experience, which throws itself against a foreign being such that, in the end, experience believes it draws from the object everything that experience itself teaches us” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 73). Although the difference between these two beliefs may seem inconspicuous, it is substantial: to believe that the seen house *probably* has another side and an interior although we see only a single appearance of it is something different than to believe that there *undoubtedly* is an objective house exactly in the form as it could be perceivable from all possible perspectives together and in its duration (in all times). The former keeps respect to the primacy of actual perception, while the latter generates untenable *presupposition of the objective world*. This presupposition is a cornerstone not only for what is usually called the common sense, but also for science, which intends to be objective. It is an inconsequence which makes them both possible. However, according to Merleau-Ponty, by presupposing an objective world, a “realm of truth, (...) we strip perception of its essential function, which is to establish or to inaugurate knowledge, and we view perception through the lens of its results” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 16). This is again what wants to convey the opening sentence and what phenomenology wants to reverse – to catch our experience emerging from its origin and to approach to the indeterminacy or openness of things as to something positive (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 7).

The previous paragraph accused science as well as common sense of an error. In the Preface of *Phenomenology of Perception* Merleau-Ponty speaks of “disavowal of science” as of the first rule of Husserl’s emerging phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty 2012, lxxi). However, this should not be interpreted in the way that all what science achieved should be overridden. In the next chapter of this thesis, I shall carry out a thorough analysis of limits of science, because it has crucial consequences for the practice of body-oriented disciplines. Nevertheless, the previous argumentation should result at least into an important message here that phenomenology brings to light “the pre-scientific life of consciousness that alone gives the operations of science their full sense and to which these operations always refer” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 59), and that scientific consciousness in fact “borrows all of its models from the structures of lived experience” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 59), which it forgets to thematize. Hence, phenomenology is not a rejection of science, but, in Merleau-Ponty’s words:

“The entire universe of science is constructed upon the lived world, and if we wish to think science rigorously, to appreciate precisely its sense and its scope, we must first awaken that experience of the world of which science is the second-order expression.”

(Merleau-Ponty 2012, lxxii)

To follow up on previous section, it is appropriate to connect these findings with accounts that has been made about own body. When we presuppose the world as a cluster of definite objects, it becomes impossible not to subsume one’s own body within them. Considering one’s own body as one of the objects of the world we repress the consciousness we have about our direct experience, about our gaze as a means of cognition and we treat our eyes as a fragment of matter (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 73). Since we accept this, we accede to that what we see is just a projection on a retina and displace it was first the seeing what mediated its discovery. We abandon our *experience* to pass over to the *idea* (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 73) and we apply that also to our own body – we think of it only as of an idea of the body. And exactly this is,

according to Merleau-Ponty, a decisive moment in the genesis of the objective world (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 74), this is the point in which science becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, because it enables to seal off the universe, keeping it consistent and taken for granted. However, next section aims to show its inconsistency from inside, because, in Merleau-Ponty's words: "in science itself, one's own body evades the treatment that they wish to impose upon it" (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 74).

B. Merleau-Ponty's critical accounts on current approaches to the body

Phenomenology was from its beginning in opposition to science. To be able to oppose something it is necessary to define or demarcate what it is. Science is an explanatory framework dominating at least three centuries and so pervading contemporary world, that it is impossible to grasp it in its fullness and complexity. This fact condemns any attempt to criticize it into creating a strawman. This thesis questions science from various positions, which implies that it in each case chooses one of the ways how science could be considered: as how it is presented in schoolbooks, guidelines or research of various body-oriented disciplines, as how it is taught at universities or popularized in public space, or as a historical movement. None of these presentations of science are science itself and a critique based on them is always only partial. The same applies to this section, which will criticize the scientific notion of the body, based on the paradigm of mechanistic physiology. It is not possible to subsume science under one philosophical principle by which phenomenology tries to bind it to be able to oppose it. Science itself, in fact, does not pay much attention to its philosophical roots. Philosophers' intrusive questions on them will very likely corner the scientist, but it will be naive to expect that it will avert scientists from doing science in the same, although philosophically untenable, way. What could this mean for the schoolbooks, guidelines, research and foremost for the practice of body-oriented disciplines is a main question for the second part of this thesis. Here the argumentation will stay at a very general philosophical level, trying, with Merleau-Ponty, to clarify inconsistency or incongruency of scientific paradigm from inside, through its own findings about human body.

Phenomenological critique of mechanistic physiology

Merleau-Ponty calls the area of science that operates with the human body a *mechanistic physiology*. As was forwarded, this paradigm inserts the human body into the sealed-off universe of objects, where an object is defined as something existing *partes extra partes* in objective space. As an object as any other it is subjected to the linear “worldly” causality, so it “only admits of external and mechanical relations among its parts or between itself and other objects” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 75-76) and therefore “the functioning of the body had to be expressed in the language of the in-itself” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 75). The body becomes a “highly polished machine” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 78) of which consciousness is a product or a result. In such a machine, perception occurs in the linear dependence between stimulus and receptor, and between the receptor and the brain. Different sensory givens are linked to distinct parts of the neural tissue.

Merleau-Ponty, himself formerly interested in clinical neuropsychology and neuropsychopathology, anticipated oncoming change and spoke of *modern physiology*. In this context, he noticed that some contemporary studies point out that both central and peripheral lesions “do not translate into the loss of certain sensible qualities or of certain sensory givens; rather, they result in a lack of differentiation of the function” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 76). In other words, the lesion in the nervous tissue “does not destroy ready-made sensible contents one by one”, but rather renders their *differentiation* increasingly uncertain (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 76). From these findings, supported by many apt examples, Merleau-Ponty deduces far-reaching philosophical consequences. The destruction of certain neural centre could not explain the vagueness of the localization of the stimulus, rather it should be explained “by the levelling out of stimulations that no longer succeed in organizing themselves into a stable whole” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 76). The *manner of spontaneous organization* of elementary stimuli

among themselves is thus more determining than the material that is being used. The spontaneity of this organization could not be explained only by the factual situation outside or within the organism, rather it assumes its ability to somehow anticipate stimulations: “(a) stimulation is not perceived when it reaches a sensory organ that is not ‘attuned’ to it” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 77). The *attunement* is more accurate expression than anticipation, which could be misinterpreted as thinking ahead. In French original the organism “vient au-devant des stimulations” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 89), which could be more aptly translated as that it *comes ahead* or opens up to the stimulations. The word “attunement” moreover stresses that it is not opened for whatever but only perceives forms of stimulation that are, so to speak, *understandable* for it. Understanding is, again, quite a strong expression, but in this case, it is not only a translational problem and though it requires more extensive clarification, which will take place later in the section about positive phenomenological account. Here it is about to express that “(t)he brain becomes the place of ‘articulation’” (*mise en forme*), which blurs the relation between the organism and the stimulus (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 77). Both words “understanding” and “articulation” are used to emphasize that the organization of stimuli is, so to speak, not only technical, but purposeful – it is *grasped* by the organism and reorganized in the way “that make it resemble the perception that is about to arouse” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 77). In the sections about perception, motricity and experience, the verb “to grasp” was used multiple times and was already put into context with understanding of the situation or with responding to its solicitation. Here again, English language turns out to be limited – French verb “saisir” (Merleau-Ponty 1945, 89) (as well as in some other languages) means not only grasping as a physical event, but also to understand something purely mentally. This connection of two split realms through one word, the fact that various languages choose single word to express (only seemingly) very different events is crucial for Merleau-Ponty’s account as well as for this thesis.

To sum up, in expectation of turnover in recent (neuro)physiological theory and research, Merleau-Ponty drew quite radical philosophical consequences from certain findings about perception in recent neurological research. In relation to elementary stimuli, he attributed the organism's functions as differentiation, organization, anticipation (tuning at), articulation, understanding, grasping, etc. He then pointed out that these events could not be imagined "as a series of third person processes, as the transmission of movement, or as the determination of one variable by another" – we cannot gain a "detached knowledge" of them (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 77). We must contrariwise look away from the body as an object and relate to the body as we experience it. And it is exactly this appeal that heralds the message of this thesis: "I can only understand the function of the living body by accomplishing it and to the extent that I am a body that rises up toward the world" (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 78). Nevertheless, for mechanistic physiology all these functions appear as that the consciousness of the body (the product or result of mechanical relations between material parts of the objective body) descends from the cortical level, that it "invades the body" and that "the soul spreads across all of its parts" (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 78).

In this regard, consciousness is not blind even to "reflexes", although they are considered by mechanistic physiology as automatic. For even the reflex is always adjusted to and oriented toward the "sense" of the situation, it "does not result from objective stimuli, it turns toward them, it invests them with a sense" and causes particular physical agents to "exist as a situation" (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 81). A situation that triggers the reflex is thus never fully articulated and determinate, the signification it provides is only a *practical* one and "the recognition that it induces is merely a bodily recognition" (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 81). Merleau-Ponty compares such openness with how "first notes of the melody call for a certain mode of resolution" (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 81). These observations after all resonate with some of the previous findings. The indeterminacy and openness of what is experienced were already thematized as

positive and by the practical signification and bodily recognition Merleau-Ponty expresses that we are first introduced to the world through our body and that objects appear to us as what we can do with them bodily. His aim was to come to these findings from inside of the mechanistic physiology, especially from reflexes, the field which is regarded as one on which it is particularly strong.

However, Merleau-Ponty's conclusions that consciousness invades the body should not imply that he accedes to the "intellectualist" notion. Once again, he tries to dialectically demarcate a "pre-objective" ground from which both the subject and object are yet to emerge:

"Reflex, insofar as it opens itself to the sense of a situation, and perception, insofar as it does not first of all posit an object of knowledge and insofar as it is an intention of our total being, are modalities of a *pre-objective perspective* that we call 'being in the world'. Prior to stimuli and sensible contents, a sort of inner diaphragm must be recognized that, much more than these other ones, determines what our reflexes and our perceptions will be able to aim at in the world, the zone of our possible operations, and the scope of our life." (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 81)

The being in the world⁵ is thus set as a primordial ground which on one hand defies to be treated as a sum of reflexes, because our world has a particular consistency that is relatively independent of stimuli, and on the other it defies to be treated as an act of consciousness, because our existence has a particular energy that is relatively independent of our spontaneous thoughts (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 82).

To illustrate the insufficiency of both psychological and physiological approaches to the body and as a case calling for the paradigmatic shift, Merleau-Ponty analyses thoroughly already

⁵ Term "being in the world" is originally Heidegger's – this is a deliberate reference to his concept.

mentioned syndrome of phantom limb. For Descartes it was only a proof why not to trust our senses much, why doubt about their validity when seeking for the ground for all knowledge. In contrast, Merleau-Ponty demonstrates the impossibility to interpret it sufficiently through psychological and physiological categories. For the phantom limb could be sufficiently explained neither as a simple effect of an objective causality, as a physiological fact, nor as an act of refusal or a memory, as a psychological fact. They both operate only with presence or absence, actual or representational, while the experience of it is in fact always ambiguous and understandable only through the being in the world. According to Merleau-Ponty, to have a phantom limb means “to remain open to all of the actions of which the arm alone is capable and to stay within the practical field that one had prior to the mutilation” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 84). The situation still appeals to the missing limb, it still “gives rise to habitual intentions”. The question on phantom limb should therefore be: how can we perceive objects as manipulable or ground as walkable when we cannot manipulate them or walk on it? After previous investigations we can answer that it is because the object or the ground ceased being something manipulable or walkable *for the amputee* and turned to be something manipulable or walkable *in itself*. Radical consequences of this motif for the theory and practice of body-oriented disciplines will be elaborated more in detail and with examples in the second part of this thesis. Here only the philosophical inconsistency of the paradigm of mechanistic physiology has been presented, which is, as we will see later, still dominant despite Merleau-Ponty’s hopes.

Phenomenological critique of classical psychology

Mechanistic physiology as described, stands with the science on the presupposition of the objective world, or, more specifically, it shares the belief of empiricism that the world is a totality of spatio-temporal events and the consciousness is explained as a product of one of its

regions. Intellectualism has broken with this belief of the world in itself, since, as was already demonstrated on the canonical case of Descartes, it constitutes the world through the act of consciousness. However, as exposed above, Descartes constructed this consciousness as indirect, as a correlate of the universe, as a subject that has all the knowledge it gains from its perception in a perfectly complete and pure form. Intellectualism thus believes in different totality than empiricism: it assumes that “what exists only in intention is actually realized *somewhere*; namely, a system of absolutely true thoughts capable of coordinating all phenomena, a geometrical plan that makes sense of all perspectives, and a pure object onto which all subjectivities open” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 43). Both empiricism and intellectualism rest on a dogmatic attitude – the former began from “the world itself that acts upon our eyes in order to make itself seen by us” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 41), the latter only adds to the world in its whole extent the thought that sustains it. Both positions, the absolute objectivity and the absolute subjectivity, could nevertheless be absolute only due to their unreflected prejudices, whilst they in fact find support in contrast to each other and through it. Empiricism omits that we must know what we are looking for in our experience, because otherwise we would not be looking for it. Intellectualism, on the other hand, omits that we must not know what we are looking for, because otherwise we would not be looking for it either. Neither of them grasps consciousness *in the act in which it gradually begins to understand*⁶ (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 30)

⁶ French original “en train d’apprendre” (Merleau-Ponty 1945, 36) was by Landes quite justifiably translated as “in the act of learning” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 30). However, for two reasons I have decided to translate into English a Czech translation (Merleau-Ponty 2013, 57). Firstly, “to gradually begin to understand” is more general expression than “to learn”, which could be subsumed under it rather than understood as a synonym, so it fits more to the general context of emerging experience. Secondly, although this distinction could be interpreted here as a nuance, it will become a key motif in later parts of this thesis in the relation of the acquisition of motor habit.

– whether the object is “a sum of qualities” or “a system of relations”, for both applies that once it exists, it must be “pure, transparent, impersonal” and thus not how it emerges in the consciousness, that is as something imperfect, which is truth for a single “moment of my life and of my knowledge”⁷ (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 31).

One of examples Merleau-Ponty uses to illustrate this momentary truth of experience is the “illusion” of larger moon above the horizon (30-31, 33-34, the world of perception). When the moon is seen close to the horizon it “looks” larger than when it is higher on the sky, although it “looks” of the same size when seen through the telescope or the cardboard tube. Empiricism presupposes the objective world, the universe in which there is possible only one true size for all ways of observation, so it “does not concern itself with what is seen, but rather with what ought to be seen according to the retinal image” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 33). Intellectualism, as was demonstrated, assumes a definite world, a geometrical plan, in which there is always only one valid version of the moon, wherefore different sizes of the same moon is interpreted, similarly as it was with exceptionalities of own body, as an illusion or inattentiveness. In both cases the determinate world is presupposed – in the first case as the cause of our perception, in the second as its immanent purpose (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 33).

