

**BODY SCHEMA(TISM) AND THE LOGOS OF LIFE:
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL RECONSIDERATION**

**ESQUEMA(TISMO) CORPORAL Y EL LOGOS DE LA VIDA:
UNA RECONSIDERACIÓN FENOMENOLÓGICA**

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Abstract: Body image and body schema are two phenomenological concepts which generated a revival of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's philosophical heritage. In the present text I intend to inquire on the relation between these two concepts and that of Logos of life, another challenging point in the Merleau-Pontyan thought.

In order to delineate the correlation between body schema, body image and my understanding of a logic of life, I will first explore how what I term "schematism of the body" is connected to an inherent model of life and living and how this schematism is reflected in the body image. I will turn further to the relation between body and world and highlight how the life of the body defines itself as meaningful in the context of both the surrounding world (Umwelt) and the life-world (Lebenswelt). In a third part of my analysis I shall point out how the relation between body schematism and motile intentionality redefines corporeal intentionality. I shall conclude by noting the role of the Logos of life, through which corporeity, in its position of meaning project, is instituted as body schematism.

Key Words: Body Schema, Body Image, Logos of the World, Logos of Life, Intentionality.

Resumen: Los conceptos fenomenológicos de imagen corporal y esquema corporal han dado lugar a un resurgimiento del legado filosófico de Maurice Merleau-Ponty. En este texto pretendo investigar la relación entre estos dos conceptos y el de Logos de la vida, otro elemento estimulante del pensamiento Merleau-Pontiano.

Con el fin de trazar la correlación entre esquema corporal, imagen corporal y mi interpretación de la lógica de la vida, exploraré en primer lugar cómo el término "esquematismo del cuerpo" está conectado con un modelo inherente de vida y de vivir, y cómo este esquematismo se refleja en la imagen corporal. Consideraré después la relación entre cuerpo y mundo y remarcaré cómo la vida del cuerpo se define como significativa en el contexto tanto del mundo circundante (Umwelt) como del mundo de la vida (Lebenswelt). En la tercera parte de mi análisis señalaré cómo la relación entre esquematismo corporal e intencionalidad motora redefine la intencionalidad corporal. Concluiré destacando el papel del Logos de la vida, a través del cual la corporeidad, en su posición de proyecto significativo, se instituye como esquematismo corporal.

Palabras clave: Esquema corporal, imagen corporal, logos del mundo, logos de la vida, intencionalidad.

Current discussions on the concepts of body schema and body image (Gallagher, 2005; Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008; Sheets-Johnstone 2009a) raise once again the legacy of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological heritage. These concepts are at the core of a paradigmatic shift within the Merleau-Pontyan tradition in phenomenology. Reorienting the phenomenological analysis of consciousness to an analysis of embodiment, Merleau-Ponty consecrates a perspective in which the body as a phenomenological project does not represent a moment of constitution anymore but rather a moment of "institution" (Séglard, 1995: 14). Such a reversal challenges the status of the subject and the resources through which at a more global level subjectivity is defined.

I intend to highlight the relation between the concepts of body schema and life, and show their necessity in the definition of a new form of Logos. The Merleau-Pontyan opus offers a non-systematic understanding of life and of its relation to Logos, his development of this topic being realized mostly in his lectures. This constant interest in the resources which ground meaning involved his taking into account this concept. For Merleau-Ponty, Logos is correlated to body, to the world and also to language (Merleau-Ponty: 1945). Yet this concept characterizes as well nature and life. Given these many aspects, the discussion of the body schematism, of its correlation to the body image as well as their roles in formulating a Logos of life becomes an important issue for the phenomenology of embodiment.

The impact of life in its actualization as Logos, is even more obvious if we consider the ontological status of the body. A body which exists is first and foremost a living body¹ (*Leib*) and a *corps vivant*, a living body; that is why a discussion of meaning cannot avoid life. What is also important to be noted in a phenomenological analysis is that life does not characterize only the living body, but also consciousness. Therefore discussing life becomes a condition *sine qua non* in any context in which meaning is involved. Merleau-Ponty develops gradually a phenomenology of embodiment and the paradigmatic turn he

¹ The translation of the Husserlian terms *Leib* in English and French was that of "own body" and "corps propre". However, I think that *Leib* shows primordially a deep connection to life and living before being a matter of "ownership", even if in Husserl's analysis the issue at stake remains the individuation of the subjective sphere in its quality of *own* sphere.

institutes has essential consequences for the significance that consciousness holds, at least in the Husserlian perspective. His definition of consciousness in terms of "consciousness of life" (*conscience de la vie*) (Merleau-Ponty 1942: 199), represents a first moment in which the question of meaning is revised. It also draws attention to how the schematism of living emerges as meaningful living. Even though the topic of life is of obvious interest in the context of an analysis of consciousness, in what follows I intend to highlight how life is imposed as a phenomenological principle at the level of the body, under a form which I shall denote "*body schematism*".

The notions of body schema and body image account for the properties of modelling and remodelling through which embodied life manifests itself as life. An inquiry into the body schematism and the body image highlights a form of regularity which attests to the body as a living schematism, and such a property may be recognizable as a form of Logos. These two concepts are also significant because they exemplify a duplicity which is omnipresent in the Merleau-Pontyan writings, for instance, the duplicity of visibility and invisibility, immanence and transcendence, subject and the world.

