

CHARLES UNIVERSITY IN PRAGUE, FACULTY OF ARTS
INSTITUTE OF PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES

THE HEALTHY AND THE SICK BODY: THE HERMENEUTICAL METHOD OF THE EARLY MERLEAU-PONTY

JAN PUC

SUMMARY

The paper explores the transformation of phenomenological inquiry which took place in the early Merleau-Ponty, and shows what role the lived human body plays in it. The position of Merleau-Ponty not only brings new items of knowledge on the *functioning* of human body but it also shows what are the starting points of different types of investigations of the body. In an effort to grasp the particular *activity* of body, Merleau-Ponty suspends the presumption of atomic data, which does not explain the emergence of consciousness of the object perceived. At the same time, he denies the philosophy of consciousness, which is not able to conceptually discern the human body from other objects in the world. Merleau-Ponty's main objection against Husserl's conception of phenomenology consists in the principal opacity of the human body. The activity of the lived body in perceiving and projecting life space are not given to the inquiring consciousness as an object of consciousness, and so every investigation of corporeity is in danger of distorting its subject by applying its own categories. Merleau-Ponty does not try to evade this danger by invoking the certainty of mathematics, as the natural sciences do, or by reducing the object to its meaning for consciousness, as Husserl suggests. In this paper, I shall show a new model of understanding hidden beneath the acceptance of the opacity of the human body for consciousness, and a new way of phenomenological inquiry in which the *difference* between the healthy and the sick body plays the central role.

Key words: hermeneutics, phenomenology, difference, understanding, pathology, evidence, consciousness

INTRODUCTION

By taking into account an area of psychopathological disorders of behaviour, Maurice Merleau-Ponty opened a new field of phenomena for phenomenological research which remained out of the focus of his phenomenological forerunners. An encounter with somebody who disturbs our notion of normality is an occasion to re-think what normal and

pathological actually means, and what is the hidden logic beneath them. But this logic is definitely not evident, and psychopathology remains a place of infinite conflict of interpretations.

As Merleau-Ponty wrote in the preface to his book *Phénoménologie de la perception*, the phenomenological reduction, as introduced by Husserl, cannot be accomplished, i.e. a philosopher reducing the world to its meaningfulness cannot achieve a common and solid soil for his utterances in the sense-giving consciousness. A well-known thesis of the *Phénoménologie de la perception* claims that we are not able to reduce ourselves to a consciousness because we are incarnated beings in an irreducible sense. This statement does not simply mean that Merleau-Ponty accepts the body as an inevitable evil, as a necessary vehicle of consciousness, which would rather postpone the problem of their relation than solve it, but he rather claims that the body is in itself something opaque; and due to this opacity it resists the idea of the ultimate layer of evidence and transparency present in all phenomena which should be achieved by Husserlian reduction.

The intention of this paper is to show how the distance from which consciousness looks upon bodily functioning, and the difference between pathological and normal behaviour, allow us to re-think our concept of understanding. I interpret the new method, which may be elaborated from Merleau-Ponty's extensive descriptions of bodily movement and bodily spatial orientation, as a movement of the difference between the normal and the pathological. Thus a pathological bodily movement gives rise to a conceptual movement, which may be an answer of phenomenology facing a new kind of phenomena.

Inadequacy between Consciousness and Experience

Throughout the whole book of *Phénoménologie de la perception* Merleau-Ponty develops a continuous polemic against two well-established philosophical positions concerning the analysis of human experience, which he calls empiricism and intellectualism. I would like to outline this criticism in order to grasp Merleau-Ponty's basic conception of the philosophical approach to experience.

The term empiricism stands for a thesis which explains experience by reducing it to its elements. In this manner, a mental anomaly, whose symptom is a disturbance in the visual field of a patient, is explained as a simple loss of certain atomic sense data, no matter whether these atoms are interpreted as of a mental or physical nature. No matter whether empiricism is further elaborated in a position claiming that the atomic data of consciousness are connected by associations, or in a position reducing all life phenomena to physical processes, the essential ground remains: There is no activity of a subject which would give sense to these data and which would make it possible to pass from the third-person description to the first-person description. For example, when analyzing the sense perception I may refine its description to a level of particles falling onto the retina of my eye, but any nerve excitation does not explain the *consciousness of* the object perceived. A hypothesis of a causal connection between body and mind – i.e. the particles fall into the eyes, the excitation is transmitted into the brain, which communicates with the mind – leads not only into the problem of where exactly the connection of physical and non-physical is to be found, but also leaves without any explanation the fact that one stimulus evokes different reactions in different people, such that it is impossible to trace back the laws of such

causality. (Merleau-Ponty, 2008, 30, 254) Thus it seems that a subject who is more than a *tabula rasa* must be taken into account. But its proper definition is a matter of another controversy, the one between Merleau-Ponty and so-called intellectualism.