When we descend from the purely philosophical level, with great simplification we can say that this dualism was historically manifested in the dominance of the empirical “nomothetic” science, which nevertheless soon found the need to be supported “idiographically”. In the case of the human body, the paradigm that stands in the opposition to the mechanistic physiology,

⁷ English translation of this passage is misleading – the claim that “it [object] must be truth for a moment of my life and of my knowledge” is mistakenly related to the flawed objectivistic notion, while in original it is tied to the imperfection of experience and it wants to emphasize that it is truth only for a single moment, not universally.

while in fact supporting it to enable its ostensible totality, is what Merleau-Ponty calls the “classical psychology” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 92). According to him, classical psychologists are mistaken in their inquiries on human experience because “they placed themselves into the realm of impersonal thought” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 97) to which science fixates, because it believes it can always identify “what came from the situation of the observer and what came from the absolute properties of the object” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 97). By this displacement, the experience of the living subject turns from the phenomenon into a psychical fact, a representation, an object. The classical psychology assumed that then this experience, “already besieged by physics and biology, would be entirely dissolved by objective knowledge when the system of the sciences was complete” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 97). This consisted in “imposing laws upon the ‘psyche’, which was opposed to the real, but treated like a secondary reality or like an object of science” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 97).

This schizophrenic moment of science is in fact only an extension of what was exposed above in the description of how we experience objects and how in experience our own body differs from them. Classical psychology interpreted these distinctive characteristics as merely other “contents of consciousness that make up our representation of body” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 98), which becomes a representation as any other, as well as the body is for mechanistic physiology an object as any other. Phenomenological position consists in refraining from falling into these flawed approaches, investigating the experience undistorted by its results. It indulges the experience and its openness and indeterminacy as it was demonstrated on the experience of the neighbouring house. In fact, this regard was already linked to the psychological reflection above – it was Husserl’s objection to Descartes that what brings light into “the living presence of ourselves” is the reflection of our psychological, not transcendental self. Similarly, as experiencing objects, we clarify and “posit” our memories, opinions etc., which are in our mind primarily obscure, present only assumptively. It was necessary to repeat that and it will be

repeated later in the context of practices of body-oriented disciplines, because psychological reflection is what various approaches incline to in order to define themselves against physiological notion of the body. In attempt to account for subjective experience they turn to investigation of how it is objectified into representations by the psychological self of the subjects.

The label “classical”, which Merleau-Ponty ascribed to the psychological approach to the body, indicates that he believed that it, similarly as mechanistic physiology, is going to be surpassed by new psychological movements of his time. He was interested especially in psychoanalysis and Dasein theory, which both departed from existential level of human being. Although psychology since then undergone great development, Merleau-Ponty would probably be disappointed at how little the motives he perceived as revolutionary have been reflected, especially when speaking about everyday practice, especially how Western medicine remains fixated to the idea of body as a machine functioning according to causal laws. Similarly, the psychological (or subjectivistic) approach remains on the position of impersonal disembodied spectator which makes judgements or takes a position instead of observing what is experienced. The phenomenological critique of science and its appeal to bracket what is taken for granted may sound presumptuous. However, it is exactly the opposite: it accuses the science of the lack of modesty, of being totalitarian and prejudiced. In order to know “something valid for me across all the moments of my life and valid for other existing or possible minds” science disparages the original experience, which contrariwise consists in “the giving of oneself over to the appearance without seeking to possess it or to know its truth” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 35-36). This emphasis on modesty in perception brings us back to the claim that we naturally tend to swap the results of the perception with its sources, which is according Merleau-Ponty “necessary, and necessarily erroneous way that a mind must imagine its own history” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 39). Phenomenology consists in philosophical act of reversing this swap, bringing

the consciousness “face to face with its unreflective life in things” and awaking “its own, forgotten, history” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 34).

C. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological accounts of the body

While the previous section could be interpreted as a negative demarcation of phenomenological notion of the body against the concepts of mechanistic physiology and classical psychology, this section aspires to present positive accounts that phenomenology can offer to the body-oriented disciplines. It clarifies the key concepts to be graspable for the second part, where they will be confronted with the everyday practice and where their potential implementation into these disciplines will be discussed.

It has to be emphasized, that there is a huge potential to bring such topics and concepts much more thoroughly and widely to the theories of body-oriented disciplines. From Merleau-Ponty's very dense and intricately structured text that makes up one fourth of the *Phenomenology of Perception* I shall now draw only on a few concise units without losing their comprehensibility and deep philosophical justification.

Body-schema

Probably the most instructive will be to begin by the phenomenological definition of body-schema – the concept originally developed in neurology⁸ and later also adopted by

⁸ The concept of body-schema first appeared in neurology (Bonnier 1905), where it was used to describe the awareness of the spatiality of one's body and its pathologies. The most influential definition was coined by Head, who emphasized that the awareness of one's spatiality (e.g., posture) is systematically related to previous motor activity which establishes the "standard, against which all subsequent changes of posture are measured before they enter consciousness" (Head 1920, 606; Head & Holmes 1911-1912, 187). This basic definition still remains valid in neurology, although a number of works have been written about the body-schema that problematize this phenomenon. One of them was, for example, the

psychologists⁹. According to Merleau-Ponty the concept was established in order to seal up their insufficient theories, wherefore the way they defined it is in fact ambiguous, “as are all concepts that appear at turning points in science” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 101). In the chapter that criticized the mechanistic physiology we saw that it presupposed the linear dependence between stimulus and receptor, and between the receptor and the brain. Accordingly, in neurology the body-schema was intended just to label the mere sum or product of proprioception and interoception. However, the previously presented insufficiency of such notion is, according to Merleau-Ponty, already foreshadowed by the term itself: *body-schema* induces not just a sum, but a certain structure, an organization, a plan or a sketch. Hence, the *unity* it wants to express, the spatio-temporal, inter-sensorial, sensory-motor unity of one’s own body, is the unity *in principle*, which precedes “contents actually and fortuitously associated in the course of our experience”, and which “in fact makes their association possible” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 102). The organizing principle is thus prior to its elements, or, conversely, the parts are identifiable only due to be originally a whole. Parts of our body do not relate to each other as if they were laid out side by side (*partes extra partes*) as other objects, they “envelop each other” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 100) and the body-schema is exactly the way of expressing this envelopment.

Although this alone is enough to question implicit touchstones of science, for Merleau-Ponty it is still insufficient just to say that the whole is anterior to parts (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 102). In addition, he notices that in contrast with the positional spatiality of external objects, the spatiality of the body is *situational* – rather than being “the global awareness of the existing

work of Paul Schilder (1923, 1950), which can probably be considered as Merleau-Ponty's main inspiration.

⁹ For an overview, see Preester & Knockaert (2005).

parts of the body”, the body-schema is actively integrating the parts according to their actual *practical value* (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 102). Here we are close to what was described in the section about motricity: our movement is usually not mediated through the conscious representation of our body. Now it should be clearer what was meant by the whole-body grasp of the situation, which irradiates from the body as a complex of incorporated possibilities of postures and movements or as a meaningful web of possible motor tasks. Our body appears to us primarily not as a representation of an object situated among other objects, but rather “as a posture toward a certain task, actual or possible” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 102). This was in different context already demonstrated on the example of phantom limb, which could be now aptly interpreted as a distortion of the body-schema. Analogical example is the neglect syndrome, when patients omit their limb from motor performance although it is demonstrably capable of particular required movements. When grasped as a representation, it could be possible to achieve the goal, but the problem is that for the patient the limb lost its immediate practical value.

Our intentions lay out of our bodily space – Merleau-Ponty chooses the example of holding his pipe in his hand to explain that we have *absolute* knowledge of the position of objects we are oriented towards in our practical tasks, to which the knowledge of the position of our body is *relative*. In his words:

“Bodily space can be distinguished from external space and it can envelop its parts rather than laying them out side by side because it is the darkness of the theater required for the clarity of the performance, (...) the zone of non-being in front of which precise beings, figures, and points can appear.” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 103)

This metaphor is also a more apt or more precise expression of the fact that the body-schema is a necessary background for perceptual figures, or that it is the “always implied third term of

figure-background structure” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 103). As we saw, in perceptual field, the figure can appear on its background as a figure only because the parts of the background can be converted to the figures by a shift of a gaze – it must belong to the same genre of being. However, this structure can only be organized in advance the zone of corporeality in which the perception happens – the body-schema is an implicit background against which our motor projects and the perceived objects targeted by them stand out as explicit figures, or in relation to which they are organized. For Merleau-Ponty, his apartment is not “a series of strongly connected images”, rather it is for him a familiar domain in which he still holds “in his hands” or “in his legs” its principal distances and directions and in which “a multitude of intentional threads run out toward it” from his body (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 131-2)¹⁰. The body-schema gives us “at every moment a global, practical, and implicit notion of the relation between body and things”, through it the body “applies itself to space like a hand to an instrument” (Merleau-Ponty 1964, 5).

Although the designation “background” for body-schema may suggest its inferiority as if it was mere void without structure in which something substantial can happen, all previous descriptions should indicate its great significance. On one hand, it is possible to say that it is polarized by motor tasks or perceptual figures, but on the other, such tasks or figures are formed as meaningful only because it is the body-schema that provides a standard of measure through

¹⁰ At this point it is appropriate to follow up on the note about the accord between Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger, because the description of his apartment as a familiar domain which he has in his hands and legs expresses almost the same thought as Heidegger’s *nearness* of what is “at hand”: when we walk, we feel it [street] with every step and it seems to be what is nearest and most real about what is generally at hand, it slides itself, so to speak, along certain parts of our body – the soles of one’s feet” (Heidegger 1996, 99). In both cases, it is put into opposite against objective position of things in the sense of Descartes’ extension.

or against which they can appear as meaningful. Like the case of perception, where it was not clearly possible to determine who conducts it, whether the look or what is seen, this is again a dialectical process: the situation asks for certain posture and movement and, inversely, the body-schema opens a field for something to be perceived and as a system of possible movements it radiates to the environment. It presents the situation already with motor physiognomy – the distance is not perceived in meters or centimeters, but originally and immediately as achievable through these or those movements. In literature the body-schema is often designed as unconscious or subconscious and put into opposition with body-image¹¹, our conscious image of our body, but it is more apt to say that the body-schema is *pre-conscious*, because although we do not perceive it, we perceive according to it or in relation to it. Merleau-Ponty considers it to be an “immediately given invariant” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 142), by which he expresses that it through its constancy enables the variability of what is perceived. This furthermore resonates deeply with the main claim about one’s own body not being an object: the body, or now more accurately, the body-schema, is by which there are objects. Objects are originally objects because they appear to us through or against our body-schema as achievable, graspable, manipulable, etc. – we have them still in our hands or in our legs. Only thanks to this truly original corporeal relationship with the world it is possible to imagine space as an objective system, as a representation in mind, although it is soon liberated and spontaneously and naturally interpreted as original.

¹¹ Probably the most influential in this topic is Shaun Gallagher (see e.g. 2001, 153-154; 2005, 40-55), who reformulated Merleau-Ponty’s account on body-schema into this dichotomy of body awareness or un-awareness, demonstrating it (again in Merleau-Ponty’s style) on neuropathological cases of neglect syndrome.

In sum, Merleau-Ponty considered the body-schema, the term first used in neurology, to be a turning point in science. According to him, it indicates the need to express the unity of the body in experience. Although this unity is, in accordance with mechanistic notion of the body, in neurology understood as a sum of afference about own body, Merleau-Ponty pointedly demonstrates that this unity is a unity in principle and that the whole is anterior to its parts. However, this alone does not fulfil the potential of what the body-schema signifies about how we are our bodies. It concurrently expresses that the parts of the body are integrated according to their practical value, in order to organize the posture or the attitude towards a certain task. In this relationship, the body-schema shows up as a third term of the figure-background structure or as its counterpart, through which it could even be a structure. In Merleau-Ponty's metaphor of a darkness of the theatre required for the clarity of the performance, there thus should be the requirement emphasized. For the body-schema is the background for motor task and perceptual figures in the sense that it is their standard of measure, an invariable structure or a system of equivalences according to or against which they appear structured and though meaningful for us.

Bodily intentionality

As was forwarded, now it is necessary to skip an elaborate part of Merleau-Ponty's work, namely his famous analysis of Gelb's and Goldstein's case study of Schneider, a case on which he demonstrates distinction between concrete and abstract movement and by which he argues against causal explanations of empiricism as well as the reflective analysis of intellectualism. Due to the limited scope of this thesis, I will move directly to the main finding of these analyses, namely to the discovery of bodily intentionality. First, it is necessary to explain briefly what

intentionality means in phenomenology and in which context it is used by Merleau-Ponty, then I will follow up not only to the concept of body-schema, but also to some of the earlier findings. Most simply put, intentionality of consciousness expresses that all consciousness is a consciousness of something. As Merleau-Ponty notes (Merleau-Ponty 2012, lxxxi-lxxxii, 520 n. 57), this discovery is often presented as originally Husserl's although its roots could be already found in Descartes and Kant. According to Merleau-Ponty, Kant argues that the inner perception is possible only through external perception – world as the connection of phenomena is the means of realization of self as a consciousness. However, while for Kant the unity of the world is anticipated in the consciousness of one's own unity, for Husserl it is already lived as accomplished and as being already there. He therefore recognizes the consciousness as a project of the world, as its layout, “as destined to a world that it neither encompasses nor possesses, but toward which it never ceases to be directed” – and the world, dialectically, “as that pre-objective individual whose imperious unity prescribes knowledge its goal” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, lxxxix). Husserl's credit thus consists not in discovery of intentionality as such, but rather in explicit definition and thorough elaboration of *more profound* intentionality which establishes the natural and pre-predicative unity of the world and of our life.

For consciousness, in order to exist, there must be an intentional object of which it is conscious, into which it “throws itself” to become entirely by this reference to this object (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 123). The consciousness *is* in fact *nothing but* this act of self-irrealization, this “fabric of intentions”, and when it “ceases to be defined by the act of signifying”, it “falls back to the status of a thing”, to “an absolute ignorance of itself and of the world” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 123). The *Interlude* already showed that in perception things offer themselves as dwellings for the gaze, and that to see an object means to inhabit it, to be virtually situated in it. Concurrently, the section on the movement of one's own body presented Merleau-Ponty's claim that the object appears as an object only because of our body, which is not an object itself, but that which

introduces us to the space in which objects can appear as objects. In fact, there was already written a lot about intentionality without explaining what it is, because it was concerned primarily by the question whether to body is or is not an object. The motor experience was found as “the original manner of reaching the world and the object” in the way that it embraces the intentional object into the “meaningful web of actual or possible motor tasks” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 141). After the clarification of intentionality, Merleau-Ponty’s claim that “the consciousness is originally not an ‘I think that’ but rather an ‘I can’” should now become more comprehensible: “[c]onsciousness is being toward the thing through the intermediary of the body” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 140).