In order to delineate the correlation between body schema, body image and my understanding of a logic of life, I will first explore how the schematism of the body is correlated to an inherent model of life and living and how this schematism is reflected in the body image. I shall do so by examining these concepts in the work of Merleau-Ponty and that of Shaun Gallagher and Dan Zahavi. Second, I will turn to the relation between body and world and stress how the life of the body defines itself as meaningful in the context of both the surrounding world (*Umwelt*) and the life-world (*Lebenswelt*). In a third part of my analysis I shall point out how the new body schematism that appears in motile intentionality allows a new understanding of the corporeal intentionality. I shall conclude by underlining the indispensability of acknowledging a Logos of life, through which corporeity, in its position of meaning *project*, is instituted as body schematism.

1. A FIRST PHENOMENOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF THE BODY SCHEMA

The concept of “body schema” has given rise to many terminological debates². In the phenomenological field, a first discussion was carried out by Maurice Merleau-Ponty. Merleau-Ponty’s analysis of this concept had in particular a methodological purpose. His intention, like that of Husserl, was, first, to detach himself from naturalizing psychological tendencies. Second, he tried to develop a phenomenology which overcame the dichotomy between body and consciousness. In order to achieve such a goal, he proposed a return to embodiment and to the relation of the body to the world. In such a context, the definition of the body schema for phenomenological purposes is particularly important.

In a first attempt in which Merleau-Ponty tries to define the body schema, he qualifies it as “a resumé of our bodily experience, which is capable of making a comment and giving a signification to the interoceptivity and the proprioceptivity of the moment” (Merleau-Ponty, 1945: 114). The body schema is connected to motility, to our ability to inscribe ourself in the world as spatializing instances, as instances that mark and create spatiality. We integrate space as traced space, as a meaningful environment. Further, the body schema is characterized as a principle that gives coherence to the body, as “a body drawing” which is supported by a “unique law” (Merleau-Ponty, 1945: 115) and further as “a global awareness of [my] posture in the intersensitive world, a form in the sense of the *Gestaltpsychologie*” (Merleau-Ponty, 1945: 116). The body schema in this Merleau-Pontyan understanding has the function of replacing consciousness with the body and of establishing the body as the primary principle in our encounter with the world.

Although it is sometimes mis-understood in a static and pointillist perspective³, the body schematism is in constant transformation. The body schema has a dual function, and this recalls the Husserlian paradox of subjectivity. In Husserl’s view, one is not only a subject in the world but also an object in the world (Husserl, 1954: 182). In the same spirit, following Merleau-Ponty’s

² Shaun Gallagher’s extensive study *How the Body Shapes the Mind* is an important resource for the conceptual differences that marked the history of this concept.

³ Maxine Sheets-Johnstone is one of the defenders of an anti-pointillist conception of the body, proposing an understanding of our bodily existence in terms of a kinetic melody (Sheets-Johnstone, 2006; Sheets-Johnstone 2009a; Sheets-Johnstone, 2009b).

analysis, it is obvious that the body schema does not ensure only an individuation of subjectivity as such but also a connection to the world, an opposition to other forms of living, which could be understood as "objectification". This fundamental connection among different forms of existence is described by Merleau-Ponty in terms of "flesh" (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). In some of his later writings, the same bond is delineated in terms of "nature" (Merleau-Ponty, 1995). I consider that the double quality of the body schematism as being both a border for forms of existence and a connection among beings, is reflected in the idea of regularity of life, namely in Logos.

The body schema is also the element that recalls the constitution of the own body (*Leib/ corps propre*). In the Husserlian perspective the constitution of the own body is conceived in relation to sensations, and more specifically to kinaesthetic sensations (Husserl, 1952: §36). Merleau-Ponty rediscusses this form of sensations, which he names "double sensations", and he introduces an essential element in his description of the own body: movement and "motor intentionality" (Merleau-Ponty, 1945: 128, 160-161, 183-184, 444). Motility recalls the presence of animation, and therefore of life. Movement is not only characteristic of the human subject but is also the characteristic of any form of life, starting with the division of cells up to other complex forms of living organisms. Motility reverses the problem of intentionality insofar as the position of subjective consciousness is considered. Its role is to show that the phenomenology of embodiment and the body schematism are essentially a phenomenology of life grounded in a principle of animation⁴.

The body schema, more than being merely connected to movement has a dynamic quality in the Merleau-Pontyan view and it institutes the body both as living body (*corps vivant*) and own body (*corps propre*). In addition, the body schema is a first moment that covers on the one hand any realization of meaning and on the other the connection between any form meaning that the body as embodied presence assimilates, and other forms revealed by other living bodies. Connected to an awareness of our situatedness as being-in-the-world, the body schema is a first relation to space. More fundamentally even: it represents one of the principles according to which life gains depth and manifests

⁴ For an analysis of animation and of its phenomenological implications see Maxine Sheets-Johnstone's (2009a).

itself in interconnection with a worldly principle. The Merleau-Pontyan approach stresses in particular this intertwining (*Verflechtung*) between the body schema and the world and reorients the phenomenological inquiry towards a connective and integrative approach. The body is not only a guarantee of my being a subject; it is the guarantee of my belonging to a world and to other bodies. Given its articulation as body schema, the body is from the beginning intercorporeal, and it makes us from the beginning “intersubjectively open” (Zahavi in Thompson, 2001: 15).