There are several positions of the reflexive philosophy summed up under the title of intellectualism that are to be ascribed above all to Immanuel Kant and Edmund Husserl. (Cf. Kant, 1974, A64/B89 – A130/B169; Husserl, 1976, § 85, 191–196)¹ Since even for Merleau-Ponty philosophy is a matter of reflection, i.e. a critical *return* to experience, the whole problem may be articulated as a question of the correctly performed and understood reflection: How is the reflected to be achieved without changing the reflected by the reflexive analysis? In other words, the reflection is an instrument which does not let things to appear unproblematically as they are or as they were, but it opens them in a manner specific for the reflection, not necessarily for the reflected. A problem sketched like this demands at first a critique of hitherto reflexive philosophy and then an unfolding of a proper method which will better serve its task.

What is so problematic in the reflection that we can not use it as a reliable instrument of analysis? Above all, the reflection is an instrument of the intellect, which is why its outcomes are also commensurate to the intellect, no matter what the object of reflection may be. The outcomes are not governed just by the object of analysis, but they are also an expression of the method which has led to their achievement. “The intellectualist reflection thematizes the object [...] and it leads it to the concept,” says Merleau-Ponty, which is to be read in a strong sense (Merleau-Ponty, 2008, 263). The experience is not only demonstrated, described and fixated by means of concepts, because such a proceeding is applied to a certain extent also by Merleau-Ponty himself. The objection aims at the presuppositions of the reflection in general. The cognition is a movement with an exactly given goal: to show clear and distinct concepts, to lead its objects to exact and stable knowledge even in the case in which the investigated area is full of inexactness, darkness and motion. The issue of the proper character of the object of perception is thus overturned into the question *what is to be presupposed for an object in order for it to be thought?* But the essential problem remains: Why should the object be so thematized that it may “be thought”? Why should the conditions of possibility be so inquired that they are “led to the concept”? Here, two aspects are to be distinguished: (a) On the one hand, the reflexive analysis is swiftly changed into an investigation of conditions inside the subject which are necessary for an object to be thought, and so it begins to operate with concepts of the subject and the object without justifying them; (b) on the other hand, a general difference between an object before and after it is analyzed is neglected, and so any possible productive power of reflection is ignored. The first objection concerns hidden presuppositions which make up a conceptual framework of reflexive philosophy, and the second aims at the more general problem of whether it is possible to do philosophy as a pure description.

Conceptual pairs such as subjects/object, consciousness/thing, form/matter, act/data are just such generally comprehensible presuppositions, which can be used in philosophy without the necessity to justify their choice. How is the reflection formed by these notions?

¹ Merleau-Ponty’s criticism aims at profound presuppositions of the philosophy of consciousness, yet it is difficult to point to an exact location in one of Kant’s or Husserl’s books where these presuppositions are clearly stated. The references offered here represent suggestions as to what best matches such a criticism.

This can be shown with the example of the notion of object. The notion of object is at first ambivalently comprehensible – an object is something which stands alone, apart from other things, what is numerically one or what my concern is concentrated on, what attracts my attention or what I handle without any particular attention, what is my well-known instrument. But this natural ambiguity, thanks to which a word can be used in different situations, makes it possible that one meaning can be transmitted into another. Thus, where one primary concrete meaning of the word “object” is our concern, there is a danger that we might confuse it with other meanings. In the case under consideration, the primary meaning which is transmitted into others is an “object” as object of scientific investigation and an “object” as object of consciousness. Both notions can be summed up into an “object” as object of cognition and intellect. In case the object of our investigation is the body, sensual perception or movement, Merleau-Ponty shows just how much this meaning, which is linked with the rationalist tradition of thinking, is misleading. An object of a bodily intentionality or an object of sense perception are not given in the way of an object of the intellect, i.e. in a thematic consciousness, which poses their objects ahead of itself in order to cognize them. And it is the illusion of reflection that foists on us its own way of openness to the world as the only way of relating to reality.

