

Phenomenology of living body

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Abstract: The interest in the redefinition of man is a special feature of contemporary philosophy, as it coincided with the development of many sciences such as psychology and physiology ... and the discovery of the phenomenological approach to philosophy, which focuses primarily on the study of phenomena in their actual presence. This has led many philosophers to adopt this approach and to present their bold ideas on the most complex issues, including the issue of the realization of the philosophy that has plagued philosophy since its inception, and the questions related to the nature and source of knowledge, which have divided philosophy into two directions: material and spiritual. Merleau-Ponty has a new conception of this, which the greatest philosophers have violated through history, so that it gives value and precedence to the body at the expense of the soul.

Keywords: Merleau-Ponty, Phenomenology, Living Body, Body schema, motor intentionality.

ملخص: يعد الاهتمام بإعادة تعريف الإنسان ميزة خاصة بالفلسفة المعاصرة، كونه تزامن مع تطور الكثير من العلوم مثل علم النفس والفزيولوجيا... واكتشاف المنهج الفينومينولوجي في الفلسفة، الذي يركز بالدرجة الأولى على بحث الظواهر في حضورها الفعلي. هذا ما دفع بالعديد من الفلاسفة إلى تبني هذا المنهج وعرض تصوراتهم الجريئة في أكثر المسائل تعقيدا ومنها مبحث المعرفة، التي لازمت الفلسفة منذ نشأتها وغيرها الأسئلة المرتبطة بطبيعة المعرفة ومصدرها، والتي شطرت الفلسفة إلى نزعتين: مادية وروحية. والفيلسوف الفرنسي موريس مرلو-بونتي له تصور جديد حول هذا الموضوع خالف به تصورات أعظم الفلاسفة عبر التاريخ، بحيث أنه يعطي قيمة وأسبقية للجسد على حساب الروح. الكلمات المفتاحية: مرلو-بونتي، فينومينولوجيا، جسد حي، الرسمية الجسدية، قصدية حركية.

1-Introduction and problematique of the study :

It is not an exaggeration to say that the philosophical concept of Maurice MERLEAU-PONTY (1908-1961) is the concept of "body", although other concepts are found very much in his texts such as the concepts of perception and meaning. ... Etc. This denotes that his philosophy tends to be a theory of knowledge like that of Edmond Husserl in his early works and intermediaries such as the article of Logos (Philosophy as a rigorous science) and Ideas¹, even in philosophy First and

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the Cartesian Meditations. This may also seem fair with respect to MERLEAU-PONTY, when one examines the structures of Behavioral Structure and Phenomenology of Perception, and the same can be to a lesser degree when one examines subsequent works. No doubt, such a judgment makes the researcher in the MERLEAU-PONTY philosophy, centered on the close detection of this traditional / modern concept, which constitutes the core of his philosophy, since it is introduced in a totally contradictory way. it represented the dawn of Western history. This in itself has prompted the researcher to know the conceptual charge that this philosopher has entrusted to him. And from there one asks the following question: how can the body be a foundation of a phenomenological philosophy?

2- The importance of the study: This survey aims to bring the reader closer to the conceptions coined by Phenomenology within the philosophical study, as well as the possibility of looking forward to the unexpected results, due to the interest in the issue of methods within the human and social sciences, and its positive impact on the value of this knowledge as well. Simply put, it makes the reader closer to the modern definition due to the attention of this thought to the physical dimension on the same level, which was given by the traditional philosophies to the spirit or the mind.

3- The body between the concept and the history in occidental civilization:

It is clear that any discussion of the body as a philosophical concept necessarily refers to the presentation of certain determinations related to the history of the word, its origins and functions. The word body, is derived from the Latin verb corpus, which refers to the frame, which in turn refers to everything that can preserve the basic functions of the body (Jacqueline Russe, 2000, p08). It also refers to "a part of individual kinetic existence", as well as to the corpse. In Greek, it comes from the verb soma, somato, some

3-1-The body in the Greeks philosophy:

The body, as a philosophical concept, refers to this distinction of the Greeks when they considered it as one of the elements of the human being. The conception of man was formerly referred to in two aspects as "matter" and "spirit", or as an image and essence. Matter is the body as a material object to form our consciousness; it is stable, independent and present in space. (Andre Lalande, 2001: 231). Face to body, there is the spirit as the truth of all life and all spirit. On the other hand, there is a hierarchical value between mind and body. Therefore, the mind was more to consider than the body because the body was accused of caprices, instincts

and corruptions. Socrates and Plato mentioned it in their philosophy, and for its importance perhaps, Plato, in "Apology", presented it as Socrates' last testament, in which he asked the Athenians to avoid satisfying their bodily desires, and running after wealth. Instead, they should be more concerned with their soul and seek its virtues (Platon, 2009, 36). Curiously, Plato - through his theory of knowledge - makes the truth live in essences, and ideas, which have almost the same characteristics of the soul namely that they are neither material nor intangible, so away from illusion, change and relativity. On this basis, he formulated the theory of forms, which means the constant truth "eidos" behind the felt phenomena that constantly change.