The discussion of the body schema allows a new understanding of the logic of life because it is connected to motility and it entails a regularity through which the schematism of the body emerges within a larger movement which is that of life. This regularity refers to the organism as living according to certain laws and principles which are constantly changing, an idea that recalls once more the principle of animation⁵. The existence of such laws should not be however understood in naturalistic terms. They represent a configuration between the body and the world, as well as between the body and other bodies. In such a context, the body schema becomes the very field through which such laws emerge. An inquiry on its potential highlights it as a condition for any intentional manifestation and for the minimal coherence of our being in the world. The body schema is that background without which we cannot define ourselves as subjects; it is the pre-awareness that renders the body to the world and the world to the body (Merleau-Ponty, 1945: 117).

2. BODY SCHEMA REVISED

In a more recent definition developed by Shaun Gallagher (Gallagher 2005; Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008) the understanding of the body schema is restated. Gallagher criticizes the fact that the body schema was frequently associated with or subsumed under that of body image, and he shows that this was prone to much confusion (Gallagher, 2005: 17-39). He makes a clear distinction between these two terms, which is capital to understand the levels that characterize the Logos of life. In his view, the body schema is characterized as

⁵ For a detailed analysis of the principle of animation and its relation to the phenomenology of the body, see Maxine Sheets-Johnstone (Ibid.)

"1) the close-to-automatic system of processes that constantly regulates posture and movement to serve intentional action and 2) our pre-reflective and non-objectifying body-awareness" (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008: 146). Such an understanding supports a first hypothesis that the primary schematism, displayed by the body, enacts a basic correlation, an idea also affirmed by the Merleau-Pontyan approach. This refers to "the connection of an idea and an existence which are indiscernible, [to] the contingent arrangement by which materials begin to have meaning in our presence, intelligibility in the nascent state" (Merleau-Ponty, 1942: 223).

The concept of the body image consists according to Gallagher in "a complex set of intentional states and dispositions – perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes – in which the intentional object is one own's body. This involves a form of reflexive or self-referential intentionality" (Gallagher, 2005: 25). An essential difference between the body schema and the body image is the intentional factor. In Gallagher's opinion, the body schema eludes intentionality. It is "a system of sensory-motor capacities that function without awareness or the necessity of monitoring" (Gallagher, 2005: 24), while the body image maintains this characteristic. "Although a body schema is not in itself a form of consciousness, or in any way a cognitive operation, it can enter into and support (or in some cases undermine) intentional activity, including cognition" (Gallagher, 2005: 26). The body schema is a body background; it represents that potentiality which contributes to the acknowledgement of the body as living body.

What is crucial to retain from Gallagher's definitions of this concept is that the body schema precedes intentionality and connects the human body to a more general corporeality which is that of nature as world. It guarantees the primary moment of phenomenality, insofar as this phenomenality is understood as corporeal life. For, as Renaud Barabars argues,

if corporeal life transcends itself in an existential significance that goes beyond natural needs, it is also true that this significance, whatever it may be, is rooted in corporeal life. In other words, it is life itself that transcends its natural or biological dimension and involves the whole realm of meaning: [...] we must be alive and have sense organs to experience anything and, finally, to perceive a world (2005: 210-211).

An inquiry into the body schema helps to understand the projection of life as meaningful project. Moreover, the correlation between body schema and body image reproduces the problematic of embodiment as a logic of life, in the sense that while the body schema is the way in which our existence is manifest, the body image partly translates the body schema through intentional manifestations. For the purpose of my demonstration, I intend only to focus on the basic description of the body image.

The distinction between body schema and body image is central for the discussion of a logic of life because it is correlated with a form of doubleness that characterizes the conceptual background in the Merleau-Pontyan work. The regularity through which the body becomes manifest has to be understood as an intertwining between these two levels of schematism and image. The body schematism is often diffuse. It is a "tacit contribution" (Gallagher, 2005: 26; Gallagher and Zahavi, 2008: 146), while the body image presents the manifested body; it only shows that which is "originated, i.e. the personal self" (Merleau-Ponty, 1945: 451). A body image is a moment through which the body becomes present, whereas the schematic aspect represents the corporeal moment through which "the body effaces itself in its projects" (Gallagher, 2005: 38; Leder, 1990). This feature of diffuseness recalls both the lively tissue within which the body appears as body schema and the participation of the body within nature. Thus the body schematism shows a double regularity that transpires at two different levels of Logos: a Logos of life and a Logos of nature. For Merleau-Ponty, these two regularities are equivalent. As he puts it "there is nature wherever there is a life that has a meaning, but where, however, there is not thought. [...] Nature is what it has a meaning, without this meaning being posited by thought: it is the autoproduction of meaning" (Merleau-Ponty, [1956-1957] 1995: 19).