A similar effect follows from the use of the notions of form and matter in the sense of a priori and a posteriori principles of perception if they are defined “too cleanly” as passing matter deprived of all formal aspects and unchangeable form deprived of all change and materiality, i.e. in case the analysis is conducted by the idea of separated form and matter, instead of searching the meaning of both notions which is suitable to a given object.

This preliminary consideration can be summed up into the conclusion that although thinking can proceed only by using notions and categories and only by posing objects ahead of it as objects, it may also acknowledge the possible inadequacy of such a method towards the object studied. The problem is that the thinking can not proceed otherwise. This is the meaning of Merleau-Ponty’s thesis that the lived body remains, in its forming of our experience essentially opaque for the cognizing consciousness. However, it does not mean that the lived body remains totally out of the reach of our knowledge. On the contrary, in Merleau-Ponty’s thinking, there is a constant conceptual figure of searching of the original state of our bodily experience – *l’état naissant de l’expérience* (Merleau-Ponty, 2008, 265) – where all notions of reflection are still in an unfolded state, and from where they are re-defined according to the method through which one approaches to the experience. Pathological movements or, in general, pathological behaviour, are the key to opening the original state of the experience and showing thus the hidden activities of our body.

Pathology and Normality

The chapter *The Spatiality of One’s own Body and Motility* (Merleau-Ponty, 2008, 114 ff.) serves well for gaining the methodical procedure employed by Merleau-Ponty for his analysis of experience. Here, the case of World War I. veteran Schneider is discussed, whose brain was damaged by shrapnel, causing a dysfunction of some of his basic organic abilities.

What does Schneider suffer from? At first glance, he is not capable of certain movements having his eyes shut. A closer investigation shows that the damage concerns the

coordination of movements that he should carry out at the doctor's bidding, but that do not relate to any common life situation. For example, he is not able to stretch and bend a finger without a purpose. In the same way, he is neither able to describe the position of his limbs in space with his eyes shut, nor show the place where he was touched by the doctor's wooden ruler. On the other hand, there is no problem for him to kill a mosquito that stung him at the very same spot, to light a lamp by a match with his eyes closed, or to blow his nose using the same movement that was demanded by the doctor without any success a short while ago. Besides this, the patient is able to carry out a requested movement in an indirect way, for example, when asked to show the place he was touched, he can determine it at least roughly with the aid of several helping movements.

It seems, Merleau-Ponty infers, that only the movements outside a vitally significant context of his situation pose a problem for the patient, but the movements firmly rooted in his everyday life are outside the scope of the malfunction. Following Kurt Goldstein (Goldstein, 1934), Merleau-Ponty calls the movements without any relation to life situations "abstract movements" and the movements related to everyday situations "concrete movements". To sum up Schneider's diagnosis, the war injury deprived him of the possibility of carrying out abstract movements.

Schneider's organism manifests a kind of adaptation to this situation, namely, with the aid of several helping movements he is able to solve given tasks. The absence of certain life functions provides an impulse for the substitution of these absent functions for the organism, and so Schneider is capable of determining the place he was touched on his body "abstractly" without the need to be stung by a mosquito. This selective dysfunction described by psychiatrists leads Merleau-Ponty to the division of movements into abstract and concrete and to the organic reaction in the form of substitution of absent abilities. But there is still a question of whether there is a deeper subsoil of such behaviour.