Although it was Husserl who first used the expression “I can”, Merleau-Ponty contributed significantly by pointing out its *primacy*. This primacy is demonstrated by the *existential* analysis (to distinguish it from empiricist explanations or intellectualist reflections) of the case of Schneider, through which he arrives to conclusion that motricity should be understood unequivocally as original intentionality (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 139). Emphasis on motor aspect of intentional relation to objects and to the world was necessary to distinguish Merleau-Ponty’s notion from Husserl – motricity is not a servant of consciousness, motor signification is not derived from intellectual signification, it is in fact otherwise, even though the intellectual signification is later liberated from the motricity. However, the section about sensation of one’s own body showed the abstractness of distinction between motricity and sensation and their “kinship” or unity in experience, as well as the chapter about body-schema showed the spatio-temporal, inter-sensorial and sensory-motor in-principal unity of one’s own body in experience. It is thus more apt to speak about intentionality of the body or *bodily intentionality*.

In sum, the discovery of the bodily intentionality announces the turn in understanding of the consciousness: it is indeed intentional in the sense that it is always the consciousness of something, but this something could exist for it only if it first exists for the body. The way how

it exists for the body was described in previous section about body-schema: as achievable, graspable, manipulable, etc., as actually or potentially in our hands or in our legs. Such defined, the concept of bodily intentionality remains quite abstract. Following section about acquiring motor habit should make it more conceivable.

Bodily habit

At the level of bodily intentionality, the body as a subject communicates with its environment to gain the possibly most adequate or at least sufficient motor performance. It is again a dialectical process: “[t]o move one’s own body is to aim at the things through it, or to allow one’s body to respond to their sollicitation, which is exerted upon the body without any representation” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 140). It has been said that it is the body, which must “understand” the movement to be able to perform it. Merleau-Ponty realizes that it may sound absurd if understanding is considered as “the act of subsuming a sensory given under an idea” and the body as a mere object (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 146), i.e., in intellectualist or empiricist categories. Mechanistic theories about the body in accordance with their paradigm cannot explain the acquisition of a motor habit other than as connecting individual movements with individual stimuli. They are nevertheless confronted with the fact that from their own observations follow that the learning process is always systematic – subjects respond “with a certain type of solution to a certain form of situation” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 143):

“The situations may differ widely from case to case, the responding movements may be entrusted sometimes to one effector organ and sometimes to another, and situations and responses resemble each other in the different cases much less through the partial identity of elements than by the community of their sense.” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 143)

But this suggests that “an act of the understanding” that would “organize the habit’s elements” is first needed in order to be able to learn any motor skill – as if we have to think it through first. Nevertheless, this is obviously not the natural way of learning the movement. To acquire a habit of certain dance or certain sport we necessarily have to *go through it*, to experience it bodily, to let it “receive a motor consecration” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 144).

Merleau-Ponty’s designation of the relationship between our decisions to move and our body as magical can also be related to the way how it is possible that our intention to perform certain movement for the first time could ever be possible. Any attempt to create a conscious plan or a sketch of forthcoming movement or posture can necessarily be only a mere fraction of the immeasurable complexity of the realized movement when considered mechanically – as an event composed of multitude of nerve excitations, muscle contractions, changes of muscle length and tone, bone levers, etc. Combination of intellectualist view of conscious plan of movement and empiricist view on the body as an object or mechanistic view on the body as a machine naturally renders the magical impression of what actually happens. However, just like in the case of movement as such, this only proves incompatibility of these notions as well as insufficiency of both. In order to overcome this stalemate it is necessary to behold the body on the side of the subject and to realize that it is the body that understands the situation and the movement it requires or triggers. Understanding then turns out to be a process taking place not on the level of intentionality of consciousness, but on the level of bodily intentionality, of which the motor habit could be considered as an element. Acquisition of the motor habit is thus “a motor grasping of a motor signification” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 144).

Once again, Merleau-Ponty first stresses the motor aspect when investigating the habit, probably to counterbalance the mechanistic notion of motricity, in which it is a mere “servant of consciousness”. However, the acquisition of the motor habit is always indivisibly concurrently the acquisition of the perceptual habit, as Merleau-Ponty himself acknowledges

(Merleau-Ponty 2012, 153-155) not far from the analysis of the motor habit (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 143-148): “[i]n fact, every habit is simultaneously motor and perceptual because it resides, as we have said, between explicit perception and actual movement, in that fundamental function that simultaneously delimits our field of vision and our field of action” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 153). Therefore, in the following text, I will use the term bodily habit, similarly as in the case of intentionality. Merleau-Ponty’s examples of habit acquisition illustrate well not only the inseparability of the motor and perceptual aspects of habit, but also the dynamics of body-schema and motor intentionality, therefore they will be given more space in the following paragraphs.

Merleau-Ponty points out that we do not compare our body width or height with that of the door when passing through them. It is the body-schema that “does the math” on the level of bodily intentionality – neither a conscious plan, nor a reflex. This becomes more obvious from his examples with a woman with a feather in her hat and himself driving a car. The woman “maintains a safe distance between the feather in her hat and objects that might damage it” as well as the driver sees that he “can pass” when he enters the lane. This happens naturally, spontaneously, without any calculations or imagining, just as if the feather or the car would be a part of their body. In Merleau-Ponty’s words, they “take up residence in them, or inversely, [they] make them participate within the voluminosity of [their] own body” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 145). Their body-schema overflows the border of their biological body and extends to the hat or to the car, which were first mere objects for them. But they have acquired a habit of wearing a hat or of driving a car, wherefore the hat and the car “have ceased to be objects” and “have become voluminous powers and the necessity of a certain free space” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 144). Before positing of the door or the road by the intentionality of consciousness, they first appear as passable or impassable for the body (now extended by a hat or a car) in the level of bodily intentionality.

These are just two examples of what everyone ordinarily experiences many times a day: passing through, over, around, between, etc., walking, running, jumping, riding a bike, carrying or holding whatever, using various tools, etc., etc. We are constantly applying our dynamically extending (or reducing) body-schema as a standard or index to all these situations, which are usually dynamic too, because the conditions vary in time and space. In that sense we are still learning and re-learning bodily habits – slicing onions, walking up a spiral staircase, unlocking the door with hands full of shopping bags, etc. Of course, conscious control over these situations often plays an important role – we are continuously reflecting if our conscious aim is being fulfilled or not. However, this (usually only partially) conscious monitoring, is far from interfering with the subtlety and precision of bodily habit that is being performed in much more immediate and natural manner.

Another Merleau-Ponty example of “habit” describes how a blind man uses his cane. In this case, not only is the cane not an object for the blind man, but moreover its “furthest point is transformed into a sensitive zone, it increases the scope and the radius of the act of touching and has become analogous to a gaze” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 144). An extension of body-schema thus can have various purposes. In the case of the feather in the hat, it is only about fitting in, whilst in the case of the blind man’s cane it is about touching something distant, which cannot be seen – it extends the perception. What was not emphasized in the case of the car was that it is an extension of motricity – it gives the body-schema the ability to get somewhere faster than without extension. This division of bodily habits according to their purpose is, however, again only theoretical, because in everyday situations, these aspects are usually mixed. The car gets us somewhere fast, but it is concurrently of a different (bigger) size than the physical body, and we can also feel how it vibrates and roars or how it bumps on an uneven road. Merleau-Ponty chooses the case of the blind man’s cane to illustrate how significantly something could become a part of one’s body-schema, how totally it could cease to be an object. For the blind man, it is

no longer a middle term or an instrument, the distance of objects is no longer consciously estimated from its objective length. The touch extends into it and the position of the objects becomes his immediate experience, while the length of the cane becomes a conscious estimation derived from the position of the objects. During habit acquisition, the cane should be understood in the same terms established by the example of the pipe in the section about body-schema. From absolute knowledge of the position of the objects, the cane converts into the relative knowledge of the position, just as we know the position of parts of our body. The habituation nevertheless needs repeated attempts, until the blind man gets it “into his hand”, until he “sees” which objects are within or out of his reach (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 144).

The following two examples will already bring us closer to the next phenomenological concept, as they will be concerned with how the body-schema can be extended in order to develop *expression*. The first example is about learning typewriting. It is, of course, possible to type in such a way that one searches for each letter separately again and again, but to be really able to type on a keyboard is to permanently know where each character is located. However, this again should not be understood as representational knowledge, a conscious model of the keyboard in objective space. Rather, it is a “knowledge in our hands” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 145) – the same knowledge as knowing where our fingers are. According to Merleau-Ponty, a glance over the text does not awake any representations which would evoke representations of necessary movements according to which these moments are executed, as it is often presented. Rather, “[t]he word that is read is a modulation of visual space, the motor execution is a modulation of manual space” and “certain physiognomy of ‘visual’ wholes can call forth a certain style of motor responses” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 145) just because the typist acquired a habit through incorporating the space of the keyboard into his body-schema – it has become an expressive space for him.

This is even more obvious in the second example: an experienced organist is capable of playing an unfamiliar organ. Merleau-Ponty probably chooses an organ for its variability, which emphasizes his point. It might have additional or fewer keyboards, its stops might be arranged differently, etc., and yet it takes the organist an hour at most to habituate to the new instrument and to be ready to execute his program. This is only possible because he is neither establishing new conditioned reflexes nor creating a conscious map of the new instrument. Rather he transposes the meaningful core of his habit to the actual situation through his body-schema as through a register:

“He sits on the bench, engages the pedals, and pulls out the stops, he sizes up the instrument with his body, he incorporates its directions and dimensions, and he settles into the organ as one settles into a house (...) – the stops, the pedals, and the keyboards are only presented to him as powers of such and such an emotional or musical value, and their position as those places through which this value appears in the world.” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 146-147)

This description implicitly refers to and resonates with the description of Merleau-Ponty’s apartment as a familiar domain, whose directions and distances he has still in his hands or in his legs. In the case of the organist, however, his movements do not only fulfil some practical tasks, but are concurrently *gestures* that directly express the musical essence inscribed in the score. These gestures “put forth affective vectors, they discover emotional sources, and they create an expressive space” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 147).

In summary, to acquire a bodily habit means to become able to accomplish a given motor-perceptual task no matter what internal or external conditions may have arisen and precisely across a variety of different objective conditions. The habit could neither be acquired by establishing a conditioned reflex through mechanically repeated exercises outside the context

of a specific situation, nor by creating a conscious plan of the movement – to acquire a habit it is necessary to go through the situation, to experience it bodily, because it is a bodily grasping of bodily significance and it takes place on the level of bodily intentionality. Merleau-Ponty's examples of motor habits illustrated not only these findings but also the dynamics of body-schema, which might be in various habits extended or reduced for various purposes. Sometimes it improves or augments our motor skills, sometimes it refines or substitutes our perception. Moreover, the last two examples have opened a new field of phenomenological inquiry: the bodily habit concurrently carries an expression, which in various extent sometimes becomes its purpose. According to Merleau-Ponty, the *body is an eminent expressive space* and its expressivity can be extended by various means and instruments. There is nevertheless another important consequence of this finding, which has to be explained in the next section.

Bodily empathy and bodily dialogue

At this point, it is necessary to recall two previous key findings of this thesis and to add a new one. This part of the thesis began by defending the claim that the body in one's own experience is not an object among other experienced objects, but that it is that by which objects can exist for us as objects. This ontological turn of Merleau-Ponty revealed the originality or constitutiveness of one's own body's permanence, sensation and movement. This section will show that expressiveness is another aspect through which this ontological turn can be illustrated. The second claim to defend was that we are originally introduced to the world by our body, and that the world appears to us originally according to what can be done with it bodily, or that the practical value of situations precedes its conscious reflection. This section will reveal another important layer besides the practical one, namely the expressive one, or that the practical relationship to the world has its substantial expressive aspect.

Merleau-Ponty, as we saw, argues that the body is an eminent expressive space. As he instantly adds, it is nevertheless “not merely one expressive space among all others”, but rather “the origin of all the others, it is the very movement of expression” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 147). We never perceive objects only as a neutral arrangement of matter, they impress us by their certain expressions. Again, it is not possible to claim that we insert it into them, but neither that they are inherently theirs. This process is thus eminently dialectical, but the fact that we perceive the world not only as a neutral arrangement of matter, but as charged with a certain expression, is again due to the fact that we are introduced into it by our body, which is itself always an expression of ourselves. This ability to form itself into an expression is again originally bodily and is that by which we are able to read the expression of what surrounds us. In this sense, the expressivity of the body could be understood as another exceptionality of one’s own body among other objects: expressions by which objects affect us are only variations in primordial field of expression of our own body. Or analogically to the argumentation used in the part about the body not being an object: not only is the expressivity of my body not a particular case of the general expressivity of external objects in the world, but moreover this latter can only be understood through the former. And this applies in particular to the understanding of the expression of the body of the other, which also turns out to be an absolutely crucial moment of this thesis, given that it primarily deals with the possibility of working *on* the body *with* the body.

According to Merleau-Ponty, we do not experience our body just as a system of current positions, but also “as an open system of infinity of possible positions in different orientations” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 142), and as has been already introduced, as a body-schema it is experienced as “a system of equivalences, (...) by which different motor tasks are instantly transposable” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 142). After all, he demonstrates this claim using the examples of patients with apraxia who fail to imitate the doctor’s movements even though they

are capable of making them in different circumstances. The failure (and in Merleau-Ponty's interpretation the adequate explanation of apraxia) consists in the loss of ability of immediate identification with the doctor's body, of patient's "irrealization" in the model (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 142). Instead, such patients resort to the reflective level, to the conscious comparison of seen images of doctor's body with the absolute localizations of their own body of which they are reflectively aware. This is, however, a secondary operation besides or derived from the existential operation of a healthy individual, and although it is noticeably insufficient and failing. We usually do not need to know explicitly where our body parts are and how they correlate with the body parts of someone else. Rather, this is all embraced together into one system of correspondence at the level of motor intentionality (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 142). In other words, through our body schema we are able to "transpose" ourselves to the body of the other.

As Merleau-Ponty notices, "the normal subject" is thus naturally and spontaneously capable of an "immediate identification with", "adhesion to" or "irrealization in" the model (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 142). As well as any other intentional object, the body of the other is inhabited through the subject's gaze, but in this special case something *more* happens: in virtually transposing ourselves into others, we (to some extent) might be able to *understand their expression*. This level of intersubjectivity, where the subject is not a consciousness but a body, Merleau-Ponty calls "intercorporeity" (Merleau-Ponty 1968). It is necessary here to emphasize that phenomenologically defined intercorporeity is essentially distinct from what is called "the language of the body" or "non-verbal communication", the vast field of predominantly psychological (or more aptly psychologizing) knowledge. Again, from the phenomenological position, these approaches work only with the reduction of the bodily experience of the other's body into their mere conscious reflections, not with the body as it is lived, but its mere representations in consciousness. Nevertheless, although the approaches are distinct, both deal

with the same issue: bodily expression and its understanding. While in the case of psychology it consists in reflective interpretations of representations of the other's body in mind, phenomenology focuses on immediate bodily understanding, on virtual, lived, unreflected transposition into the other's body not just to *know*, but to *experience* what it expresses.