The meaning displayed as nature appears in corporeality as meaning displayed in the living being; the analysis of the body schematism allows the joining of these two aspects of nature and living, into one. Meaning is traceable as living and through projects of living in the "body schematism". As Renaud Barabaras argues "this meaning of being emerges from a study of living beings, to such an extent that nature originally means life, or in other words that there is an original sense of nature that accounts for the possibility of life" (2005: 223). These moments of transition that make the understanding of living in-

separable from the understanding of nature and therefore of the structure of meaning in general, are encompassed in the correlation between body schema and body image. The idea that the "body schema is always something in excess of that of which I can be conscious" (Gallagher, 2005: 38) and that is defined as a regularity, entails a first inscription of the body in the world and its dynamics as living body. Through its diffuseness, the body schematism asserts the opacity of nature and life.

A phenomenology that chooses the theme of corporeal schematism is necessarily a phenomenology of life and gains ontological implications. The interest in the body schema as the primordial moment of the regularity of consciousness and of intentionality, resituates both the Merleau-Pontyan understanding of this concept as well as its recent development. The body schema becomes that bridge that joins human existence to other forms of existence and contributes to the reorientation of phenomenological analysis towards a specific form of passivity: that of life and nature.

Nature and bodily being are sustained in their development by a diffuse form of meaning. As Merleau-Ponty argues, the body schematism becomes the reflection "of a being of the order of Logos and not of the 'pure thing'" (1995: 209). Through this primary moment of corporeity, the body schema ensures our resonance in the world and through the world. It affirms life as a constant transitivity, as an infinite correspondence through which the subjected body overcomes itself in order to assert a new form of schematism, that which Merleau-Ponty names *Ineinander*. The body schematism is simultaneously a connection to nature, and a connection to life, a connection between a form of life and other forms of life. Therefore the reality of the body schematism emerges in the tension between *Leib* and *Körper*, in the overlapping that these corporeal dimensions operate on each other.

3. THE LIVING BODY

Following the previously mentioned ideas, the phenomenological distinction established by Husserl between *Leib* and *Körper* (Husserl, 1950; Husserl, 1952) could correspond with the Merleau-Pontyan couplets of body schematism and life. For Husserl, *Leib* serves a particular purpose, namely to individuate the

egological sphere and to show the importance of corporeity in the more complex problematic of intentionality. *Leib* is therefore a privileged level, that includes *Körper*, but which promotes a principle of individuation – “an own body”. The idea of “ownness” prevails over that of living, the bodily quality serving a specific reduction that clarifies the status of the subjective sphere. Furthermore, what is essential for the Husserlian definition of the “own body” (*Leib*) are *kinaesthetic sensations*. For Husserl, a first individuation of corporeity as subjectivity is identified at this level (Husserl, 1952: §36-37). The idea of kinaesthetic sensations refers to the fact that when I experience an object, for instance when I touch a table, the object in question is doubly seized. On the one hand, I tactually feel the object in its exteriority; on the other the object imprints itself on me. I feel the sensations that result from the pressure I exert on the table. These kinaesthetic sensations are different from those sensations, which are defined by Husserl in terms of an “effect” (1952: §36) and which constitute the features of the things as such (1952: §18). This second type of sensation is called *aesthetic* by Husserl.

Kinaesthetic sensations are important in a discussion of the body schematism because they refer to a form of engagement of the body. They refer to the way in which the body is attuned to the world it experiences. They announce the quality of the body as *Leib* and it is this *Leiblichkeit* that allows a meaningful transition in the world. Being preoccupied by the status of intentional consciousness, Husserl often subsumed corporeity to a principle of transparency. This is also quite explicit in his analyses of intersubjectivity, in particular in his *Cartesian Meditations*, where *Leib* comes once more into question. Thus corporeity represents the field upon which Otherness is constituted through the process of appresentation and coupling (*Paarung*). Yet, here too, the body remains always an “own body”, an “*eigenheitlich reduziertes Leib*” (Husserl, 1950: §44).

It is only in the Merleau-Pontyan analysis that the reality of ownness is extended and leads in the end to the conceptualization of the body as foundation of all existence and finally to its understanding as “flesh” (Merleau-Ponty, 1964). *Leib* receives the meaning of “living body” even though still conceived as “*corps propre*”. Merleau-Ponty develops indirectly the idea of a “*corps vivant*”, since the essence of “*Leib*” is inseparable from “*Leben*”, just as the essence of the flesh is also life. In his analysis, there is a first resource in which the correlation between the body schematism and a Logos of life can be claimed. The

body is a milieu between the subjective sphere and the world. And yet before having this transition function, the body is an expression of life. It is as life that the body dissolves in the world and defines itself as opaque moment.

Merleau-Ponty reorients the phenomenological inquiry from a body which is a centre in itself, from a body which is a centre of perception and sensations and thus a guarantee of spatiality and intersubjectivity (Husserl, 1952: §41-42; 1950: §53-54) to a body which is connected to other bodies as forms of life. He goes thus beyond the idea of "own body-ness" and restates it in terms of a "living-ness". For, as Christopher Macann argues,

being a body means not merely being that very body which one is oneself, but also standing in relation to other bodies which also have the meaning of being bodies for themselves and, moreover, coming thereby to see oneself from the standpoint of the other as an embodied being for the other (1991: 102),

an other which may be extended to any other form of being.