3-2-The body in Christianity: With the advent of Christianity, the body acquired a kind of sanctification, as it became the Holy Spirit through the idea of incarnation - God incarnated and became a human - on which the Christian religion is based (Michela Marzano, 2012, p. 550). However, the purpose of this Incarnation is mainly to rid the human body of sin. "In Christianity, God revealed himself to be love (gave his life), and as a result, life became synonymous to love and love synonymous to life. In another word, a rejection of God. The body has no purpose in itself, but in love, and the result is that the desires, emotions and concerns of the body, deliver the body to itself, and thus to its own corruption, and not to life" (Michela Marzano, 2012, p. 551). Hence, the body had two **fates**; it is a good if it is carried through the Christian faith towards sublimity by love to attain self-salvation. On the other hand, it is corrupt if committed to sin by disobedience, which is first and foremost a challenge and aversion from God. (Michela Marzano, 2012, p. 550).

3-3- The body in modern era: In modern era, Descartes supported this dual view, which raises the value of the body when thinking of its association with God. It is a "machine made by the hand of God, it was well organized, and it has in itself the movements beyond the magnificence of all that can be made by human hands." (René DESCARTES, 1637, p.33). On the other hand, he degrades the value of the body when he considers it a box of the spirit it contains. Moreover, he defines a man as being above all a spirit or thought because the soul is "more distinct than the body, and easy to recognize from the body." (René DESCARTES, 1647, p23). DESCARTES did not think of the body except from the concept of the body that is influenced by the canonical thought, which was established by the Greek language and the stylistic philosophy of his time. What makes St Paul the origin of the distinction between the

concepts of body (Soma) and corpse (Sarx), since the living body is an animal or living body, and like any living body, this body is mortal but the soul remains

(Michela Marzano, 2012, p. 552).

3-4- In contemporary philosophy:

In the self-philosophy of Descartes entitled *Kujito* (I think therefore I am) overshadowed most of the body-related views, until Frederick Nietzsche (1844-1900) came, the revolutionary philosopher, who overturned all the standards and values of Western thought. Unlike his predecessors, he especially denied the Cartesians and the extremists, their mockery of the body by saying: "It is their duty not to change Methods of their doctrines, but they have to surrender their bodies until dumbness take all over their tongues ...The child's says: I am a body and a soul. Why do not these people speak like children? As for the person who is aware of and recognizes himself, would say: I am nothing but a body, and the spirit is only a word that has been launched to designate part of this body." (Frederick Nietzsche, 1938 p. 25). Nietzsche, imbued with realism and his archeological style, reveals the fallacies on which Western metaphysics was founded through, and the negation of the body in favor of the mind from Nietzsche's point of view is one of the great errors that metaphysics has established and must be combated.

4-The body with regard to Merleau-Ponty: Merleau- Ponty's view to the body has been distinctive from the very first moment (Maurice MERLEAU-PONTY, 2010, p47). Unlike the image that was given by his predecessors concerning the body, being a statue or a machine (René Descartes, 1648), p04) and at best a substance and an extension, body, and vessel to the spirit, or a subject, MERLEAU-PONTY has distinguished it as an "alive body" (Maurice MERLEAU-PONTY, 1976, p184), combining nature and idea. This new feature qualifies it to gain efficacy in the process of cognition. How can the soul -says MERLEAU-PONTY- exists if it does not have any means of expression, or rather, any means of verification? It, then, becomes nothing and ceases to be a spirit. A body that loses its meaning ceases to be a living body and then falls to the level of the physio-chemical mass; it will not become meaningless until it becomes dead. (Maurice MERLEAU-PONTY, 1976, p269). MERLEAU-PONTY does not imagine any existence of one without the other; therefore, neither the soul can appear in a void, nor the body without the spirit as it would be a mass with no value or life. Thus, the body represents an original meaning, within the physical system, within the system of life and within the human system. Therefore, material

(substance), life and spirit are neither three systems for truth nor three forms of existence, but they are three tag schemes (charts) or three forms of unity. (Maurice MERLEAU-PONTY, 1976, p260).