While Merleau-Ponty sticks with the terms intercorporeity, transposition, bodily understanding, bodily expression, etc., in order to make it more graspable for the second part of this thesis, it will be convenient to resort to the term "*bodily empathy*", which aptly expresses the ability to bodily understand the other's body expression through this virtual, unreflected transposition into it. Bodily empathy is a purely theoretical concept introduced by Carl Edvard Rudebeck (2001) – inspired by Merleau-Ponty's accounts on intercorporeity, he reconsiders the clinical communication primarily between doctors and patients. While Merleau-Ponty very often draws arguments from clinical cases, he rarely deduces from his theories how they could or should be reflected in clinical practice. There are only a few moments in his work which could be interpreted as a suggestion for an application. This is a mission for his followers as well as for this thesis. He himself rather stays at very general theoretical level, inferring from intercorporeity the nature of the perceived world and of the perception as such. Yet, in addition to the intended conclusions, his examples also demonstrate fundamental discoveries about the immediacy of the relationship between two bodies. In the example of two people pointing out some landscape detail to each other, he explains that it is not about triggering some internal visions in the other that are only analogous to the one pointing, but rather about invading the other's world and guiding her gaze. For Merleau-Ponty, this "co-presence" - seeing together, or sameness of what is being seen - is not merely an intelligible signification, but also "a certain accent of the world's style" (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 370). For the purpose of this thesis, it is nevertheless important how immediate correlation between the experiences of two bodies could arise.

Another conclusion important for this thesis follows from Merleau-Ponty's remark on how a child learns how to use tools and instruments. Although he "finds these objects around himself at birth like meteorites from another planet", he "learns to use them as others use them because his body-schema assures the immediate correspondence of what he sees done and what he does" (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 370). Such claim may sound banal, but when supported by what was explained above – that we experience our body "as the power for certain behaviours and for a certain world" and that it is only given to us "as a certain hold upon the world" (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 370), it reveals the essential dimension of this capability. In Merleau-Ponty's words:

"[I]t is precisely my body that perceives the other's body and finds there something of a miraculous extension of its own intentions, a familiar manner of handling the world. Henceforth, just as the parts of my body together form a system, the other's body and my own are a single whole, two sides of a single phenomenon, and the anonymous existence, of which my body is continuously the trace, henceforth inhabits these two bodies simultaneously." (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 370)

Again, for Merleau-Ponty this point primarily clarifies the ontological aspect of "coexistence of [psycho-physical subjects]" (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 370) in the world, while for the intentions of this thesis it is also possible to draw from it a crucial insight into the dynamics of sharing bodily experience. Or, in other words, it can significantly help to answer some key questions of the body-oriented disciplines, e.g., how motor learning is even possible or how can one possibly react motorically to another body. These are still being answered insufficiently from the positions of physiology or psychology.

However, bodily empathy can be explained neither physiologically nor psychically. Learning a movement from a coach, from a therapist, coordinating movements with a dance partner, with a teammate, estimating the opponent's upcoming movements – none of these is explicable

merely as a reaction to a particular external stimulus (it often precedes the event supposed to be the stimulus) or as conducted by an inference (there is usually not enough time for such a complicated process). Still, there is a tendency to explain motor learning by “partial stimuli” on one hand or “non-conscious judgments” on the other, although it is obvious that it is incomprehensible from the dualistic subject-object perspective. Following Merleau-Ponty, we should rather say that in such situations one immediately and originally perceives the other’s body as *expressive*, i.e., as a body in which there is already inscribed a bodily intention, which can be bodily understood through bodily empathy.

From bodily empathy it is very close to another phenomenon described in current literature (e.g., Bjorbækmo & Mengshoel 2016, Kříž 2019, Øberg et al. 2013, Roenn-Smidt et al. 2019), inspired mainly by Merleau-Ponty’s thoughts, although not mentioned by himself, and introduced apparently because of the need to draw consequences from his theories for the body-oriented practices: a *bodily dialogue*. For it would be insufficient if disciplines in which two bodies interact would try to explain this interaction as a mere mechanical intervention by the body of an expert who possesses theoretical knowledge of physiological processes in the other’s body as in a machine, or as imparting this knowledge to the mind of another, who on that basis should make those mechanical changes through his will-controlled representational body. Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological account of the body leads into the unequivocal conclusion that *the primary source of understanding of what is happening with the other’s body should be the expert’s own bodily experience*. Only if the sharing and transmission of experience takes place on the level of bodily intentionality and not on levels derived from it, is it possible to guide the other’s bodily habits in their natural complexity and malleability, to develop and rearrange the body-schema directly, not merely through its representations.

The expert’s body thus must participate in the encounter – at least as a model, but better as a guide. Verbal instructions or various schematic representations can play a role in pre-setting of

the actual interaction, they can shape its framework, adjust or correct it, but they are secondary, supplementary, and without the intercorporeal core they are insufficient and often misleading. And the same applies to knowledge of physiology, anatomy, kinesiology, etc. As noted in the Interlude, scientific knowledge should not be overridden as a whole, but relegated into the area of its real competence. It may serve as a map, a model, a framework and due to its current dominance inevitably as an established channel of communication between experts. But the actual intervention should happen through bodily dialogue, recognizing what to do with the other's body, and especially *how* to do it, by bodily empathy.

The whole first part, the core of this thesis, has been accumulating relevant phenomenological knowledge to support such radical and thoroughgoing claims, and so, the reader should regard them now as justified and understandable from the inside, relying on the internal logical structure of the argumentation. However, from the outside, in the eyes of experts working daily with the bodies of the others, it may nevertheless still sound presumptuous and unpersuasive. This is not surprising, forasmuch as this whole part of the thesis persistently advances a certain notion of the body, with which they probably do not identify. As forwarded in the Introduction, they are rarely concerned with what notion of the body underlies their interventions, such that it is usually composed of unaware presuppositions and individual *ad hoc* considerations. In order to distinctly define the phenomenological notion of the body, it was necessary to do this *against* something. Criticism is therefore a necessary by-product of the main intention, which is to offer a deeply philosophically grounded alternative.

In fact, the author of this thesis, himself a physiotherapist, is convinced that the imposed current scientific notion of the body plays a strange, hypocritical role in the practice of these disciplines. Although they formally refer to it and use the scientific vocabulary to gain the credit that science

has maintained since the Enlightenment, their practical interventions are in fact determined by individual concepts shaped by everyday experiences with the bodies of others. Although they are unable to accurately articulate the principles of their effects because they are still trying to fit the scientific vocabulary of causal relations, the author of this work judges from his own experience that many of them resonate significantly with the presented phenomenological concept of the body. This presumptuous hypothesis will be clearly better assessed only after the following part, in which the outlined phenomenological concepts will be implemented to the practice through examples.

II. POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF PHENOMENOLOGICAL NOTION OF THE BODY FOR PRACTICE

In the second part, it is finally possible to move on to the discussion of how the outlined phenomenological notion of the body can or could be projected into the practice of body-oriented disciplines. But this thesis is far from being the first to herald the entry of phenomenology into practical fields. Since the 1950s, when Merleau-Ponty's work became more widely known, his ideas have begun gradually to permeate into the various fields of knowledge of and practice upon the body. It is impossible to thoroughly assess how much, where and how the phenomenological notion of the body has asserted itself directly in the work with the body, or whether and how it appears in various local teaching materials or in expert lectures. However, at least according to the rapidly increasing number of academic publications it is obvious that this process still continues. At least a significant part of these studies should be discussed here in order to illustrate the position of this thesis distinctly.

As was mentioned in the Introduction, the research about the body (in medicine, nursing, rehabilitation, sport, physical education etc.) is currently dominated by the quantitative methodology. One of the manifestations of widely perceived insufficiency or inadequacy of the current notion of the body is the growing tendency to compensate dominant quantitative approach with qualitatively oriented studies. And precisely in this area we can find a rapidly increasing number of authors referring to Merleau-Ponty through engaging in some form of *“phenomenological” empirical research*. Although qualitatively oriented researchers use selected phenomenological terms and refer to key phenomenological philosophers, there is still no consensus on whether it is at all possible to create methodological tools for the needs of empirical research that would meet the epistemological criteria of phenomenological philosophy defined by its founders and current key representatives (e.g., Crişan and Copoeru 2020; Gallagher and Francesconi 2012; Køster and Fernandez 2021; Zahavi 2019a; 2019b;

Zahavi & Martiny 2019). In various disciplines, several authors argue that a considerable proportion of such qualitative research is labelled “phenomenological” without proper justification and lacks clear delineation of the concept of phenomenology (e.g., see criticisms by Allen-Collinson and Evans 2019; Halák et al. 2014; Kříž 2019; Martínková and Parry 2011; 2013; Paley 2005, 2016). Hence, it is necessary to go through some of them and explain in which sense they do not convene with presented phenomenological notion of the body.

A. “Phenomenological” research”

For phenomenological research studies it is characteristic, that although references to original phenomenological texts appear to varying degree in their theoretical introductions, these references disappear later in the methodological part and in discussion, where the phenomenology is being “applied”. Instead of referring to Merleau-Ponty, Husserl or Heidegger, they generally employ methodological tools developed by Max Van Manen (2016), Amedeo Giorgi (2009), Linda Finlay (2011) or else. These tools seem to rely on the researcher’s ability to interpret the verbal or non-verbal expressions of those whose body is being treated, and/or those who are treating it, either directly during it happens or of their statements in subsequent interviews. The phenomenological aspect of research supposedly lies in the researcher's ability to go beyond their own taken-for-granted understandings of observed or heard. For example, according to Wenche Schrøder Bjorbækmo, one of the most influential phenomenological research promoters, “[p]henomenological insight is accessible only through a phenomenological method (Merleau-Ponty, 2002), one which aims to break through and gain access to pre-reflective experiences as they occur in taken-for-granted situations and activities during the research (van Manen, 2014)” (Bjorbækmo & Mengshoel 2016, 14). Compared to the participants, the researcher should therefore be the one who understands the situation “phenomenologically” and is able to describe and explain it in this way. And Van Manen’s, Giorgi’s or Finlay’s tools (books, models, guides) are what capacitate them to do that.

However, in attempting to bring phenomenology into practice through qualitative research, Van Manen (whose tool is probably dominant in this area) himself found that his work initiated a number of studies wherein the methodological principles he suggested were “misused and poorly understood” (Van Manen 2017, 776). Within few methodological misconceptions that, according to Van Manen, distorts the spirit of phenomenology, he criticizes in particular the

contention that “phenomenology is the study of how individuals make sense of their own experiences” and that therefore all “study of experience... must be phenomenology” (2017, 776). Van Manen (2017, 776) argues that reflection or sense-making of the psychological “I” do not constitute phenomenological inquiry because the latter is concerned with the *pre-reflective* experience. In previous part, especially in the section about experiencing own movement and later in the section about bodily habit, it has been shown that at least according to Merleau-Ponty the bodily experience, which is the actual charge of these disciplines, takes place exactly in the level of bodily intentionality and is thus unaware (the movement happens “as if by magic”).

However, many recent studies in these disciplines define themselves as phenomenological and falling precisely within the criteria that Van Manen rejects. Thus, there must be something in his presentation of phenomenology (as a method) that tempts researchers to such a misinterpretation. Probably it is the fact that while phenomenology was originally presented as a philosophical *method* by Husserl and understood as a manner or style of thinking by Merleau-Ponty, van Manen created and legitimized the shortcut that then it simply can be a qualitative method or style too (e.g., van Manen 2001, 460-461). From his point of view, Husserl and Merleau-Ponty were just *reflecting experience*, so why not to enable researchers to reflect the “experiential material” produced by empirical methods, when “[t]hey include personal descriptions of experiences, gathering written experiences from others, interviewing for experiential accounts, observing experiences, investigating fictional experiences, and exploring imaginal experiences from other aesthetic sources” (Van Manen 2001, 461). However, phenomenology as a philosophical method actually tries to dig down through the sedimentations of acquired knowledge (Merleau-Ponty 1964, 5) to discover the very original ground on which experience arises. But this only applies on the most *general* philosophical, and thus non-empirical level. It reveals how *any* experience is possible. General

phenomenological findings are thus very distinct from feelings and reflections that particular participants or researchers could have about their particular experience. It is even quite distinct from non-mechanistic and sometimes quite poetic descriptions of particular experiences made by researchers who are erudite in phenomenology (e.g., Bjorbækmo & Mengshoel 2016, Hughson & Inglis 2002).

Like Van Manen, Giorgi is often quite critical about the way his “phenomenological tool” is used, saying, e.g.: “I am forced to admit that there are many poor examples of the application of phenomenology in the nursing literature” (Giorgi 2000, 15). He nevertheless insists that this is due to the negligence or in consequence of researchers studying his work, rather than due to the impossibility of applying phenomenology to qualitative research. Moreover, he asserts that what he calls “scientific phenomenology” must be distinguished from philosophical phenomenology, arguing that if we expect any implications of phenomenology for practice, it must cease to be a philosophy (Giorgi 2000, 12). He apparently believes that he is the one who discovered how to provide this mediation, the one who can make “phenomenology a scientific practice rather than a philosophical one” (Giorgi 2000, 15). In this logic, phenomenological philosophy can only be practiced by philosophers, who naturally always condemn non-philosophers, who would try to use phenomenology in their field, of misunderstanding and misuse. Hence, in connection to psychology, Giorgi claims that “to be helpful”, phenomenology “*must not remain just a philosophy*”, rather “it must be expressed in a way that makes it proximately helpful to psychological praxis, and that would be the meaning of phenomenological psychology as a human science rather than phenomenological psychology as a subfield of philosophy” (Giorgi 1985, 46-47).

It is thus evident, that Giorgi’s (mis)interpretation of phenomenology and its possible application to practice is absolutely incompatible with the position of this thesis. Further confrontation might be interesting, but it would take too much space to the detriment of the

positive accounts in this part of the thesis. Suffice it to repeat that phenomenology was founded and in key works has always remained primarily a *critique of science*, wherefore the question should not be how to make phenomenology less philosophical for better compatibility with scientific methods, but rather how to revise scientific methods according to discoveries of phenomenology, whose essential purpose is from the beginning to be a philosophy. As was demonstrated, it defines itself as overcoming flaws and presuppositions of mechanistic physiology as well as of classical psychology and thus it is inappropriate to expect that it will conform to them instead. When criticized from misinterpreting phenomenology, Giorgi is concerned that nobody deals with the issue “how does one mediate between the philosophical method and a legitimate scientific version that is equally scientific and phenomenological” (Giorgi 2000, 12). The simple reason is that it cannot be dealt with, for it is simply not possible with respect to the original spirit of phenomenology.

In this light it seems that Van Manen’s and Giorgi’s efforts to implement phenomenology into practice have in fact only created a pretension for the researchers to consider their interpretations of the treatment of the body as phenomenological and thereby make them presumably more valuable and profound. It is therefore appropriate to agree with Zahavi (2019a; 2019b) who claims that Van Manen and Giorgi’s transpositions of phenomenology onto empirical research is based upon philosophical imprecision and bring more confusion than clarification into qualitative methods. Moreover, by promoting their research mistakenly as phenomenological, they attract justified criticism not only from philosophical positions (e.g., Halák et al. 2014, 123; Martínková & Parry, 2011, 191), but also from the scientific positions against which they define themselves (e.g., Paley 2016, Sholl 2015). They create a misconception about phenomenology and its potential implications for treatment with the body, which makes it very easy for defenders of contemporary methods to deal with their criticisms.