There are other conceptual pairs corresponding to the division concrete–abstract movement, which can be gained from the basic situation by additional questioning: Why is one and the same spot on Schneider's body once accessible in a way that does not make it possible for Schneider to touch it, while at another time he is capable of reaching it immediately and without any problems? It seems that a spot may be present in two different ways. I relate to one spot differently with an intention to kill a mosquito than with an intention to fulfil a task without any practical significance. In the first case, the spot of a sting is integrated into vital relations of my body and its surroundings and I protect my body against a pain completely naturally. In the second case, the body is pulled out of these relations and the spot to be shown is only one indifferent place among many others, no matter whether on my body or anywhere else. This distinction constitutes a difference between the phenomenal and the objective body. The phenomenal body opens the world according to its vital functions, for example, a mosquito stands for danger, and so it projects the bodily life space; on the contrary, the objective body is integrated into an objective space whose parts can be pointed out by a finger. The phenomenal body opens a life space structured by vital significance and, here, practical relations gain their sense. For example, I am too far away to reach a door handle and so the handle gains a meaning of "too far" because it is out of the momentary possibilities of my body. On the contrary, my objective body is just a thing among things which bears certain qualities, for example, it is three metres away from a door handle in the same way as the handle is three meters away from a table.

Merleau-Ponty infers that the concrete movement, phenomenal body and space are founded in an integral attitude towards the world or in an integral intention, with which we open the world. He calls it the intention to grasp (*saisir*, *Greifen*). Abstract movements, objective body and objective space arise from the intention to know or to point (*montrer*, *Zeigen*). These two intentions represent two ways of human being-towards-the-world, two ways of openness and structuring of life activities.

The patient is not capable of determining the place he was touched on his body and accordingly he is not capable of a consciousness of this concrete part of his body; but he has no problems in carrying out practical concrete movements in a very efficient and well-coordinated manner. How is it possible that, in one case, the movement proceeds as if each single part of the body knows where the rest is to be found, but, in the other case, the patient is not able to create any consciousness of a part of his body? It is plain enough that in each case the body is present in a different way. The phenomenal body stays behind as a background or structuring power which lets arise concrete relations in its surroundings, without attracting attention to itself – on the contrary, if it gets into the centre of attention its unproblematic functioning is disturbed. The phenomenal body functions as a horizon of other objects and activities. The objective body, however, stays exactly in the centre of attention. When somebody touches me on my hand, the touch itself has the power to attract my attention and pull me out of another activity. The place on the body is thus moved from the horizon towards the centre, or, as Merleau-Ponty and Gestalt psychology put it, it becomes a figure. The objective body as a place in the objective space is constituted by the sum of figures without horizons. The conceptual pair horizon–figure, achieved in this way, is useful for the description of Schneider’s inability to objectify a place on the body. The vital relation to the body is not affected, and only the ability of Schneider’s body to attract attention is damaged – the ability to make figures out of horizons.

How exactly is the horizon functioning in the perception of a situation? Another of Schneider’s pathological abnormalities arises when he is solving a simple mathematical problem. A normal man, having passed a basic education, notices immediately that there is nothing to solve in the exercise “ $5 + 4 - 4$ ”. However, Schneider adds honestly the four and then subtracts it again, i.e. he really counts the fours one by one, as we would count for example “ $124 - 92 + 13$ ”. Schneider counts even when it is clear for others that there is another much easier solution available. At first glance, the symmetry of the numbers makes it evident that there is no need to count because the result is immediately evident. One would tend to say that it follows already from the bare meaning of its elements, if the case of Schneider did not show clearly that this meaning can be present in different ways. In the first case, the exercise is conceived as a unity whose two elements cancel one another out. In the second case, it is being successively gone through by the mind and counted. Schneider resembles a small child who learns to count and searches how the two elements can be linked in the easiest way. However, there is a profound difference between Schneider and a child: An understanding of the symmetry of numbers arises quickly in the perception of the child, in the spirit of economy of thinking, in order to save work. If such a symmetrical conceiving is present in the horizon, it renders nugatory any counting procedure and allows the mathematical exercise to emerge as trivially easy. In this example, it is plain enough that the horizons may be blended together or overlapped one by another and that, for a healthy man, it is possible to pass freely from one to another, that they are modifiable in time, and that they can be gained and lost.

Since the horizon influences the formation of the meaningfulness of reality, Merleau-Ponty can sum up his theory of meaning and re-define the concepts of form and matter on the ground of analyzed distinctions. The meaning of something is not a unit gained once and for all, which would reflect an unchangeable essence of things, but rather it depends on a metamorphosing power which can be gained or lost. A meaning itself can be a ground of other meanings or it can be overlapped by them. One may call these relations the form and matter of experience if these notions are not thought of as separated. The horizon is the *form* of experience, similarly as other already achieved meanings that participate in the meaningfulness of what is immediately perceived. The immediately perceived thing is a formed *matter*, although not purely passive.