Based on this central idea about the human, which stands between the spiritual and the physical aspects, the philosophy of MERLEAU-PONTY can be understood. In the conflict between idealistic philosophies and realistic ones, we can find the thread that will allow us to extend his phenomenological ideas that would explain his philosophy, in which perception represents the central question of the possibility and awareness of existence, and of life.

4-1-One's own body: MERLEAU-PONTY has engaged intensively since his book *Phenomenology of Perception* to clarify the existential difference between what he calls the body-object, which is completely different from the body-subject; since it is the field where sense is established with the world. One of the very clear differences between the subject-body and the one's own body is that the latter is constantly aware; it is something that never leaves me, which makes it nothing like the rest of the things in the world. Its permanent presence makes it non-discoverable and it always comes to me from the same angle. Its permanence is not a permanence in the world but it is a permanence on my side. (Maurice MERLEAU-PONTY, 1945, p142). To say that it is permanently by my side, permanently here for me, is to say that it is not in front of me, I cannot keep it under my eyes, it permanently stays on the marge of all my perceptions, it is with me. (Maurice MERLEAU-PONTY, 1945, p143).

4-2- Body schema: Although the body is composed of a certain number of organs and thus of a certain number of functions, which can suggest an abundance and a dispersion in exchange for the soul or the soul. spirit, which refers to cohesion and unity. MERLEAU-PONTY finds this multiplicity only as a form of unity under what he calls "corporeal schema" (Danilo SARETTA VERISSIMO, 2012, p500). MERLEAU-PONTY hoped, through the concept of body schema, to create a particular phenomenology, in which the body would play the role of the Husserlian superego, whose supremacy would considerably hinder the ontological link, the one that Husserl sought in his later writings. through the concept of returning to the world of life (*Lebenswelt*). MERLEAU-PONTY, and through his introduction of the concept of corporeal schema, also wanted to do without the mechanism of phenomenological reduction which emphasized its impossibility in the phenomenology of perception. On the other hand, we see him focused on another mechanism of the phenomenological approach, namely "intentionality". So, how does

MERLEAU-PONTY use intentionality as part of its phenomenological philosophy? And before answering this question, it is crucial to first to discuss what kind of intentionality we are talking about in relation to Husserl's intentionality..

4-3- Husserlian Intentionality: the essence of Husserl's intentionality lies in the fact that it is a "movement of consciousness that surpasses itself to objectivity" (Yusuf ibn Ahmad, 2008, 279). Thus, every state of consciousness or state of life of consciousness in general is an awareness of something. Husserl emphasized two things: "On the one hand, acts of conscience: external perception, memories, value judgment, spontaneously carried out ..., on the other hand, meditation (acts of thought) which reveal these spontaneous acts, which are also considered cognitive acts of a new kind: In the spontaneous perception, we perceive the house, not the as of perception of the house, and by meditation only, we move to this act itself and to its perceptive destination, thus to the house (Edmund Husserl, 1996, p66) According to this distinction in this intentionality, Husserl stipulates two positions: the first is specific to the natural experience, which places us on the ground of the world which is always given as existence, the second is attached to the transcendental phenomenological experience, which requires the activation of phenomenological mechanism of methodology e called "universal epoche" in order to fundamentally suspend the conviction of the existence or non-existence of the world. The world in the phenomenological position is not an existence but a simple phenomenon. (Edmund Husserl, 1996, p64) Consequently, transcendental meditation is divided into two domains: self-oriented phenomenology and subject-oriented phenomenology (Edmund Husserl, 1996, p65). which are actually two fields of intentionality since the transcendental turn of ideas 1, and which therefore bear two concepts and two opposite fundamental functions: noesis (noesis) and noema (noema); which designate respectively: acts of consciousness which establish the unity of the consciousness, and the thing as sense to be constituted by the consciousness. (Emmanuel Housset, 2000, p261).

Intentionality to MERLEAU-PONTY: For MERLEAU-PONTY, the impossibility of completing the response and the functional correlation between the response and the intentionality, and the difficulty of determining the primacy of one over the other, made it not reassuring to put the intent as formulated by Husserl. MERLEAU-PONTY emphasized this correlation and ambiguity in the relationship between reduction and intentionality from the very first pages of Phenomenology of Perception when he recalled the foundational value of intentionality in

phenomenology and the impossibility of understanding it without reduction. (Maurice MERLEAU-PONTY, 1945, p23), which is also impossible to accomplish. The primary and ultimate task of response is to attain the super-ego, which is the pure ego (the phenomenological rest) clean up all prejudices. As he is immune to all prejudices and ready to make sense of every existence, so to evaluate the world. After phenomenological response, intentionality becomes able to both evaluate and give meanings. However, is intentionality -which is in principle conscious of something- able to reach the farthest limits of rooting through the response, which is essentially a disabling of consciousness of what is an intentionality?