An understanding of the body as living re-conceives the status of intentionality along with the status of corporeity in general. The Husserlian perspective in which consciousness is defined as a consciousness-of is replaced in a body focused approach by the *body-of* (*corps à*) (De Saint Aubert, 2005: 135). This change implies that any form of directedness is projected under another form of schematism than the schematism legitimated by consciousness. Embodiment has its own laws; similar to consciousness, it has a capacity of schematizing, including a "logological" characteristic. The analysis of the body schematism shows how the body portrays a double characteristic: a first moment in which the body legitimates itself as an instance of *Verleiblichung*, and a second moment in which the body remains a "*verkörpert*" project, in which it is connected to the brute fact of life and of nature. This double configuration could be associated with the distinction between the body schema and the body image, discussed by Gallagher. Yet, as already mentioned, the body schema has no intentional aspect in this approach.

I consider therefore that the re-evaluation of the Merleau-Pontyan project on body schematism and the return to the *fungierende Intentionalität*, which is a corporeal intentionality, restores corporeal schematism to its phenomenological importance. The *Körper* is constantly "*verleiblicht*"; it is overcome by an inner movement which sustains its quality of being lively (*lebendig*) and imbr-

cated in a net of life. In this sense, the body schematism affirms itself as a logic of living, as a logic of life and in such a movement through which life is asserted, it releases the body in the world. For if embodiment as "*Verleiblichung*" asserts life, it also creates a profound connection with the world and it underlies the ego's understanding of life-world. As an animated body, and thus as living body, the *Leib* overcomes the *Körper* and presents itself not as an object in the world, but "as means of communication with it" (Merleau-Ponty, 1945: 109). The interrogation of *Leib* becomes correlated to an inquiry on the status of the life-world, which is the matrix of meanings, and also of any form of intentionality. As a result, the double reality of the *Leib-Körper* and its import for the body schematism requires a consideration of the duality *Lebenswelt-Umwelt*, which I shall explore in what follows.

4. THE WORLDLY LOGOS AND THE LOGOS OF LIFE

An inquiry on a Logos of life and on its connection to the body schematism, the conceptual couple body schema-body image is useful because it underlines the *doublure* which the body presents in its relation to the world. According to Emmanuel Alloa, Merleau-Ponty's conception of logos remains equivocal (2008: 105). The types of Logos vary according to the questions that lie beneath Merleau-Ponty's terminological development. He postulates for instance a Logos of the perceptual world (1945: 490), a Logos correlated to the tacit cogito and in *Le visible et l'invisible* he mentions a particular conception of Logos, which he understands as a double Logos divided between a *logos endiathetos* (a latent logos) and a *logos prophorikos* (a logos which exteriorizes itself).

The couple *logos endiathetos* and *logos prophorikos* is also mentioned in Merleau-Ponty's lectures on nature ([1959-1960] 1995). The first is defined as "a logos of the natural world, an aesthetic logos" ([1959-1960] 1995: 274). It is diffuse and indispensable for any form of existence, and similarly to the body schema it remains most often tacit. Furthermore, being connected to an aesthetic dimension, it expresses itself as negativity. The second type of logos, the *logos prophorikos* which characterizes basically perception is complementary to the *logos endiathetos* and recalls a reversibility that qualifies any form of living and especially that primordial layer of living, which is the *Umwelt*. The *logos*

endiathetos and *logos prophorikos* play a particular role in the realization of the logos of life. They are on the one hand connected to life as a principle *per se*, and on the other they are indispensably related to the configurations of mundanity. That we are first and foremost living and animated beings is an idea that occurs both in Merleau-Ponty's as well as in Husserl's writings. However, what the Merleau-Pontyan perspective brings forth is that the Logos is correlated to living-ness (nature); it is in this sense that the Logos appears not only as a principle of perception, sensation or corporeality, but as an indispensable element that organizes life. The relation between Logos and life emerges more strongly in the Merleau-Pontyan texts when he discusses the structure of the *Umwelt* and of the *Lebenswelt* (life-world). Both these layers of mundanity maintain a specific relation to living and offer an occasion to consider the body as schematism and its interconnectedness to Logos. However, there are clear distinctions between these two life-mundane projects. In what follows, I shall point out some of their differences as well as their influence on the body schematism.

A return to *Umwelt* implies a return to non-distinctive moments of life. The *Umwelt* escapes thematization, although it remains intrinsic to any process in which corporeity institutes meaning. As Ted Toadvine puts it, "[...] the *Umwelt* itself cannot be reduced to subject or object; it is, instead, a kind of self-organization at the level of life" (2009: 88). Belonging to the *Umwelt*, and therefore to life in its primitive and brute aspect, the body confirms in addition another quality: that of being opaque. The *Umwelt* is a first moment that guarantees this opacity. In the Merleau-Pontyan phenomenological conception opacity is opposed to the transparency of consciousness. A first reversal that he postulates for the overcoming of transparency and for the return to opacity is embodiment as such. I believe that a phenomenology of living can deepen even more an inquiry on the status of opacity. A return to life, in its form of Logos, can challenge the regularity confirmed by consciousness and highlight a new principle that sustains any phenomenal possibility. In this sense, opacity is not negativity; on the contrary, it has a positive quality, in that it confirms an infinity of possible surroundings in which human life in its relatedness to other regimes of life is accomplished. One of the levels in which the opacity of lives emerges is that of the *Umwelt*.