Van Manen's and Giorgi's methodological tools are being employed within the wide scale of body-oriented disciplines qualitative research. In particular, it probably began to spread in nursing (Van Manen in e.g., Andrew 1998, Gramling 2004, Tracy 1997; Giorgi in e.g., Costello-Nickitas 1994; for overview see Dowling 2005, Zahavi & Martiny 2019). As suitable for capturing various kinds of disability described from first-person perspective, it has soon found its application in various sub-disciplines of medicine (Van Manen in e.g., Gad 2023, Santos Salas 2019; Giorgi in e.g., Moro-López-Menchero 2023 Osman et al. 2017, Zhang et al. 2022), especially in rehabilitation (Van Manen in e.g., Van der Meide et al. 2018, Giorgi in e.g., Råsmark et al. 2014) or more specifically in physiotherapy (Van Manen in e.g., Bjorbækmo & Mengshoel 2016, Bjorbækmo et al. 2018, Blixt et al. 2019, Smythe et al. 2012; Giorgi in e.g., Bertilsson et al. 2020, Dragesund & Øien 2018, Ekerholt & Bergland 2019, Hellem & Bruusgaard 2018, Skjaerven et al. 2008). All these studies and many more are more or less connected by understandable effort to overcome the evident insufficiency of quantitative approach to the body by implementing deeply philosophically rooted phenomenological notion of the body. Hence, we can on one hand read for example that "how we perceive our body is our mode of access to the world, and hence the primary mode for knowing the world" and that "we live in our bodies unreflectively" (Albertsen et al. 2019, 3), or that "we exist in the world through our bodies" and that "from this perspective the body cannot be reduced to a mere object" (Skjaerven et al. 2008, 23). But on the other hand, in empirical part of these studies, they ask their participants on their reflections of bodily experiences and thereby allow participants to objectify their experiences into representations or researchers even do it for their participants in their own interpretations. In Albertsen et al. (2019), particularly, participants reportedly achieved better relationship to their body ("from avoidance to greater acceptance") through being prompted to the conscious reflection of their bodily experience while exercising. According to authors, this shift is understandable from phenomenological perspective, "since

the body is understood as our mode of access to the world” (Albertsen et al. 2019, 10). Such understanding of phenomenology is a very apt illustration of misconception criticized by Van Manen, as it was described above.

Very similar shortcuts we can find in more or less all studies which use Van Manen’s, Giorgi’s or other “phenomenological methodology”. Quite exceptionally there are also efforts to transform phenomenological accounts into quantitative research without employing such pre-existing tools. Such studies vary between those that rely on physiotherapy only superficially (and only seemingly) (e.g., Roenn-Schmidt et al. 2019) and those who are apparently quite erudite in original phenomenological writings and try to bring its accounts into practice sensibly with respect to their original spirit (e.g., Sivertsen & Normann 2015). For example, Roenn-Schmidt et al. (2019) “applies phenomenological perspective” by claiming that reflection is not solely a conscious action, but “also a bodily process, connected to the perceptions and experiences of the body, existing pre-consciously” (Roenn-Schmidt et al. 2019, 8), from which they (quite surprisingly and paradoxically) conclude that physiotherapy “incorporates the possibilities for the patient to be more aware of the body’s signals and boundaries” (Roenn-Schmidt et al. 2019, 8), and, in the end, that “[a] phenomenological approach to the patient can support the patient’s embodied knowledge, and can thereby support and develop the patient’s identity” (Roenn-Schmidt et al. 2019, 1).

Sivertsen and Normann (2015), in contrast, interviewed patients after a brain injury and their physiotherapists, to interpret their narratives about their bodies to gain better understanding of what the pre-reflective change due to the injury consists of. Researchers were concerned in how their findings could be taken into consideration within the rehabilitation process – in general they concluded that it is desirable “to treat the patient as an experiencing and expressing body, a lived body (body-as-subject) and not just the body-as-object separated from subjectivity as may be favored in the more traditional frameworks of physiotherapy” (Sivertsen & Normann

2015, 158). This could be viewed as more legitimate application of phenomenological notion of the body into practice, but still it is very far from the how it is going to be suggested by this thesis – namely that the change has to be achieved not through *verbal reflections* and making the pre-conscious bodily experience conscious, but rather through *touch* and through turning the focus of the education to develop the natural capabilities of bodily empathy and bodily dialogue.

Although sport, physical education and dance are not so far from rehabilitation and physiotherapy, at least in the sense that they all in general thematize the process of motor learning (and motor habit), Van Manen's and Giorgi's methodological tools do not grow through their research so widely (but still there are rare cases: Van Manen in e.g., Browrigg et al. 2017; Giorgi in e.g., Ronkainen et al. 2020). Nevertheless, in Van Manen's words, the contention that phenomenology is the study of how individuals make sense of their own experiences is, unfortunately, quite widespread even in this area (e.g., Aggerholm & Larsen 2016, Hughson & Inglis 2002, Larsen 2016, Thorndahl & Ravn 2016). However, Merleau-Ponty's accounts project into sport studies much more through conceptualisation of skill acquisition (referring to Merleau-Ponty's accounts on motor habit and motor intentionality), usually in mediation through Stuart Dreyfus (Dreyfus & Dreyfus 1986). Phenomenology serves here to cover the insufficiency of both intellectualist and empiricist ways of explanation of how the acquisition is possible. The discussion usually turns into questioning the level of awareness or consciousness of the bodily action, wherefore interpretations of statements of interviewed sportsmen are meant to serve as arguments for this or that opinion (e.g., McNarry et al. 2019, Purser 2017). To which extent are interpretations of athletes relevant for such discussion is still a question, but authors that demonstrate their theories about skill acquisition on some practical situations in sport (e.g., Morris 2002) are definitely closer to the original spirit of

phenomenology than those who seek to understand bodily situations through application of pre-prepared clues¹².

Such cases bring this overview closer to the position of this thesis, because they raise a question, whether the phenomenological theory should be used to explain the practice with the body or whether the practice with the body should serve as an illustration of the phenomenological theoretical findings. If any author wants to be considered as doing phenomenology, it is necessary first to decide between these two positions. This thesis stands on the latter and is convinced that the former is very problematic. Explanation of bodily situations or translations of statements made about them in phenomenological terms are valuable in the sense that they confirm aptness of phenomenological notion. But they are not helping in bringing the change in how body-oriented experts treat bodies of others. Once again, the change must rather happen in their hands. It is thus necessary to formulate key phenomenological findings in the way understandable for them, and for that purpose it is beneficial to illustrate them on examples from practice. Yet for that there is no need for any qualitative empirical research, or at least not at all for a methodological tool.

As can be seen, the discussion is extensive and fragmented. The way it was presented is not and cannot be exhaustive and, in fact, not even fair. There are many empirical studies that bring

¹² As do almost all studies cited in this section. There are also studies that explicitly adhere to both positions (Køster & Fernandez 2021, Ravn & Høffding 2016). Ravn & Høffding (2016) detect that “while qualitative researchers employ phenomenology to empirically investigate the domain of sport and exercise, phenomenologists employ empirical data to substantiate their claims concerning foundational conditions of our being-in-the-world” (Ravn & Høffding 2016, 1). Therefore, they suggest a to “enhance the collaboration between the two fields” (Ravn & Høffding 2016, 1) and in conclusion explain how they can inspire one another without any explicit remark about their essential incongruence.

valuable insights and remarkable thoughts. The radical diction was chosen to point out their philosophical inconsequence, which takes an important part on that the potential reach of phenomenological notion of the body is currently dispersed and tangled up. The popularity of phenomenological research has on the one hand caused a certain amount of congestion, and on the other it has created a very superficial image of what phenomenology actually is. The whole first part of this thesis tried to clarify the philosophical depth of phenomenological notion of the body, which promises considerably more radical change in the practice of body-oriented disciplines. Next section outlines in which this change depends.

Besides the dominating efforts to employ phenomenology in empirical research, there is a wide scale of theoretical studies in which phenomenological notion of the body plays various roles according to how each author understands or interprets the original phenomenological philosophers, dominantly Merleau-Ponty. However, compared to the empirical studies, which are easy to criticize due to their presented schematicity, theoretical studies are contrariwise impossible to discuss them other than each separately. It has to be postulated that there are many of them which at least partly resonate with positive message of this thesis, but even such cases usually lack the radicality that follows from the ontological level of presented phenomenological notion of the body. In sport these are especially articles of David Morris (1999, 2000, 2002, 2005, 2021), Gunnar Breivik (2008, 2011, 2013), Vegard Fuchse Moe (2005, 2018) or Øyvind Standal (2011, 2016, 2016, 2020), in physiotherapy David Nicholls (2010, 2016) Gunn Kristin Øberg (2013, 2015), in general medicine Dan Zahavi (2010, 2013, 2019a, 2019b, 2021), Shaun Gallagher (2001, 2005, 2020) or Carl Edvard Rudebeck (1992, 2000, 2001).

B. Phenomenologically inspired transformation of body practices

This last section is finally going to fulfil the promise to show how to draw consequences corresponding to the depth and radicality of presented phenomenological notion of the body. It will follow the structure of the second half of the first part (critical accounts on current approaches and positive phenomenological accounts) and demonstrate what each concept or claim brings to the practice with the body. First it is about to demonstrate insufficiency of physiological as well as psychological approaches to the body on practical cases, then to provide an alternative by implementing presented concepts of body-schema, bodily intentionality, bodily habit, bodily empathy and bodily dialogue into practice through examples.

Inapplicability of physiological approach in practice

From the phenomenological critique of the mechanistic physiology, it followed that body-oriented disciplines should not primarily approach the body as a measurable and analysable object which should be treated using universal standardized techniques. Such approach should be understood as secondary, derived from the primary pre-objective experiential level. In other words, the fact that the body-oriented expert is his or her own body and has a bodily experience of the world should be the primary ground for understanding what should be done with the other's body, and how. The following text is built upon practical examples, that are taken from Halák & Kříž (2022) and may serve well to substantiate this claim.

Probably as the most illustrative can be seen the cases of amputees: absence of parts of the objective body does not necessarily imply the loss of a particular type of experience or manner of relating to the world them (Merleau-Ponty 2020, 121; see Gallagher 2001, 161-164; 2005, 86-106). Those with missing hands usually still perceive and approach objects as “handy”,

graspable and manipulable by hands, and for those with missing legs the path could still remain walkable, although the parts of their body that were the original means of this relationship is no longer available to (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 78–91). The already discussed special case of phantom limb then depends in specific failure of adaptation of bodily behaviour to the changed situation without losing the bodily grasp of certain surroundings as walkable. On the other hand, “even if our own biological body is objectively present and physiologically available, we may become incapable of using it. As the experimental postural situation known as the hand reversal illusion illustrates, the two aspects can easily become dissociated (Hong et al. 2012). In that case, unusual intertwinement of the fingers disturbs their typical configuration in synergic actions and causes subjects to fail to execute simple sensorimotor tasks such as pointing with a specific finger” (Halák & Kříž 2022, 18). This example is valuable because one can experience in limited extent the situation of patients suffering with apraxia or neglect syndrome due to stroke or traumatic brain injuries (see Merleau-Ponty 2012, 140-142; 2020, 109-117; Katz 2018). “Under such conditions, a physically present limb is chronically disintegrated from the subject’s body-schema and altered in its explorative power (Merleau-Ponty 2020, 95–96). The patient understands what they are supposed to do, is able to formulate it in speech, and their sensorimotor system has preserved the capacity to produce the intended movement; however, this explicit reflective knowledge does not lead to the bodily reorganization that normally makes possible practical accomplishment of the required task” (Halák & Kříž 2022, 18). In this regard, it is thus understandable that “in becoming capable of using a prosthetic limb, it is not enough that it is physically attached to one’s body. One must also ‘incorporate’ it, learn to integrate it into the range of one’s motor behaviours and one’s relationships with the environment (see Merleau-Ponty 2012, 144-145; cf. Murray 2004; Preester and Tsakiris 2009; Standal and Moe 2011; Thompson and Stapleton 2009). A mere physical presence of the body and the physiological availability of its parts is not a sufficient condition for the subject to

experientially rely on them in their pragmatic engagements in the world” (Halák & Kříž 2022, 18).

Although presented examples of amputation, hand reversal illusion, apraxia or neglect syndrome and prosthetic limb may evoke that this claim is valid only for very special cases, it actually applies to all (dis)coordination impairments that cause the most common painful syndromes. For example, tennis elbow syndrome (enthesopathy of tendons on lateral epicondyle of humerus) can be understood as a slight apraxia of the whole limb and described as inadequate coordination of all its muscles that leads to overstraining of wrist extensors. Phenomenologically expressed, the tennis elbow syndrome is as much a disintegration of subject’s body-schema as apraxia, although they are different in many specific aspects.

As Halák and Kříž (2022) points out, instead of being concerned by the experiential level of bodily issues, the dominant evidenced-based approach in medicine and paramedical disciplines as well as in sport standardly “focuses on identifying and measuring alterations in physical tissues that can be categorized as deviations from presumed general norms” (Halák & Kříž 2022, 19). However, in common practice, health-care professionals encounter cases in which such deviations do not systematically correlate with experiential difficulties of those they work with, even though the difficulties are paradoxically the original reason for their interventions. Using another apt example from Halák and Kříž (2022) to illustrate this claim, “a deviation displayed on an X-ray, such as a particular Cobb’s angle of scoliosis or a shift of lumbar vertebra, does not have to correlate with a specific intensity of low back pain or other subjective difficulties. One patient with a very pronounced hallux valgus deformity may report a degree of pain and discomfort in the area of the metatarsophalangeal joint similar to that of another patient with an almost insignificant deformity in the same area. Conversely, a given angle of hallux valgus may be associated with intense pain in one case and negligible pain in another.

The adjustment of the angle that makes it more conform to the norm may even lead to an increase of pain or discomfort” (Halák & Kříž 2022, 19).

Quantitative evidence-based studies therefore fail to shed light on these cases. Halák and Kříž illustrate this with research on hallux valgus, in which researchers as Menz et al. (2010) “select a very limited number of objective bodily variables (e.g., the angle of hallux valgus, sex, age, weight) and significantly simplify the subjective values by transposing them onto quantitative scales, such as the Visual Analogue Scale. Factors that are relevant for therapy but cannot be easily operationalised are excluded from the study. Attempting to account for more complex factors while also preserving statistical significance, some researchers resort to using a bigger sample. Chang et al. (2020) examine static (standing) and dynamic (walking) pressure distribution in 944 feet with hallux valgus deformity to identify correlations between the pressure and local pain in the foot. Relying on a large sample, they distinguish between several types of deformity and thus explain several differences among the cases. The study still omits other relevant factors, such as the type of shoes used, the general quality of connective tissues or the patients’ lifestyle. However, a patient whose angle of hallux valgus does not considerably deviate from the norm but experiences pain in the area needs to be examined precisely regarding these factors, as well (Halák & Kříž 2022, 19). As Halák and Kříž concludes, it is therefore evident that “disclosing objective physiological structures and causal relations between them alone does not make it possible to design optimal therapeutic intervention” (Halák & Kříž 2022, 19).

