

## THE BODY: INSIDE AND OUTSIDE<sup>4</sup>

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### Abstract

The reality of the child's life is through bodily experience. The early-motion reflex correction program builds on body experiences. It is very important for the body to move consciously, feelings, body experiences and feedback are important. According to Fodorné, it is not generally necessary to provide an ingenious environment, but to develop sound stimulation programs during motion development. Progress should be considered in a dynamic system approach. The system is part of the whole personality of the child, physical and mental abilities, personal and physical environments, etc. The absence, multitude, excess, and unpredictable imbalance of the stimulus can have consequences. The theories of phenomenological thinkers, neuroscience, INPP movement and psychology research are analyzed.

**Keywords:** Body interpretation, body experience, nervous system, INPP

**Disciplines:** physical education, pedagogy, philosophy

### Absztrakt

A gyermek életében testtapasztalat útján épül föl a valóság. A korai jelekre épülő reflexkorrekciós mozgásfejlesztő program a testtapasztalatokra épít. Nagyon fontos a test tudatos mozgása, fontosak az érzések, testtapasztalatok, a visszajelzések. Fodorné szerint nem általában kell ingergazdag környezetet biztosítani, hanem rendezett ingerprogramok kidolgozása szükséges a mozgásfejlődés során. A fejlődést dinamikus rendszerszemléletben

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<sup>4</sup> The editorial board does not take any responsibility for the English of the papers. Indeed, we made some slight changes but wanted to keep the style of the authors.

kell vizsgálnunk. A rendszer része a gyermek teljes személyisége, fizikai, és mentális adottsága, személyes és tárgyi környezete, stb... Az ingerek hiánya, sokasága, túlzása, egyszóval kiszámíthatatlan egyensúlytalansága, következményekkel járhat. A fenomenológiai gondolkodók elméletei, az idegtudomány, az INPP mozgásprogram és a pszichológia kutatásainak összefüggéseit elemzi az írás.

**Kulcsszavak:** testértelmezés, testtapasztalat, idegrendszer, INPP

**Diszciplína:** testnevelés, pedagógia, filozófia

The thinking about the body presumes that we make questions to understand it. It is our natural wish to discover the world and the sport expert's instinct desire is to know the human body. What is my body like? How do I see it? How do I perceive it? Where is my body in relation to other objects? Where is my body in relation to the perceived reality? Here we think mainly about the physical reality of the body but this philosophically interpretable phenomenon had multiple ways of interpretations by various philosophers throughout history.

The philosophical thinking about the human body had been exhaustively influenced by two dualistic theories: platonism and cartesianism whose traces can be found even in our present-day thinking. The modern interpretation of the body is still vastly determined by dualisms where the body and the soul, the body and the consciousness, the body and the spirit were in conflict with each other. The effect of these dualisms can be still felt in our everyday lives, science and the consumer culture as well. On the other hand the 20th-century thinkers stepped beyond the dualistic thinkers and phenomenology entered into history with a new way of interpretation.

### **PHILOSOPHICAL INTERPRETATION OF THE BODY**

In the interpretation of the body from among the ancient thinkers Platon considered the terrestrial order, the nature, the human body and the substance itself as lawless and morally deficient whose *raison d'être* is just to be transformed by the order of intelligence. Platon believed that there are two ways of existence, a visible and an invisible one. The invisible is always the same but the visible never. The body is in relationship with the visible while the soul is invisible. The soul is similar to be divine while the body tends to be mortal. The divine is set to rule, lead, the immortal is subject to subordination and servitude. Therefore those who had been focusing on carnal pleasures throughout their lives, cannot break away from their bodies as they are permeated by corporeality and their souls will be housed by races like ass or other savage animals. These ideas constitute the base not only of life-denying thinkings where Earth and secular things are despised but that of Christianity as well. The fallible and sinful nature can be redeemed by the divine Logos (later the divine science).

The tamed „good” and the „bad” ancient nature shall be confronted with each other where the battle of the body and soul will be fought to save the immortality of the soul from the fallibility of the body. The split of the body from the soul, the rise of the spirit's importance and the valuelessness

of the body greatly contributed to the theory creation by later thinkers of history.

Renaissance and the early New Age was a very colourful period of time when the birth of modern natural sciences coincided with the wildest cases of witch burning. 17th century philosophers wanted to create some order in the spiritual chaos of the age by trying to find answers of the way how you can get knowledge in the best and most prolific manner. Two

answers were found, the rational and the empirical. Both negated the dogmatic thinking and wanted to establish a new base for cognition.

Europe was the main soil of rationalism with Descartes as one of its greatest figures who was looking for incontestable truths which new-age sciences could be relied on. According to rationalism the principles of cognition are to be acquired by the individual's own intellect. To be able to experience the world around us is determined by the laws of rationality and intellect. All knowledge gained is based on the clear function of our own mind.

This tradition determines the cognition-related independence and freedom of the individual, the free use of the intellect while making no discount to experiences at the same time. Descartes found the ultimate truth in the controllable and incontestably evident consciousness on which the new age sciences could be built.