The *Umwelt* also strongly related to the *logos endiathetos*, underlining that brute nature is already meaningful (Toadvine, 2009: 89). Life is guided by meaning even in its most basic forms for Merleau-Ponty. This characteristic becomes clear in the examination of the relation between life as Logos and *Umwelt*. Given its status of fusing multiple levels of meaning, the *Umwelt* is that constant resource through which any corporeal project appears as organized through a logic of life. It is only when the living body defines its actions within the *Umwelt*, that the *Umwelt* is transformed into a *Welt* ([1959-1960] 1995: 284; 1945: 144). The quality of a living body in its most schematic aspect is inseparable from the *Umwelt*; on the other hand when the living body surpasses the level of the *Umwelt*, it realizes what I would call a *significative leap*. Through this leap corporeity gains an institutive quality. Life in its connection to mundanity, undergoes as well a transposal – it does not appear as *logos endiathetos* anymore, but as *logos prothorikos*.

The body manifests a similar form of logic according to Merleau-Ponty. Such an imbrication and duality confirm that the living-ness of the body cannot be separated in a first perspective from the *Umwelt*.

The *Umwelt* is therefore not outside the body, and the body is not other than the *Umwelt* [...] the two terms must be understood as divergences to one another; [...]. The coupling with an *Umwelt* is, then, precisely what clarifies the profound correlation of the body and the world (Hansen, 2005: 252)

as well as the *Ineinander* operated by life.

Umwelt is also understood by Merleau-Ponty as *Offenheit* (VI: 266, 305) and as inseparable from the *Lebenswelt*. This is a second layer of mundanity from which the body as body schematism cannot be separated. The correlation *Lebenswelt-Umwelt* transpires also in the relation between body schema and body image. For, if the *Umwelt* is the moment where significations remain diffuse, the *Lebenswelt* is that world of life, where significations are actualized, even if they remain unthematized. And through their silence they also adhere to the *logos endiathetos* (Merleau-Ponty, 1964: 222; 224). The *Lebenswelt* is a realm of the body schematism that, in contrast to the *Umwelt*, receives an additional form of signification. The auxiliary meaning strata are actualized in what Merleau-Ponty defines as the “junction of *Physis* and *Logos* [...] [or in the junction of] *Physis-Logos-History*” (Merleau-Ponty, [1959-1960] 1995: 259).

This ternary combination of *Physis*, *Logos* and *History* leads the analysis on the status of the body schematism to a “regressive interrogation” (Husserl, 1956: 280), requalifying the principles of the genetic phenomenology and reinstating the principle of opacity. However, in the context of the correlation between *Lebenswelt* and *Umwelt*, opacity does not refer only to an exclusion of the “clarity” of rational/transcendental consciousness, or to a return to the originarity of mundaneness. It refers implicitly to a more basic conversion, which is that of life, of life as a grounding regularity for any form that mundanely exists. In such a context “to uncover a living dimension at the transcendental level, that is, a sense of life more basic than the difference between the transcendental and natural consciousness” (Barbaras, 2005: 207) becomes a task, the aim of which is to restore the schematic articulation of the body to basic principles of meaning.

The connection between body and *Weltlichkeit* is characterized by a double excess insofar as the body’s quality of *Leib* is concerned. As Mark B. N. Hansen claims,

on the one hand, there is an excess of the body’s potential in relation to its actuality (excess of the body over itself) and, on the other, an excess of the body in relation to being as cosmology (excess of being over the body). [...] the body manifests its potential (phenomenalizes itself) in the very act of preserving it as potential [...] that is, by moving out from itself toward the world; and correlatively, the world manifests itself [...] through actualization in the living body (2005: 254).

In this movement of constant surpassing, we see the belonging of the body qua *lebendig* to the *Lebenswelt* and the correlation between the body and *Umwelt*. At the level of the *Lebenswelt*, the excessiveness of corporeity manifests itself as an excessiveness of life schematism. The life-world is a retranscription of life in a symbolic configuration. It represents that milieu in which the *logos endiathetos* encounters the *logos prophorikos* and in which what is considered to be a regularity of life becomes an expression of being. As a world of life which transpires in a historical world and thus as a symbolic projection, the life-world is aesthesiological. This quality of *aisthèsis* refers also to corporeity.

The worldly-living regularity of the body, is consequently accompanied by an expressiveness that thematizes, an expressiveness grounded in an aesthesiological moment. By means of *aisthèsis* the body accomplishes its transfer in

the body image and projects itself as an imaginary. Thus the Logos of life transpires in this *aesthetic* transition, being further fulfilled as a constant “commerce” and as a reversibility that recalls “those sublimated structures, which are laterally designated” (Merleau-Ponty, [1956-1960] 1995: 291). The relation between *Lebenswelt* and *Umwelt* is defined as an interchange in this “commerce”, which is both a commerce of life, and a commerce of the flesh. According to Emmanuel de Saint Aubert, “any commerce is an extension of the ‘commerce of the body schemas’, which is rooted in a commerce of the flesh with itself [...] as if it were its own ground (*comme dans son propre fond*)” (2005: 115)⁶. The commerce in the body schematism in its relatedness to mundanity marks an *Überschuss* of being and not only of life. This process is reflected in a constant surpassing of the *Lebenswelt* by the *Umwelt*, and reciprocally of the *Umwelt* by the *Lebenswelt*. Their overlapping shows how the regularity of life transpires in a mundaneizing movement, in which erasure and actualization are phases of the same process.