In relation to these difficulties of the mechanistic notion of the body, which is concerned by measurable deviations of tissues, the belief emerged that these bodily processes must be approached with regard to the bodily *function* or *functionality*. Nevertheless, as Halák and Kříž (2022) substantiate in relation to physiotherapy, the departure from the inadequacy of the mechanistic approach is still largely insufficient. Firstly, “[d]ifferent conceptual elements are

used within different schools of thought. Some physiotherapists speak generally of a ‘functional approach’ (Helders 1999) or a ‘physiotherapy of function’ (Lewit 1994; 2004; Lewit 2008), while others refer to ‘functional motor disorders’ (Nielsen et al. 2015; Pringsheim & Edwards 2017) or ‘cognitive functional therapy’ (O’Sullivan et al. 2018). Although there is no comprehensive definition of ‘function’, these studies suggest that physiotherapy be focused less on measurable deviations of particular physiological tissues (e.g., the angle of hallux valgus or Cobb’s angle) and more on whether parts of the body fulfil their presumed general function or purpose (e.g., gait, maintaining balance, grasping)” (Halák & Kříž 2022, 19). Moreover, “[b]eyond merely considering pathologies of a given physiological structure considered in isolation, functional approaches also investigate relationships between such structure and a specific bodily operation, in particular in the context of patients’ daily activities. For example, physiotherapists of function consider not only the shape of the femur and pelvis, the range of movement in the hip, or the strength of the hip muscles but also the patient’s capability for maintaining an appropriate position of, for example, the pelvis while performing a particular activity such as standing on one leg. That is, rather than contenting themselves with the analytical approach to the body and the search for specific causes, they proceed more holistically and involve interpreting measurable physiological structures in their behavioural contexts” (Halák & Kříž 2022, 19).

According to Halák and Kříž (2022), functional approaches nevertheless “remain attached to a universalistic third-person account of the living body that is typical of the mechanistic paradigm. By referring to ‘function’, practitioners presuppose objective norms of bodily operation to which they subsequently adapt their diagnoses. Compared with analytical approaches, functional diagnoses are better situated for establishing higher levels of correlation between experiential difficulties and bodily ‘dysfunctions’ to be treated. However, because their conceptual framework is still abstract and universalistic, they fail to consider crucial

aspects of embodiment (...). That is, they do not consider whether the patient incorporates the meaning of the desired movement into their particular bodily action and, consequently, how well a specific movement fits into their specific relationship with the environment regarding the physiological means they currently possess” (Halák & Kříž 2022, 19-20).

Halák and Kříž thus see with Merleau-Ponty the limitations of bottom-up analytical and top-down functional types of clinical reasoning in “the fact they both remain attached to the causal framework as their paradigmatic interpretative tool. To resolve discrepancies between objective deviations and subjective difficulties, practitioners usually examine adjoining parts of the physical body and construe increasingly complex webs of presumed causes of the observed discrepancies. Hallux valgus, for example, may be linked to a genetic disposition, hormonal setting, shoe shape, the quality of exteroception in the feet, postural activity of the muscles sustaining the arch, postural activity of muscles adjusting rotation of the tibia, and so on. Each such causal factor involves several possible explanations, and as a given subjective condition can always be linked to a different set of causal factors, the list of presumed objective causes of a given difficulty stretches on infinitely. Moreover, as each set of causal factors reflects the condition of an individual patient that is variable in time, any attempt at generalising the causal relationships reported is fundamentally problematic” (Halák & Kříž 2022, 20).

Analogically to the physiotherapeutic field, in quantitative evidence-based sport studies the machine-like body of athletes is objectified to be measurable and the treatment with it standardizable (e.g., Franchini et al. 2019, Hellem et al. 2019, Padulo et al. 2016). The idea is to discover statistically significant correlations between selected objective parameters of body, according to which the training should be adjusted in order to improve the performance. While in medicine and paramedical disciplines the mechanistic notion of body suggests pushing it into presumed general norms, in sport it is determined by the character of particular sports disciplines. In some of them, the athlete’s body strives to be fastest or strongest, it tries to get

further, higher, deeper, etc. Quantitative approach in such disciplines could be viewed as appropriate, for the body of athlete is truly becoming a machine. But still, there is no such sport in which results are independent on the quality of the coordination, or, in other words, on the extent in which the body incorporates specific bodily habit, which is unobjectifiable and thus immeasurable. And this argument applies all the more in sports where it is even more complicated to define what makes one athlete better than another. These are all team sports, but also sports in which athletes use special tools or equipment or where the aesthetics of performance is valued. In short, similarly as in health-care area, objective measurements of body in sport studies does not correlate much with athlete's actual bodily experience and the value of his or her performance, and disclosing causal relations between objective measures of the body does not make it possible to design optimal training intervention.

Although Halák and Kříž (2022) direct their arguments to the physiotherapeutic field, all essential claims can be applied to body-oriented disciplines in general, as well as their overall conclusions, that any eventual success in treatment based exclusively on analysis of mechanistic variables in the body will remain partial and coincidental. Intervention aiming exclusively at elimination of objective deviations or at achievement of objective parameters does not systematically lead to subjective relief or better performance because it simply does not allow the body-oriented experts to determine the presumed cause of the experiential difficulty. Objective measurement of a physiological structure of the body does not provide satisfactory insight into the real matter of intervention which concerns an experiencing body oriented towards the world. An experiencing body should be understood as a subject capable of maintaining a certain relationship to its surroundings by relying on potentially very different configurations of objective conditions with potential causal values (see Halák & Kříž 2022). The subject involved in the therapeutic, educational or training process is not therefore a body that can be measured and analysed from the disembodied scientific perspective but rather a

body understandable and addressable by the embodied expert, who can tune into its capability of acquiring and potentially losing capacity to execute its intentions in the world.

Inapplicability of psychological approach to the body in practice

From the phenomenological critique of the classical psychology, it followed that body-oriented disciplines should not primarily approach the body as a representation reflected by the psychological “I” of the subject and treated by addressing subject’s conscious awareness of own body. Just as the physiological approach to the body, the reflective psychological approach is derived from the pre-objective experiential level and thus secondary. In order to modify the bodily intentionality or to reorganize the body-schema, it is necessary to go beyond the level of conscious awareness. Focusing subject’s attention on bodily processes does not have potential to compensate for the insufficiency of the physiological approach (as intended in the so-called psychosomatics, behind which concept usually hides disparate amalgamations of these two approaches).

Halák and Kříž admits, that patients in physiotherapy (but it can be applied again to body-oriented disciplines in general) “may benefit from increased explicit awareness through instructions or demonstrations on manipulating specific parts of their bodies. Opening up to a new coordination, for example, is usually initiated by means of a conscious decision. Similarly, our motor performances are often affected by explicit perceptions, beliefs and narratives regarding our bodies. A visual perception of one’s body can disturb one’s motor performance (e.g., hand reversal illusion) or contribute positively to it by stabilising spatial orientation” (Halák & Kříž 2022, 20). At the same time, however, it is obvious that when performing everyday bodily tasks, we do not turn our attention inwards or create a conscious movement plan beforehand (besides Merleau-Ponty as already discussed, see also Dreyfus 2002;

Romdenh-Romluc 2007). In fact, it is an exact opposite – the most effective and harmonious movements are usually those in which the body "ceases to obstruct" and "disappears" (Leder 1990), when the movement proceeds smoothly without having to focus on it, or even because of it. If the body begins to enter consciousness during its normal functioning, it usually means that it obstructs or complicates the realization of the movement intention. Such situation suggests that an intervention which would return the subject's body back to the "darkness of the theater required for the clarity of the performance" (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 103) is rather convenient.

It is thus irrelevant to assume that patients or trainees will be able to integrate bodily habits through conscious attention to what passively happens to their bodies or to a verbal description of how they should move. Halák an Kříž give an example from practice, which illustrates that the precision and harmony of our spontaneous movement is not dependent on our conscious awareness. "Patients who cannot raise their arm above their shoulder level because of inadequate coordination may be instructed to keep the shoulder in a lower-back position and then externally rotate the humerus to increase the range of shoulder flexion. However, this conscious intervention in corporeal coordination usually produces unintended accompanying changes in posture and general muscle tension increases in the corresponding area. Further instructions aimed at preventing such adverse effects usually lead only to different sets of adverse effects. Such instructions merely address explicit representation of the body in patients' consciousness, which does not embrace the complex coordination of a habituated corporeal movement" (Halák & Kříž 2022, 20).

This is even more obvious in practicing sports, wherefore it is also more discussed within academic publications about sport – as was already mentioned, one of the most common research questions is how much or in which sense is an athlete conscious or aware of what happens in his or her body during the performance or while acquiring motor habit. Experiences

from practice unequivocally show that although verbal instructions and demonstrations are important supplements of skill acquisition, it is always primarily necessary to jump into it, to go through it without a clear idea of what exactly will happen and how it will end. Athlete must let the body grasp the skill in its duration, in which it encounters concrete internal bodily and external environmental conditions and reacts spontaneously (intentionally) in order to achieve the given goal. At least to justify these experiences, it may be appropriate to interview athletes about their impressions of their performances. Their acknowledgement thereby does speak of the adequacy of phenomenological findings – nevertheless, phenomenology is then not applied to sport, but sport contrariwise supports phenomenology with its examples. Expressed even more straightforwardly, “the demonstration that phenomenological findings fit *even* to what happens in various sports is correct, because it should fit to *any* physical activity – it is just more obvious in sport” (Kříž 2019, 10).

In contrast to therapeutic and educational intervention based on explicit awareness of the body, verbal instructions, and explicit memorizing of motor drills, presented phenomenological notion of the body suggest that it should take place primarily at the level of patients or trainee’s bodily intentionality, in bodily interaction with the therapist or trainer. Consequently, “physical parts of the body are neither simply *causes* of a subject’s experiences nor mere *instruments* through which the subject materializes their purely mental intentions in the physical world” (Halák & Kříž 2022, 19). Merleau-Ponty points out that by relying on merely causal or psychological (or transcendental) explanations, “one will never understand that a given fact of the ‘objective’ order ([such as] a given cerebral lesion) could entail a given disturbance of the relation with the world” (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 200). That is, the subject’s intentions and physiological means must be viewed as elements of a larger system in which their particular roles depend on the presence and specific quality of all the other elements and on the way, they are synergically configured within a functioning body oriented toward the world.

Implementation of body-schema and bodily intentionality into practice

The way how the body-schema was phenomenologically interpreted (in contrast with traditional neurological or psychological conceptions) suggests a significant revision of how body-oriented experts should comprehend the way the subjects of their treatment perceive the world and act in it. To break out of the abstractness of terms as pre-objective body or body-as-subject, the term body-schema was brought up to express that the body is experienced as *structured* or *organized*. To bring this concept into everyday practice of body-oriented experts therefore means to focus their attention on a completely different way of their subject's bodily experience internal organization. In contrast to the mechanistic machine-like notion of the body in which bodily parts are viewed as laid side by side, connected by causal relationships and as such being assembled into a meaningful whole, phenomenological concept of body-schema supersedes the whole to its elements – bodily parts are in the experience distinguishable only through their partial role in achieving the goal of the task. Instead of employing a biomechanical model of levers, forces, plasticity, elasticity, contractibility etc., it is thus more appropriate to be first concerned by the overall *practical value* of the bodily habit and to assess whether individual parts of the body-schema fulfil their role adequately in accordance with the overall *intention*. And this is also the reason why implementation of concept of body-schema into practice is going to be discussed together with implementation of bodily intentionality: to approach the bodily organization as primarily determined by the practical intention actually means to deal with the subject's body in the level of bodily intentionality.

One of the most fundamental attributes of bodily intentionality is thus the ability to dynamically *differentiate* body-schema into isolated parts which fulfil partial functions necessary to support the overall performance. Developed motor intentionality is thus manifested, for example, by the ability to drink while walking or even running, the ability to look to the side while

maintaining the direction of cycling, the ability to open the door with the elbow or the flank when hands are full etc. In this area in particular, it is obvious how inadequate is the universalistic analytical model of mechanistic physiology, which measures muscle strength and ranges in the joints and as a therapeutic or training approach chooses schematic exercises to strengthen specific muscles and passive stretching of others just because their strength or length is out of the universal norm. If the movements in the runner's ankles are not sufficiently differentiated, so that he strains his toes overmuch against the ground before his centre of gravity reaches the point of bounce, this means that while the rest of the body is doing its best to move forward easily and efficiently, the "confused" ankle goes against this effort with its untimely activation. The individual parts of the runner's body-schema then struggle with each other, resulting in overloading not only the calf muscles, which strain the toe too early and spasmodically, but also the hamstrings and glutes, which must exert all the more force to pass over the straight toe. A specific knee pain or poorer performance of runners can thus be explained as a body-schema disorder in terms of their ankle's misunderstanding of its true purpose in relation to the work of the rest of the body.

Phenomenological notion of the body thus projects into the practice through concepts of bodily intentionality and body-schema in the sense of a radical turn of attention of body-oriented experts from machine-like body organized and functioning causally, to the body-as-intentional-subject differentiating and coordinating its parts according to a successful fulfilment of intended task. The mechanistic notion of the body presupposes the predetermined unequivocally given universal norm, which means that for every particular situation there exists only ideal "physiological" bodily action, while the multitude of others are to a varying degree "pathological". The scientific endeavour then consists in detecting of general patterns of ideal bodily performances, which naturally leads to a further reduction of its multiplicity. In contrast, phenomenological notion of the body, in which the differentiation of the body-schema was

identified as a fundamental attribute of the bodily intentionality, suggests that the ideal of adequate bodily performance is rather found in the *multiplicity* of ways of dividing the whole into individual parts according to the need given by a practical purpose¹³. In therapy of scoliosis, for example, instead of mechanical pushing of the body-as-an-object into the prescribed norm, it is rather advantageous to develop the ability to differentiate individual functional sections of the spine from being merely able to bend or straighten to being able to make barely noticeable precise corrections of the shape of the trunk.

The multiplicity as a positive phenomenon and conversely its reduction as a disorder also applies to another fundamental aspect of bodily intentionality, namely its *transponibility*, an ability of bodily subject to transpose bodily habits, that is, to convey a certain relationship to the environment across variations within the body and the environment. This aspect has been already explicitly described in section about bodily habit, when citing Merleau-Ponty that subjects respond “with a certain type of solution to a certain form of situation” and that “situations and responses resemble each other in the different cases much less through the partial identity of elements than by the community of their sense” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 143). Very illustrative for this claim was his example of experienced organist who is able within an hour to transpose his skill of playing a certain piece onto a different instrument. While discussing habits or skills, it is apt to speak about their transposition across the variety of circumstances, however, while discussing the body-schema, it is probably better to choose the term *adaptability*, i.e., the ability to reorganize the body-schema in order to adapt to changed or continuously changing circumstances. Being able to walk means also that one can react flexibly to compensate for changes in the shape, material and tilt of the surface, changes in the

¹³ For a remarkable study of differentiation and dedifferentiation of body-schema in phenomenological sense see Halák (2021).

type of shoes, or even the consequences of injuries and the associated possible need to relieve the leg or limit its mobility for example due to external fixation by a brace etc. In adaptability, the multiplicity is manifested in the multitude of alterations of bodily coordination that is needed for an adequate adaptation to various internal or external changes of the situation.