Hitherto, time has not played a dominant role in the analysis, but now there is a need to recapitulate the development of Schneider's disease. We can try to determine the diagnosis more precisely. The illness began as a loss of certain visual contents because of the brain damage and, later on, the disturbances appeared as described above. It seems that the change of functioning or forming of experience is a specific reaction of the organism to this original damage, and that the absence of certain visual matter provoked a change of the a priori side of experience. Thus form and matter are in a peculiar relation of mutual conditionality and adjustment: Contents of experience are also forming, form is also exposed to contingency, and so it can be affected by an illness or an injury, but in a longer period.

Merleau-Ponty comes to his own theory of the a priori, which takes into account the power of disease to change the forms of experience. *The form, or the a priori principle of experience, is dragged into the world whose form it presents because the a posteriori principle is connected to the a priori in such a way that the a posteriori can transform it.* Merleau-Ponty calls the relation of development of both principles "concrete essence" (Merleau-Ponty, 2008, 158) which, in the case of the analyzed patient, equals the logic of the development of his disease.

Differential Concept of Understanding

When Merleau-Ponty speaks about the a priori conceived as a genealogy of experience, i.e. a movement of concrete essences, this proposition does not simply determine things as they are, nor is the proposition a simple uttering of being, but rather it carries within itself methodical specifications with the help of which it has been achieved. A description of forms, i.e. of the a priori truths, "amounts to nothing other than the *making* explicit of a fact [*explicitation d'un fait*] ... The a priori is the fact understood, made explicit, and followed through all the consequences of its latent logic. The a posteriori is the isolated and implicit fact" (Merleau-Ponty, 2008, 256). The a priori propositions are making explicit, understanding, interpreting and following of the logic of facts. They are neither an empty form waiting for contents, nor any other separable part of experience, but as concrete forms they are gained by an interpretation of facts of experience. In this specification of a priori, there is a reflexive act involved which turns back to the experience and searches for the logic in it. In other words, the original being is these facts of experience which can be divided reflexively into a priori and a posteriori parts. But these parts do not have the status of real things, they are only abstract components. Merleau-Ponty thus realizes clearly his own activity as a reflecting philosopher who actively approaches the matter under explanation.

Such a concept of cognition leads to the acknowledgement of other explanations of experience. When analyzing the pathological behaviour Merleau-Ponty does not consider his own interpretation to be the ultimate solution of the given problem, for there may be more theories consistent with the given facts: “No rigorously exclusive interpretation is possible in psychology as in physics” (Merleau-Ponty, 2008, 149). On the strictly inductive plane, it is possible to create different theories which explain the phenomena in a worse or better way without any possibility of displacing them definitely when being supplemented continuously by auxiliary hypotheses. The ambivalent soil of psychopathology is fertile enough for a large range of interpreters, from exorcists to psychoanalysts. However, even in such a situation it is possible to make up a self-relation, to reflect one’s own activity and hand over more than one of many interpretations that bears a conflict with other interpretations. If philosophy is an interpretation of experience, is it possible to reach such depth that it changes itself into pure description, as Husserl suggests? Is there such an Archimedean point which makes it possible to unfold a universally valid system of truth?

Here, Merleau-Ponty offers an answer which rejects the idea of an evident core of experience and yet underlines the inherent rationality of our being-in-the-world. This rationality is elaborated on the ground of the intuition that the pathological experience can be used as guidance for illuminating normal functions of our body. Merleau-Ponty’s theory of dynamic a priori enables us to conceive the transformation of disease in the course of time. Schneider’s condition is not just a mere lack of certain organic functions but a reaction to this original damage. In case of the abstract movement, it is obvious how the patient tries to help himself to change the horizon into the figure by helping movements and so to substitute missing functions according to his preserved possibilities. If it is so, the preserved reaction keeps in itself an *index* to the lacking function, a reference to the healthy functioning, of which the patient is deprived. Moreover, Schneider’s helping movements do not have a simple equivalent in the healthy organism – they are a substitute, a reaction to damage, not a deeper layer of normal movements. Such an approach presupposes a certain idea of the logic of the disease, i.e. an idea concerning the damaged functions and substituting processes. Thus the patient is investigated from two points of view: (a) his autonomy, the logic of his organism as different from the healthy one is acknowledged; (b) the pathological functioning contains an index to health, which relates it back to the person of the doctor. This reference bears relation to the situations in which the difference of the pathological behaviour appears. To acquire or strengthen this reference, the patient is put under the experiments that are used by Merleau-Ponty to illuminate the normal functions of the organic body. *It is the relation of pathology to normality that shows the logic of the disease and the relation of normality to pathology that shows an otherwise unapparent healthy functioning of the body.* The question where the logic of disease should be explained from, if the health is explained from this logic, is not answered by Merleau-Ponty by a reference to another area, but by a *regressive relation of the disease to the health*. The interpretation does not proceed linearly, trying to find a new plane of explanation, but it proceeds in a circle.