The body schematism in its relation to *Lebenswelt*, surpasses the moment of the *Umwelt*, and becomes a “body-means or an occasion-body for the projection of a *Welt*” (Merleau-Ponty, [1959-1960] 1995: 284). The connection to *Lebenswelt* gives thus the possibility to redefine the nature of corporeality both in terms of an exchange between body schema(s) and body image(s), and in terms of a constant commerce of being. This commerce recalls the intersection of existence(s) in corporeal forms - the *Ineinander*. Being an endless movement of life and of modelling in life, “this original commerce is always new and though older than anything; it engages a reciprocity of precessions [...]. The commerce is therefore more than just a pure *Offenheit*, because it involves the reciprocity of a substantial exchange” (de Saint Aubert 2005: 114)⁷, which is that of life as body schematism.

The transition between *Umwelt* and *Lebenswelt* and that between body schema and body image is accomplished as intercorporeal exchange in the flesh. The inquiry on a Logos of life, expands in this context to an inquiry on flesh and on the world as containing all horizontal dimensions (Husserl, 1954: §37-§40). This Logos reveals itself in a moment of “projection-introjection that

⁶ My transl.

⁷ My transl.

confirms further the *Ineinander*" (Merleau-Ponty, [1956-1960] 1995: 281) and in the schematism of the body as flesh of the world.

The point at issue here is that the layers of mundaneity find a correspondence in the layers that define the body schematism and the body imag(ism). This is possible in virtue of the interconnection and co-conditioning in layers of life. Of import in this context is that a reflection on the realization of life as *Ineinander* leads to an understanding of life as anima-tion⁸, as expansion in which, the living body accomplishes itself as open schematism. The logic of life revealed in a display of corporeality in mundaneity, refracts itself in a logic of reversibility, affirming a constant *doublure* in which the existence accomplishes and erases itself simultaneously. This correlation, between life and world through which the world defines itself as world of life, is equally present in the conversion that Merleau-Ponty finds between an intentionality of the consciousness and an operative intentionality (*fungierende Intentionalität*). I shall point out below that such a conversion shines a new light on the correlation between body schematism and the logos of life.

5. WHAT ROLE FOR INTENTIONALITY IN THE BODY SCHEMATISM?

A discussion of the body schema, which I reframed as a discussion of the body schematism, cannot elude the issue of intentionality. As already announced in his *Phénoménologie de la perception*, Merleau-Ponty intended to bracket consciousness in order to concentrate on corporeity and on the body's capacity to direct (*viser*) to the world. A first moment of this directedness is represented by "motor intentionality" (Merleau-Ponty, 1945: 161). As noted in the beginning of this paper, motility is the basic characteristic of the body schematism. Yet, motility hides other aspects through which the body opens itself to the world and through which the world includes the body. One of these aspects is corporeal intentionality, the purpose of which is to guarantee the interconnectedness of the human being's existence with that of other orders of existence⁹. As Emmanuel de Saint Aubert asserts, "the first virtue of the corpo-

⁸ See Emmanuel de Saint Aubert (2005: 109): "Animation is not the assumption of a corporeal envelope by a spiritual principle but its internal overflowing (*débordement*)".

⁹ This idea is already mentioned by Husserl in his chapter on *animalia*, in the second volume of *Ideen*.

real intentionality is to make things exist, by making us exist and to root thus knowledge into a mystery of co-existence" (2005: 137-138)¹⁰.

Such a relation surpasses the regularity that is realized at the level of subjective consciousness, and its intentionality. It refers rather to a structuring that is present within corporeal life, defined in terms of nature. As the lectures on *Nature* show, Merleau-Ponty's project on corporeality developed gradually into a project of life. In this context, an obvious consequence is that the intentionality of the body shall not be separated from the intentionality of life. More radically, these two types of intentionality should be understood as one. An inquiry on the body schematism is meant to stress the combination of these two intentional drives and to give an account of their accomplishment through a vital movement, "the very essence of our life – our animation" (de Saint Aubert 2005: 137)¹¹. The question of bodily intentionality and hence of all life, repositions the inquiry on the constitution of meaning in a new context. The body, by its double quality of presence and absence, of affecting and being affected provides that field which joins opposite tensions and which absorbs any intellectualization. It defines itself as the absolute ground for any subjective manifestation.

Being the condition of possibility both for experience and life, the body schematism must be described in terms of *affection* and *passivity*. Both concepts recall the operative intentionality (*fungierende Intentionalität*), a concept which Merleau-Ponty recovers from Husserl. His conviction that consciousness is "in reality an intentionality without acts, *fungierende*, that the "objects" of consciousness themselves are not a positive before us, but [...] specific voids (*des vides spécifiques*)" (Merleau-Ponty, 1964: 292) reorients the analysis to a plan of a primary affection where the subject is not separated from the world, but where it makes a common ground with it.

In order to understand the functioning of intentionality in a context where the main issue is the body schematism and its legitimacy as a logic of life, we need "to turn the tissue of life into operative intentionality" (Merleau-Ponty in de Saint Aubert 2005: 147, note 3)¹². The correspondence between Logos, life and operativeness is therefore necessary if we want to delineate the relation

¹⁰ My transl.