In any given situation, it is moreover possible to perform movements and hold postures in various ways without it being requested by the situation itself. An elite tennis player, with the ball going in a certain direction at a certain speed, is able to practically realize multiple options for hitting back, whereas his weaker opponent manages to do it only a single certain way in his situation. Or, if a healthy young man runs down the stairs in a hurry, he can decide how many steps to jump, and perhaps even use the banister to amplify the bounce, while an old lady has no choice but to go relatively slowly step by step, using the banister only as a necessary stabilization. While the elite player could imitate his weaker opponent and young man could imitate the old lady, in both cases it could not be otherwise. *Variability* of the way of performing the habit is another aspect of motor intentionality, another manifestation of structuration and organization of body-schema (in contrast to mechanistic explanations) and also another demonstration that multiplicity should be considered as a positive phenomenon and its reduction as an impairment, rather than otherwise (as it is in mechanistic approach). Whether the reason for variation is haste, the desire to win, or the need to express the inner state bodily, it is always advantageous to maintain high-level of variability of bodily intentionality, rather than resorting to a few certain unchanging patterns.

Bodily intentionality must therefore be understood as the relationship of the body-as-a-subject to the world, which can achieve various degrees of organisational complexity – specifically, the abilities to differentiate, adapt, and vary within a body-schema were mentioned. “Pathological”, unhealthy or suboptimal state then consist in the reduction or disintegration of these abilities and thereby in decreasing of the adequacy of the response to specific environmental challenges.

“Physiological”, healthy or optimal state, on the contrary, consist in their maintenance or improvement, that is to say, in the sufficiently fine structure of the bodily response to environmental challenges. And consequently, a suboptimal sports performance as well as the most common musculoskeletal problems, such as pain in and mechanical damage of connective tissues, or the limitation of the range of movement, should be considered as consequences of specific ways of disintegration of bodily intentionality. Focus on particular objective parameters that are just out of the norm and effort to get them in the norm by mechanical analytical exercises are again insufficient. Moreover, considering primarily the development of bodily intentionality, it suggests to be concerned by *how* bodily habits are performed rather than *if* the subject is capable of them, which is the primary concern of so-called functional approaches. For to be able to maintain a certain type of physical interaction with the surrounding environment, such as being able to run, does not automatically mean that this interaction happens adequately in relation to the dispositions of the physical body. It is precisely a certain degree of disintegration of physical intentionality that leads to either acute or chronic overloading of tissues, that can be a significant factor in the occurrence of injury or that can cause worse results of the runner. Hence, the abilities to differentiate, adapt or vary within a body-schema are by what should body-oriented experts be primarily concerned in their assessments as well as in their treatment. Their aim should be to develop subject’s body-schema in order to be more differentiated, adaptable and variable. Naturally, such categories would never be measurable, objectifiable, standardizable and statistically verifiable. But this in itself does not mean that it will not lead to better results of therapy or training.

To be more illustrative, all of the above was again focused more on the motor aspect of body-schema and bodily intentionality. As was explained in part one, motricity is nevertheless inseparable from perception, with which it is mutually conditioned in the dialectical manner. If the body-schema was found out as a system of equivalences according to which things appear

structured and though meaningful in the sense that they are graspable, achievable in practical tasks, it follows that the manifoldness and diversity of what is perceived depends on structuration and fine-tunedness of the body-schema. And conversely, in the dialectical manner of figure-background structure, manifoldness and diversity of surroundings is necessary for development of the body-schema. This should be considered in practice, especially in physiotherapy of infants or neurological patients. From this point of view, the softness of the surface on which they exercise is not a detail, but an essential prerequisite for finding a stable point of support. A child with congenital visual impairment will, in comparison to a healthy child, need much clearer and well-arranged visual environment to be able to differentiate and coordinate its body parts. As was already mentioned, our intentions lay out of our bodily space, we are not used to turn attention into it, our perception is developed to grasp meaningful figures that surrounds us. Therefore, it is always better for therapy or training when it is possible to reorganize the body-schema by focusing the patient's attention on external rather than internal stimuli. The body-schema is and should stay a background, a “darkness of the theater”. However, this motif is better to discuss within implementing a concept of bodily habit into practice, for it is closely related to considerations of the degree of awareness in the acquisition and execution of the bodily habit.

Implementation of bodily habit into practice

In the first part, acquisition of habit was found with Merleau-Ponty as “a motor grasping of a motor signification” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 144) and though considered as an element of bodily intentionality. If the body-schema is a concept through which the body-as-subject is for practical purposes more graspable as structured and organized, the habit is a concept through which the bodily intentionality is graspable in its individual presentations. Concurrently,

acquisition (as well as improvement, correction or change) of the bodily habit is in Merleau-Ponty's words a "reworking and renewal of the body-schema" (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 144). From all this, it is necessary to draw several fundamental consequences for practice.

Firstly, establishing habit as an element means that it is further irreducible in the sense that it grasps a bodily signification, so it could not be analytically reduced into sequences in which its overall sense disappears. From Merleau-Ponty's claim that the acquisition of a motor habit means that the body "assimilates a new meaningful core" (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 148) follows that this core cannot be further divided without losing the meaning by which the acquisition of the habit is conditioned. In practice, however, this does not mean that the only possible way to acquire, improve or correct habits consists in their performance in the natural settings of the given physical activities. The habit can be defined in different degrees of generality – the habit is playing volleyball, but also jumping, serving, smashing etc. From the physiotherapeutic point of view, as a habit can be considered, for example, leaning on various parts of the body in various positions, which a person gets into either during daily activities or through which everyone should have passed in the motor development. The meaningful core of the habit should not be confused with the conscious purpose of the physical activity in the level of representational knowledge – while the mind of the footballer is permeated by the effort to score, the bodily grasp of the situation through various bodily habits is rather expressible through terms as supporting, leaning, bouncing, receiving, turning, etc. All of these express individual bodily habits that could be potentially treated in training or therapy – although partial, cut out of the physical activity, they still remain meaningful for the body when put into bodily understandable training or therapeutic situation. Compared to the analytical mechanistic approach, for which the elements are flexions, extensions, rotations etc. and which is concerned by stretching, strengthening, massages etc., the phenomenological approach is still primarily

concerned by whether individual parts of body-schema understand or misunderstand the *purpose* of their action.

Focus on the meaningful core of the habit in practice relates also with already explained principle, that when the body understands the movement, it is able to perform it across a variety of different objective conditions. This is essential for practice, because it is precisely for this reason that the exercising of bodily habit in the therapist's office or sports skill training without a real opponent is transferable and therefore not futile. On the contrary, if the therapy or training is focused on the meaningful core of the habit and the body catches and incorporates it, it will be manifested precisely by the ability to transpose the habit to another situation, or, as described in the previous section, by the ability to adapt to changing conditions. Claim that the body "has to go through it" should not be interpreted as that the improvement of common daily activities or the sports performance is only possible by going through them as such with therapist or trainer behind their backs. Rather, it means that acquisition, improvement or change of the habit cannot take place at the abstract level of imagining their own body as an object or a machine and creating a conscious plan of the intended movement. They must experience it bodily (in the level of bodily intentionality), although transposed into carefully selected therapeutic or training conditions. For example, it is impossible for the therapist or a trainer to guide runner's feet in order to adequately distribute the weight during footing while actually running. However, it may say a lot about the weight distribution when they ask him to make a slow step over the assessed foot, especially if they give him some balance aid underneath. This can show how and how much the runner rely on the hardness and flatness of the surface and the friction between it and the foot. The therapy or training then could consist in correction of a gradually faster and faster step over the balance pad with expectance that the body will incorporate the correction and transfer it into. How the correction should be executed and according to what will be discussed in the next section.

As already noted, Merleau-Ponty's account of habit acquisition became very influential especially through Dreyfus's and Dreyfus's reformulation into their five-stage model of skill acquisition (Dreyfus & Dreyfus 1986, later Dreyfus 2002). In the sports field, a large number of authors refers to the phenomenological critique of the psychologizing approach, arguing that the cognitive processes accompanying a sportsmen performance are primarily non-representational (Eriksen 2010, Hogeveen 2011, Standal & Aggerholm 2016) and that 'practical knowledge' or 'knowing-how' has its essential role that should not be oppressed by 'theoretical knowledge' or 'knowing-that' (Breivik 2014, 2017, Moe 2018, Standal & Aggerholm 2016). This motif is a part of a wider discussion about the level of awareness of the athlete's body during the performance (Breivik 2012, 2013, Hopsicker 2012, Piacente 2018). Although these studies do not draw practical consequences corresponding to the weight of Merleau-Ponty's ontological turn, the extent of the discussion shows that, at least in the field of sport, it is chiefly the aspect of critique of intellectualist notion of habit acquisition. Often motivated by own sports experiences, these authors emphasize the "magic" of skill acquisition, because they realize how much that happens beyond their conscious control and how insufficient is to rely on verbal instructions or imagining of how the movement should happen from the third-person perspective (as their body would be an object for them). Of course, conscious control over these situations often plays an important role – we are continuously reflecting if our conscious aim is being fulfilled or not. However, this (usually only partially) conscious monitoring, is far from interfering with the subtlety and precision of bodily habit that is being performed in much more immediate and natural manner. For practice, it thus does not follow that trainer's and therapists should give up trying to correct or guide their trainees or patients with verbal instructions, but they should be aware that they are lighting up in the theatre during the performance, or less metaphorically expressed, they are thematizing what should be naturally hidden in order to work well. After all, insufficiency of verbal instructions that turns the attention to the body as

an object of consciousness was already demonstrated while discussing the inapplicability of the psychological approach in practice.

The level of awareness of acquiring or performing the bodily habit is very closely connected to the so-called “flow” phenomenon (for meta-analyses in sport see e.g., Harris 2021, Stamatelopoulou 2018,). The state of flow was originally described by Csikszentmihalyi (1990) as a state of “complete immersion into the activity”, from later definitions for instance as “becoming at ‘one’ with the activity leading them [performers] to enter another reality in which they are entirely absorbed by what is being undertaken” (MacDonald et al. 2006). Such expressions apparently resonate with what was described as “disappearing” of the body or its retreat into the “darkness of the theater”: the body-as-experienced fully dissolves in its intention that it disappears in the “zone of non-being in front of which precise beings, figures, and points can appear” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 103). Not only does it not obstruct the intention in any way, but even every element of the body-schema participates in the fulfilment of this intention. In practice, it could be the main aim to enable the subject of treatment to experience the flow – the moment of perfect organization of body-schema, when there is nothing experienced in the body that creeps into consciousness and the reflection becomes unnecessary or even counterproductive.

The concept of flow could serve as another argument to question the intellectualist or psychological idea that it is beneficial to develop consciousness, mindfulness or awareness of own body. An athlete will certainly perform better when getting into a state of flow than when having the bodily processes, so to speak, under (conscious) control. The concept of flow is much more applicable to sport, dance or music performance, however in medical and paramedical disciplines it has its analogies. For example, therapy leading to a significant weight reduction may cause so substantive change of bodily experience that it could be considered as a flow (Albertsen et al. 2019). Similarly, the patients undergoing the successful physiotherapy

may experience a phenomenon that can be compared to the flow when their bodily intentionality finally discover the optimal way of performing given exercise – the individual parts of body-schema stop to fight one with another and start to work synergically towards the aim of the exercise. This state is usually being described as that the exercise which was first difficult for them “suddenly became as for nothing”, as if it “goes better the less effort is spent” on it. Analogically to the state of flow, it consists in that the body cease to obstruct the intention and concurrently there is no need to consciously interfere with the execution to be successful.

Concepts of body-schema, bodily intentionality and bodily habit suggest more apt approach to the body of the subjects of body-oriented disciplines by turning the focus of body-oriented disciplines from body-as-an-object to the body-as-an-intentional-subject or to the pre-objective body. Such a change of focus nevertheless stays quite fruitless until drawing the way how practically transform the techniques of the treatment, so this is going to be the aim of the last section.

The role of bodily empathy and bodily dialogue in practice

As already foreshadowed in the first part of the thesis, the essence of the suggested phenomenologically inspired change in practice consist in building on the fact that the body-oriented experts are *themselves embodied* – the primary source of understanding of what is happening with the other’s body should be the expert’s own bodily experience. The main message of this thesis has been actually hastily revealed yet in the critique of mechanistic physiology by quoting Merleau-Ponty: “I can only understand the function of the living body by accomplishing it and to the extent that I am a body that rises up toward the world” (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 78). The presented phenomenological notion of the body pointed out to the possible depth of *sharing bodily experience*, which precisely is from what, above all, should be drawn

consequences for practice. If one's own body is originally not experienced as an object but as that by which there are objects, and as that what introduces us to the world, wherefore the world appears to us originally according to what can be done with it bodily, in such a world it therefore applies primarily to the bodies of others. And if perception of objects consists in inhabiting them or virtually placing into them, then also understanding and grasping of the bodies of others primarily, originally, naturally and spontaneously happens by inhabiting their bodies, by immediate identification with their bodies. It is possible through the general attribute of expressivity of our own bodies, by which we are able to read expressions of what surrounds us, especially of what is the most similar to us, namely the other's body. Through a "miraculous extension of its [expert's body] own intentions, a familiar manner of handling the world" (Merleau-Ponty 2012, 370) it is not only possible, but from the position of this thesis even adequate and necessary to approach the bodies that are being treated to achieve the desirable success.

The current model of treatment of other's body was also already aptly expressed: "mechanical intervention by the body of an expert who possesses theoretical knowledge of physiological processes in other's body as in a machine, or as imparting this knowledge to the other's mind, who on its basis should make these mechanical changes through his will-controlled representational body". This model should be dramatically revised due to its insufficiency, inadequacy, inconsistency and discrepancy, as was thoroughly discussed. Phenomenology shows that sharing other's bodily experience could mean not just to know what the other experiences, but to experience it directly in bodily "co-presence", through "invading other's world", which was for the practical purposes defined as *bodily empathy*. The practice of body-oriented expert should therefore primarily consist in developing this capability through unflagging effort to bodily understand what express the bodies of their subjects by inhabiting

them, identifying with them in the most immediate manner, that is, in the level of bodily intentionality.