If we search for the criterion of a successful interpretation as if it should be a reference to an ultimate layer of experience from which something is to be explained, for example, the causality among facts of consciousness or the self-giveness of phenomena of consciousness, we miss another model of explanation in an effort to determine

unambiguously what is profoundly ambiguous. We might be misguided by the tendency to use the results of the natural sciences or Husserlian reflection as an instrument to overcome the ambiguity of our experience. Although the tendency to use clear and distinct notions inheres in all sciences, as well as in philosophy, the application of mathematics and the reduction of experience to its meaning for consciousness are not the only way to fulfil it. Merleau-Ponty shows the possibility of investigating experience by relating pathological behaviour to normal behaviour. *The understanding of our body is an unfolding of the difference between normality and pathology*. Defined in this way, we are not in an area of lucidity, which is required by the model of understanding that tries to explain everything from the evidence and its certainty. The lived body does not allow us to achieve any final and certain ground.

The described differential model of understanding depends on the tension between the normality and the pathology, between my body and sick behaviour. This tension is articulated in the basic twofold relatedness – it is necessary to acknowledge the autonomy of the other, to accept the otherness in the functioning of another organism, but at the same time to discern the index to normality inside the pathological functioning. My experience demands that I refrain from a mere transposition of the already known onto the unknown for me, to accept the autonomy of the other and to observe how this autonomy reacts in encounter with me. But the experience of otherness is not found only in the pathological behaviour of the organism, it is also contained in my own body. The whole inquiry concerning this difference is undertaken in order to exhibit the functions of the healthy organism that make up the basic structure of experience, which lies outside of the scope of our consciousness. The confrontation, as described, shows them because it shows them as *different*.

CONCLUSION

Merleau-Ponty was inspired by Husserl's idea that all our theories and notions should be gained from experience itself, and not from the ready-made explanations of natural sciences, as empiricism does, nor from the distinctions of Cartesian and post-Cartesian philosophy, as intellectualism suggests. But, for Husserl, experience itself is analysable into meaning-giving activity of consciousness reached by the transcendental reduction, which is therefore the proper method of philosophy. Merleau-Ponty rejects this idea of the evident meaning of experience, but by this step he is deprived of the prominent point of view which would let him achieve all the insights that are open for a Husserlian philosopher.

When reflecting, we are already always one step behind the reflected experience. Therefore, we must ask the other way round: Why cannot we reduce our experience and thus also ourselves to a mere consciousness? The consciousness is not our original being-in-the-world, the original fullness of our living, but rather a reflexive attitude acquired by switching to the sphere of pure appearance. Originally, we are not creatures watching the appearances of things in the world, but creatures inside the world, in the same order as things. And it is so thanks to our bodies. According to Merleau-Ponty, there is a basic distance between my body and my consciousness. My body stays "on the periphery of my being", it opens the world by means I am not clearly aware of. Thus, there is always a gap

between the activities of consciousness and the activities of my body, like sense perception or opening my vital-practical space by the phenomenal body.