¹¹ My transl.

¹² My transl.

between intentionality and body schematism. Since the body schematism can be understood only as a permanent movement, as pure dynamics (Sheets-Johnstone 2009b: 273).

A body intentionality finds a support in the return to an operativeness through which life appears as a body interconnectedness and as a body schematic imbrication. This recalls once more the principle of *Ineinander* which reverses the understanding of intentionality. The body schematism impels a consideration of subjectivity as embedded with other corporeal articulations. As a result, intentionality and thus the capacity of the subjective sphere of giving account of meaning is re-located from a moment of intellectualization to a moment of living, a moment in which intentionality dissolves into intentional life. This idea becomes more obvious if we consider the concept of "flesh" which is the summa of all corporeal projects in their quality of life intentions. "Through this enlarged notion of intentionality, the phenomenological comprehension distinguishes itself from the classical 'intellection', which is limited to the 'true and immutable nature', and phenomenology can become a phenomenology of genesis" (Merleau-Ponty, 1945: XIII). An inquiry on the body schematism and on the logic of life through which this schematism acquires a grounding validity¹³, the intentional drive is not conceived anymore as something divided between an exteriority and an internal sphere. It becomes an introjective movement in which the mundane includes the subject.

The body schematism simulates the oscillation of corporeal intentionality and, by its assertion of life, it defines itself through a capacity of *affection*. As beings we are affected by the world in which we live and we affect other beings in our turn. Life appears in this perspective as an affective chain. Furthermore, insofar as the status of intentional life is concerned,

the me is at the origin of living in as far as it is affected by this living. [...] The objectifying intentionality is thus to be thought on the background of a latent intentionality, on a life background which requires the consideration of a passive pre-giveness, which has nothing to do anymore with the passivity given in empiricism (Montavont, 1999: 73)¹⁴.

¹³ The phenomenological validity in this case does not have a transcendental value, as the Husserlian perspective expressed in the first volume of *Ideen* or the *Cartesianische Meditationen*, but a life-bound value.

¹⁴ My transl.

In a phenomenology of life correlated to a phenomenology of affection, consciousness in its quality of consciousness-of escapes the schematism of idealities. It becomes instead an affective-receptive milieu (Husserl, 1952: §54, 213). In such a tension, its capacity to transpire through intentional acts is contained within intentional life (Merleau-Ponty, 1964: 227). An inquiry on the body schematism is meant to show that life as nature precedes the intentional life of consciousness; it also highlights their intertwining, the return to those primary moments in which we emerge as life projects, and consequently as incarnated trajectories. A philosophy of the *Bewusstsein* gives an account of the principles which are responsible for the realization of meaning. However, the return to corporeity in its form of operative life and affective potential completes this project.

The body schematism represents the proper medium to integrate the corporeal subject with a movement of life that precedes it and through which any reaction and affection become possible. It is that condition that suffuses intentionality and opens the human being to the ontology of *Ineinander*. Preceding any other actualization, the body schema appears as that very condition of actuality, which impels the phenomenological perspective to "consider the human being first in her being a body, in her way of being a body" (Merleau-Ponty, [1956-1960] 1995: 276).

6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

A phenomenological theory of the body schematism necessarily means in the context of a Merleau-Pontyan consideration a theory of mundaneity. The body is not a resistance, a refusal that counterpoints the sphere of subjectivity or the sphere of "own-ness". It is on the contrary our possibility to disclose the world and at the same time to be disclosed by it. The role of the body schematism is precisely to stress such a process. To theorize the body schematism is to overcome "ownness" and to bring in a phenomenology of openness. This is one of the meanings expressed in the Merleau-Pontyan concept of *Ineinander: Offenheit*.

Further, the body schematism in its understanding as Logos of life shows that the body as primary existential project is not a body in itself; it is a body which is already intercorporeal, which is inter-schematic since its essence is that of going beyond itself in a constant movement toward other living beings. An inquiry on the body schematism becomes in this context an inquiry into the possibility of living. The living body, being an expression of animation and inevitably of motion, becomes a site where other corporeal projects interweave. It is in this network created by the living body with other living bodies that the Logos of life is delineated in terms of body schematism.

Thematizing corporeity as schematism, shows that its actualization and disclosure transpire as “the life of the bond, as an intercorporeity which makes the *basso vivo* of all our passivities” (de Saint Aubert, 2006: 212)¹⁵. In this sense the body, in its oscillation between hiding and disclosure enacts altogether with a Logic of life, the very essence of being in its being alive.

The purport of an inquiry on the body schematism in terms of Logic of life is an inquiry on meaning in its most active and substantial quality; it is an inquiry on “this ‘montage’ of the own body, which allows it to be a body for the world (*pour le monde*)” (Matos Dias, 2001: 74)¹⁶ and a body for the living. The body schematism is therefore that configuration that “unites us directly to the things by its own ontogenesis” (Merleau-Ponty, 1964: 177). Conditioning our movement and being implicitly a principle of animation, the body unfolds us as more than moments of living. It unfolds us as moments of being; as projects that welcome the life of the world.

¹⁵ My transl.

¹⁶ My transl.

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