It seems that such embarrassments is what led MERLEAU-PONTY to dive in for an independent and deeper Intentionality; intentionality that carries the meaning of existence to itself, (Maurice MERLEAU-PONTY, 1945, p160). Once there is consciousness, and for there to be a consciousness, there must be something conscious of consciousness, something intentional. Then, if there is a kind of existence called consciousness, there must be only one intentional texture. And when it ceases to be defined from the verb to mean, it will fall into the class of things, the thing that is unable to be known; a thing which rests in a total ignorance on itself and on the world, which is therefore not a true "me" (essence), thus "for-itself" and which has only a spatio-temporal singularity existence in itself. "(Maurice MERLEAU-PONTY, 1945, p159).

5- Living Body: A more reliable explanation can be found in the concept of living body, distinguishing my body from the rest of the other bodies as a body connected to life. On this basis the body possesses a spirit; The body to which I am attached by an instantaneous experience, for example: the way in which my hand leans by touching something by anticipating the excitors and by drawing a shape that I will recognize. According to Merleau-Ponty, the understanding of the function of the living body can only be accomplished when it is done and in the state in which I am a body moving towards the world, (Maurice MERLEAU-PONTY , 1945). p108). This explains the intertwining of psychological motivations and physical coincidences, for there exists in the living body no movement subordinate to pure chance in the face of a psychological intentionality, nor any psychological act; its origin and final destiny do not attribute to a physiological cause. This has nothing to do with the unjustified meeting of two reasons, or a collision between the system of causes and the system of objectives, but by an intangible transformation, an organic process leading to human behavior; instinctive act

transformed into feeling or vice versa, a human act that falls asleep and continues clandestinely in the form of a reflex. (Maurice MERLEAU-PONTY, 1945, p122).

Within the living body, MERLEAU-PONTY distinguishes the functions proper to consciousness and the functions controlled by the body; the function most proper to the body is the ability to move, but the fact remains that consciousness is what represents this ability and organizes it. MERLEAU-PONTY relies on the analysis of diseases related to the kinesthetic disorder (also called sensory processing disorder) to demonstrate the existence of a motor intentionality (Maurice MERLEAU-PONTY, 1945, 146). without which the mental commands remain mere dead letters, sometimes the patient thinks of the ideal form of the movement, sometimes he throws his body in a blind attempt. On the other hand, for a person in good health, each movement is always both a movement and a consciousness of movement (Maurice MERLEAU-PONTY, 1945, 146). And if he abstains without doubt in this distinction, it is to reveal a specific and global intentionality, which would be the unification of the bodily movement and the thought of the conscience, because he believes that each movement - for a healthy person to a depth or an interior, and that the movement and its depth are "moments of a single unit". (Maurice MERLEAU-PONTY, 1945, p147).

Conclusion: This may seem simple by spelling out these sentences that try to explain or describe the methodology of realization of this process, described by MERLEAU-PONTY as "magical" (Maurice MERLEAU PONTY, 1945, p180). In which he finds that it is impossible to produce unless we cease to distinguish the body as an organism in itself and consciousness as existence for itself (Maurice MERLEAUPONTY, 1945, p180) . To understand man - as well as to enunciate Alphonse de Waelhens "far from the dualism of oneself and of oneself, because if it were a pure consciousness, then man would cease to be in the world. because the thing is with other things, it is not superior there as long as it has no horizon, meanwhile, the world is not in things, but in the horizon of things and pure consciousness is nothing but a representative view of everything that comes before it without being involved "(Maurice MERLEAU-PONTY, 1976, pV).

This magical act is revealed in the living body, which has the capacity to perceive meaning not through the representation of things, but through the process of opening that reveals the entanglement of psychological motivations and physical coincidences. . The body as MERLEAU-PONTY understands it is not this machine subordinated to the authority of the mind, nor an

organism devoid of all efficiency, but rather an expression of the unity of man between what is matter (substance) and what is spirit. It would not be surprising that the philosophy of MERLEAU-PONTY is characterized by the philosophy of the body. Thanks to the description of the body and the identification of its functions, it turned out that phenomenology did not make Husserl's dream come true because he wanted it to be an exact science. In other words, a microscopic science since the phenomenological description was no longer able to determine the boundaries to the naked eye between what belongs to the mind and what belongs to the body, only by the speculation of an event seen whose nature is unknown. MERLEAU-PONTY calls this the inimitable (miraculous) act and that is what makes motive (dynamic) intentionality the foundation of this philosophy, since it is up to it to unite consciousness and body in one process.

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