To sum up: experience cannot be reduced to its meaning for consciousness because the body is the condition of experience and that is not accessible to consciousness in a *direct* way. This condition of experience is revealed concretely by mutual determination between the functions of the healthy and the sick body. The activity of my own body is disclosed if I compare it with a *differently* functioning body. Thus there are two elements, which are not only distant from each other, but which are also at a distance from the philosopher's reflexive consciousness, because neither the pathological behaviour nor my own body is an object about which I can achieve clear and distinct knowledge. (a) I am a bodily being, but the body works independently of my consciousness, and it is not given in a reflexive consciousness as it is itself. Therefore there is something in my experience that cannot be analyzed as it is. (b) The second difference makes it possible to infer concrete conclusions from the encounter with pathological behaviour. This difference is unfolded in a tension between the acknowledgement of the autonomy of the concrete logic or "concrete essence" of the disease, as described above, and a searching for the index that relates the pathology to the normality. Thus the second difference is an answer to the first inadequacy – the distance to one's own body is "overcome" by relating to the differently functioning body. Thus, in general, Merleau-Ponty offers a hermeneutic model in which the interpreter compares lived but obscure phenomena with the pathological privation of them, and so gains understanding of them both without the need to search for the last unshakeable basis of interpretation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Petr Kouba, Jakub Čapek and participants of *Movement – the Art of Life V* conference for useful comments and remarks and Jim Parry for helping with the text.

Tato studie vznikla za podpory Grantové agentury České republiky v rámci projektu č. P401/10/1164 *Filosofické výzkumy tělesnosti: transdisciplinární perspektivy* a za podpory Grantové agentury Univerzity Karlovy v rámci projektu č. 75910 *Fenomenologické teorie tělesnosti a vtěleného subjektu*.

This paper was supported by the Czech Science Foundation in the frame of the project no. P401/10/1164 *Philosophical Investigations of Body Experiences: Transdisciplinary Perspectives*; and by the Charles University Grant Agency in the frame of the project no. 75910 *Phenomenological Theories of Corporeity and Incarnate Subject*.

REFERENCES

- GOLDSTEIN, K. (1934). *Aufbau des Organismus*. Haag: Nijhoff.
HUSSERL, E. (1976). *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*, Erstes Buch. Haag: Nijhoff.
KANT, I. (1974). *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
MERLEAU-PONTY, M. (2008). *Phénoménologie de la perception*, Saint-Amand: Gallimard; In this text I follow Collin Smith's translation: MERLEAU-PONTY, M. (1962). *Phenomenology of Perception*. London: Routledge.

ZDRAVÉ A NEMOCNÉ TĚLO: HERMENEUTICKÁ METODA RANÉHO MERLEAU-PONTYHO

JAN PUC

SOUHRN

Článek se zabývá proměnou metody fenomenologického zkoumání, ke které došlo u raného Merleau-Pontyho, a ukazuje, jakou roli v ní hraje živé lidské tělo. Pozice Merleau-Pontyho nepřináší pouze nové poznatky o *fungování* lidského těla, ale také kriticky ukazuje, jaká jsou východiska různých typů jeho zkoumání. Ve snaze zachytit vlastní *aktivitu* těla vylučuje Merleau-Ponty předpoklad atomických dat, který nevysvětluje vznik vědomí předmětu vnímání. Zároveň se obrací proti filosofii vědomí, která nedokáže pojmově odlišit lidské tělo od ostatních předmětů ve světě. Merleau-Pontyho zásadní námitka, kterou se vymezuje proti Husserlově pojetí fenomenologie, spočívá na principiální neprůhlednosti lidského těla. Aktivita živého těla při vnímání a při rozvrhování prostoru se zkoumajícímu vědomí nedává jako předmět vědomí, a tak je každé zkoumání tělesnosti v nebezpečí, že svůj předmět zkreslí aplikací vlastních kategorií. Merleau-Ponty se nesnaží vyhnout tomuto nebezpečí tím, že by se dovolával jistoty, ať už aplikací matematiky na předmět zkoumání, jak to činí věda, nebo redukcí předmětu na jeho význam pro vědomí, jak navrhuje Husserl. V předložené interpretaci ukazují, jak se za uznáním neprůhlednosti těla pro vědomí skrývá nový model rozumění a nový způsob fenomenologického bádání, ve kterém hraje zásadní úlohu *diference* mezi zdravým a nemocným tělem.

Klíčová slova: hermeneutika, fenomenologie, diference, rozumění, patologie, evidence, vědomí

Mgr. Jan Puc
jan.puc@seznam.cz