Despite how essential and concise the concept is according to this thesis, Rudebeck's term appears only rarely in professional literature and again it lacks either the ontological weight (e.g., Kordahl & Fougner 2017, Råsmark et al. 2014, Schmidsberger & Löffler-Stastka 2018) or the ambition to draw consequences for the practice with the other's body (especially Fuchs in Fuchs 2017, Fuchs & Koch 2014, Fuchs & Schlimme 2009, which draws consequences for psychopathology and psychotherapy). The same applies for another Rudebeck's term "existential anatomy", which indicates more or less the same phenomenon, as it follows from his claim that "[i]f the doctor knows his existential anatomy, he can follow the patient back to the origin of the experience, where it may be more easily understood" (Rudebeck 2001, 302). This one only emphasizes more the fact that the experts themselves must dispose of more developed and advanced organization of body-schema than their subjects, which is soon going to appear as substantial not only for understanding of what should be treated, but for knowing how and the treatment itself.

One of the most classic lessons in the education of doctors and health professionals is that they should notice the (especially bodily) behaviour of patients "from the moment they walk in the door". They are supposed to observe how they take off their shoes, hang up their coat, what attitude they adopt when they talk about their problems, etc. Their point is that this observation should significantly help them with the diagnosis. However, they usually not further clarify how to proceed from these observations to a diagnosis. Experienced professionals claim that after hundreds of cases this ability develops "as if by itself", which from the position of this work could be understood as a confession that it does not consist in improving causal inference from objectively observable parameters. From the positions of this thesis, on the contrary, this ability does not emerge by itself, but is gradually built and refined by applying bodily empathy,

by incorporating into the bodies of others in a way that is unthinkable and therefore inexplicable from scientific positions. This discrepancy between the official doctrine and the naturally occurring procedure (for bodily empathy is not only a specific characteristic of these experts, but a natural capability of all living bodies) forces body-oriented experts to various strategies. Either they stick with instilled scientific exactitude and thus stumble upon the infinity of the network of causes and effects of the objective parameters of their subjects' bodies, or they lean towards some of the many alternatives or even esoteric directions and thereby earn the label of charlatans, or they pretend that their abilities lie in their scientific exactitude, although they actually rely to various extent on their developed bodily empathy.

This schizophrenic moment roots from the discrepancy and incoherence between theory and practice in the body-oriented disciplines education. Although, as was presented in introduction, it is not possible to make any general statements about how the body-oriented experts are educated, it is obvious, that mechanistic physiology and evidence-based approach are, if not only, then at least mainly, programmatic frame of their theoretical knowledge. The practical part, as teaching of various techniques, methods, skills, etc., is even more difficult to judge in general, but it certainly is accompanied by a scientific language which, as has been demonstrated, rather obscures the natural capability of bodily empathy and does not allow for its thematization. Nevertheless, it is equally certain that during that process this faculty is being developed – the refinement of vision and touch to be able to distinguish nuances in the bodily expressions, which correlate with the subjective difficulties more than measurable deviations from universal norms. Hence, one of the most important consequences of phenomenological notion of the body is, that in the educational process the bodily empathy should be brought out of the shadows of objectification of the body and positively thematized and emphasized as a capability to unfold.

First half of the key question of this thesis was answered through explaining how to take bodily empathy into account in practice. Now all that remains to be answered is the question *how it is possible to transform the other's body*, grasped by body empathy, whether for the purpose of improving performance in a sport or on health grounds. In the first part, the term bodily dialogue was already mentioned, but so far without greater explanation and specification. Although it occasionally appears in contemporary literature (e.g., Engelsrud & Rosberg 2021, Kersting et al. 2023), it is usually without a philosophical anchoring and again without an entitlement to the greater ontological depth that the phenomenological notion implies. Phenomenological concept of bodily dialogue consists, as well as the concept of bodily empathy, in relying on the fact that the body-oriented experts are themselves embodied and that their experience of the world is primarily and originally corporeal: their body must participate in the encounter with their subjects. Of course, that the possibilities of body dialogue differ from discipline to discipline and that in many cases the only option is to approach the body as an assemblage of tissues, which must be mechanically reshaped or a certain volume of substances must be brought into or out of it. But it shouldn't be like that programmatically in all cases. The body should be, after all, in which are both its notions exceptionally in agreement, more or less on its own able to cope with various challenges, whether sports or health ones. The phenomenological notion, however, suggests that when this capability fails, if possible, it is the bodily dialogue which should be employed at first that should guide the other's body to better performance or health.

It has been already strongly postulated in the first part, that “[o]nly if the sharing and transmission of experience takes place at the level of bodily intentionality and not at levels derived from it, it is possible to guide other's bodily habits in their natural complexity and malleability, to develop and rearrange the body-schema directly, not merely through its representations”. Therefore, the experts' bodies should, as much as possible, be a direct guides

in the encounters – their more developed and healthy bodily intentionalities should guide, develop, improve, refine, adjust or correct the less developed and less healthy intentionalities of the subjects of their treatment. The term guiding is chosen very judiciously, for it intends to express that it is neither about directive leadership, nor about leaving the other “in the lurch”, but that it consists in a sensitive dialogic process in which one guides the other just to the extent that is needed to the gradual improvement of the intended movement or posture. This principle actually applies for any learning process: the degree and style of support must be sensitively chosen so that the other understands. In the case of body-oriented disciplines it is “only” the other’s body that understands and therefore it must be the expert’s body that guides. As much as possible, it is advisable for this guidance to take place through touch (targeted pull, resistance), for, as already described above in the section on Husserl, touch is in an essential sense the primary element of corporeality. Expert must take up the behaviour of the subject’s body as expressive of its bodily intention, which is lacking something with respect to the given bodily task. And, inversely, the expert must act so as to make the subject’s intentionality take up the trainer’s intention, already expressing an optimal grasp of the situation.

However, also a guidance by a demonstration, when the expert’s body becomes a model, could be very beneficial for the subject – it only relies much more on the subjects’ bodily empathy, or respectively, on their ability to suppress the tendency to analyse an expert’s demonstration of posture or movement mechanistically. Although verbal instructions were found to be secondary or even misleading above, given that verbal communication is a natural part of human interaction, it is not appropriate to claim that it would be beneficial to somehow suppress it unnaturally. In fact, when the chosen vocabulary is not too technical, mechanistic, analytical and scientific but more figurative, metaphorical, or even poetic, it certainly can help arouse the subject's own bodily intentionality to find the desirable change within its own bodily capacities. Nevertheless, following the phenomenological notion of the body, the emphasis should be

placed primarily on mutual touch and secondarily on bodily demonstrations, and within such interventions, the developing of sensitive dialogic guidance of subject's bodily intentionality by expert's bodily intentionality should be thematized as the desired framework of the procedure.

CONCLUSIONS

In the first part, this thesis offered an interpretation of the phenomenological notion of the body, intended to be accessible, comprehensible and graspable for body-oriented disciplines, but without losing ontological depth. This resulted, on the one hand, into higher demands on the reader, especially for complete non-philosophers, and on the other hand, into a considerably critical and radical thesis – critical of the presumptive current notion of the body, and radical in relation to the suggested changes. However, if phenomenology is not to dissolve into empty rhetoric, it must not be too compromising; on the contrary, it must necessarily defend its strong positions even though they are difficult to understand and their consequences are far-reaching.

This demand is also projected in the structure of the first part in the way, that it was necessary to dedicate enough space to thoroughly clarify the inconsistency of the scientific (as well as commonsensical) notion of the body. To achieve this, as the easiest entry, I chose the opening question *whether one's own body is an object* comparable to other objects in the world. As this question has a relatively long tradition, the answer was first sought in the *Meditations* of René Descartes, who is also generally (and simplistically) considered to be the originator of the body-mind dichotomy in modern thought. It was probably his intention to define a sharp borderline between two distinct substances (as he really did in the Second Meditation) in order to set the ground for "deductively 'explanatory' world-science, a 'nomological' science, a science *ordine geometrico*", but thanks to his intellectual honesty, he later (in the Sixth Meditation) got into difficulties when he had to admit that *the body as experienced really does not behave like other objects in many ways*. Despite the alibi loop through which he superimposed the former conclusions on later doubts, these doubts remained and inspired his followers. One of them was Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, who revealed Descartes' loop and developed the idea of *exceptionalities by which one's own body in experience differs from other*

experienced objects. This led him to the discovery of the experiencing body (*Leib*), which he situated on the side of the subject. However, although he made several fundamental philosophical steps to overcome Cartesianism, the body-mind dichotomy persisted, because he retained the material body (*Körper*) with the same ontological weight as the experienced body. It was Maurice Merleau-Ponty who made the revolutionary step of superseding the body-as-a-subject with the body-as-an-object. The rest of the first half of the first part of the thesis was dedicated to his answer to the question of the objectivity of one's own body. It entirely aimed at clarifying the brief answer that *one's own body cannot be an object, because it is by which there are objects*. Unlike his predecessors he interprets the exceptionalities of one's own body's permanence, sensation and movement no more as mere exceptionalities, but as an indication of a fundamental change in understanding not only of one's own body, but also of the perception of objects.

The way in which the basic misleading presupposition in the perception of the world arises was described in the Interlude and was summarized by Merleau-Ponty's quote: "[o]ur perception ends in objects, and *the object, once constituted, appears as the reason for all the experiences of it* that we have had or that we could have". Respectively, the real mistake consists only in the fact that with such preset perception, one's own body, which is in fact its source, must be necessarily included among other objects. And it is precisely this inconsistency that is the fundamental precondition of the scientific notion of the world.

As a second way of showing the unsustainability of the current notion of the body, Merleau-Ponty's double critique was presented from within two philosophical traditions that are compensating each other's inconsistencies, although in fact they are contradictory and therefore incompatible – namely, mechanistic physiology and classical psychology. Within mechanistic physiology he points out some attributes in relation to elementary stimuli (differentiation, organization, anticipation, articulation, understanding, grasping), that are inexplicable through

a determination of one variable by another, but only through their practical sense. So, it seems as if the consciousness of the body, which is on the one hand considered as the result of mechanical relations between material parts of the objective body, on the other hand pervades the body as its attribute. This inconsistency is nevertheless the basis of classical psychology, which reduces the experience of one's own body into mere representations objectifiable from the position of the impersonal disembodied spectator.

As a counterweight to the critical account, the rest of the first part of the thesis introduced some positive phenomenological concepts that might be useful for the practice of body-oriented disciplines, namely body-schema, bodily intentionality, bodily habit, bodily empathy and bodily dialogue. Body-schema expresses the idea that the body is experienced as a basic unity, whose parts are integrated according to their practical value, organized towards a certain task, of which it is concurrently the background, a standard of measure. Bodily intentionality expresses that the consciousness is not originally "I think that" but "I can" – objects of the world exist for us because they first exist for our body as achievable, graspable, manipulable, walkable, etc. The original manner of reaching of the world is through the body. Bodily habit is an element of bodily intentionality - it is a bodily grasping of a certain bodily significance. With a few examples of habits, the aptness of the concept of body-schema was demonstrated by illustrating its dynamics, as well as the concept of bodily intentionality by showing that their acquisition could be understood neither as establishing a conditioned reflex, nor as creating a conscious plan. Bodily empathy is a natural capability of immediate pre-reflective identification with the other's body, which is hardly explicable scientifically, but unequivocally consequent from previous phenomenological discoveries, especially from the claim that it is the body that understands what the situation asks for. As well as the fact that objects of the world exist for us only because they first exist for our body, the other's body is originally understandable for us because we spontaneously and naturally tend to inhabit our own body. Bodily dialogue

expresses that the most immediate and thus fruitful way of developing, improving, correcting the other's body-schema, bodily intentionality and bodily habits is by sharing the bodily experience through touch, or at least through demonstration. It suggests that there exist more original, immediate and natural ways of affecting the other's body than that based on the scientific notion of the body.

Secondly, this thesis proposed how the phenomenological notion of the body should transform the practice of body-oriented disciplines. Before doing so, it was nevertheless necessary to deal with the existing phenomenological (or at least declaratory phenomenological) literature with similarly practical ambitions. However, since it predominantly consists of so-called "phenomenological research", which is not in line with the presented phenomenological concept of the body, this literature was not taken into account in the following. However, it was still necessary to discuss it in order to expose which philosophical negligence precisely makes phenomenology lose its credibility.

To emphasize the need for a change in the practice of body-oriented disciplines, the phenomenological critique of mechanistic physiology and classical psychology was then demonstrated with practical examples. First, the inapplicability of so-called "evidence-based" approach was illustrated. Objective measurements and standardization as well as statistical procedures applied to them was shown as not very relevant in relation to the subjective difficulties of subjects of treatment, and moreover as largely fruitless for therapy or training. Classical psychology also proved to be similarly inapplicable to the body in practice. It manifests itself in the belief that the best way to influence the other's body is to direct their attention to their bodily experience. As demonstrated by a few practical examples, it would be always insufficient, or even counterproductive, to approach the body as an instrument controllable by the subject's consciousness, for the original manner of reaching the world is immediately the bodily one.

The proposal to implement the concepts of body-schema and bodily intentionality into practice consists in turning the body-oriented experts' attention from the objective machine-like body to the body as intentional subject differentiating and coordinating its parts, adapting and varying its postures and movements according to a successful fulfilment of an intended practical task. Instead of pushing the other's body into one universal norm, the multiplicity of ways of performance is valued as positive. Moreover, assessing the optimality of the bodily response as integration or disintegration of bodily intentionality in practice emphasizes the question of *how* the bodily habit is performed rather than *whether* the subject is capable of it. In relation to the presented phenomenological notion of bodily habit, it was necessary to clarify in more detail what it implies for practice. For the emphasis on the meaningful core of the habit could suggest that the only way to acquire it is to try to perform it again and again as a whole in its complexity and right in the situation in which it is required. It was nevertheless explained that habits do not necessarily lose the orientation towards the practical goal even when cut out of the complex bodily action or from natural circumstances. The concepts of bodily empathy and bodily dialogue were found as already naturally and spontaneously occurring in practice, although usually unknowingly or even unacknowledged for its controversy against the established scientific approach to the body. Therefore, their implementation into practice consists "only" in the rehabilitation of these natural capabilities and their positive thematization in education of body-oriented disciplines. The best way for a body-oriented expert to understand the issues of the other's body is to identify with their body immediately through gradually developed bodily empathy. The best way to help them with their issues is to guide their less developed and integrated bodily intentionality in a dialogic process through touch or demonstrations of the expert's more developed and integrated bodily intentionality – which is again a capability that should be purposefully improved.

Given the scope of this thesis, it is of course impossible to live up to the ambitions it has raised. Since it is primarily a philosophical work, it emphasises the consistency of the argumentation, which is why its main strength is the presumed irrefutability of its conclusions. It is therefore possible to doubt the applicability of these conclusions for practice, but they cannot be thrown off the table as unjustified. Their applicability should therefore be the justified subject of extensive discussions in the body-oriented disciplines, as well as discussions about unsustainability of current notion of the body and the ways of treatment of other's body that follow from it. Although this thesis is considerably critical and radical, it is nevertheless necessary to point out again at the end, that the suggested change does not consist in the replacement of one notion by another or the rejection of all scientific knowledge, but only in the rigorous definition of competences.

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