This is the idea which simultaneously established the base for the dualism and individualism of the modernman. According to Descartes existing things can be divided into two, the conscious thing – *res cogitans* and the extensive thing – *res extensa*. All extensive things are mere subject of my thinking and nothing else, consequently my thinking cannot be part of the extensive thing but in fact it stays out of everything. Me as an intellectual being cannot be part of the nature just examine it as an exteriority. My body is also an exteriority belonging to the *res extensa* zone and obeying the laws of physics just like any other object in the outside world.

In Descartes' theory my corporal feelings do not belong to me as an intellectual person, they are just subjects of my thinking. However his theory formed the notion of the human body as a physical thing which is not myself as subject of outer perception and functioning like a lifeless mechanism. Even today this is still the body notion of anatomy, general medicine and majority of sport sciences.

The cartesian dualism and several ancient philosophers considered the body as rest of the consciousness. The first philosophers who interpreted the body in its trues reality appeared only at the beginning of the 19th century.

According to Nietzsche our rational world is pure reaction. The first major source of Western culture, the world of Platonic ideas which do not consider the body original but just a reaction. He is the first to deal with body experience. This very same reactionism comes forward in Christianity and modern sciences as well. The scientist is interested not in life itself but an abstraction of it. Nietzsche thought we must use hammer to make philosophy by destroying the body-soul dualism ruling in Western culture. He thought that man is not a separate body and soul but a body in its entirety. „I am body and soul.” Body is big intellect, diversity, war and peace together, a pen and a shepherd. My blood! Your tiny little intellect is your body's tool which you call „mind”, little tool and toy of your big intellect”. (Nietzsche 1908, 41)

The experience, the vivid, sensual desires and energies of the body come from the deepest abyss of our existence with full of intellect. We can become ourselves only if we live through our corporal reality.

„Behind your thoughts and emotions, my blood, stands a mighty ruler, an unknown sage – whose name is „self”. He lives in your body, he is your body. There are more intellect in your body than your best truth.” (Nietzsche 1908, 42) We are not the same either with our consciousness or soul. Consciousness is an oft shadow, servant of huge emotions, desires, knowledge of the body. A wise man always relies on his physical senses, a bigger wisdom.

Parallel with this, Freud's theory of psycho-analysis is also published which marks the growing importance of the body as a notion, its experience and rise of its understanding.

Opposite to the Western tradition of Platonism and cartesianism Freud claimed that not only the body but also the soul can be divided since as field of inherent conflicts much more power

is working there. Instinct is the body's check-in to the soul! It does not handle the body as an outside object but as an inner experience.

Its duality stands in the fact that by maintaining the natural scientific, mechanical model and body interpretation, at the same time it gives scientific frame to the most subjective corporal experiences. Although he considers „self” of carnal origin, in his theory the body does not appear directly but rather as symbolic representation. In the new-age philosophy instead of soul we meet the notion of sense. Depending on which level the specific spiritual process can be found in the course of apperception Freud discerns three qualities, the conscious, pre-conscious and unconscious ones.

Phenomenology is the science of phenomena. According to Husserl the subjective experience is the basis of interpretation of the phenomena and starting point of all our explanations.

In phenomenology subjective / own experience keeps receiving more emphasis but simultaneously objective experience also turns up. According to this theory the body can be the most subjective and the most objective at the same time. The body and its experience is the very first object in human life. Body is the most inherent subject-object relationship. Already our earliest experiences we live both in a subjective and objective way. Body can be the most alien and most subjective at the same time. This double experience is the link that connects a new-born baby with the outside world and all inter-subjective experiences come after this first in the maternal then in the ever-expanding general environment.

Body is the carrier of all experienced feelings and realities. The reality of the body is experienced through motion. The motion of my body is the world where I have already been and where I want to go. The motion of the body has a norm-creating function as it leads to the birth of subjective samples, quantitative and qualitative standards.

The building power of reality is evolved through body experience. The reflex excitation based on early signs and the reflex correctional motion development program both relies on the body experience. The deliberate motion of the body, the feelings, the body experiences and the feedbacks are of utmost importance. I think that the theories of the phenomenological thinkers, the neuroscience and the physiological researches can be connected just as Lajos Horváth says „we are facing a hybrid discourse”. Apart from the dynamic system approach Lajos Horváth accentuate the role of neurophenomenology mainly epokhé and corporal experience (proprioception, kinesthesia)

in Husserl's philosophy. „The phenomenal field and the intentional action cannot be reduced simply to specific brain areas but these peculiarities are manifested in the intertwining connection of body regulation, sensomotoric linkage and intersubjective interaction.” (Lajos Horváth 2011, 1306-1315) To properly understand this phrase we need to clarify the single notions.

The phenomenal field in Rogers' interpretation is man's ever-changing, individual world of experiences. This field is not only experienced but evaluated from the own point of view and classified as a positive or negative print. These experiences are not always conscious ones. As per Lajos Horváth's interpretation of the previous phrase, the intentional action is not controlled by a specific brain area but through the synchronicity of the perceptive and locomotive organs a mutually conscious interaction is generated to perform it. The individual experiences, the coordination of the body, the sensomotoric prints can be interpreted only in the relationship of a person, an object or a situation. The interpretation of this dynamic, momentary condition makes possible a new way of body interpretation.

In the first motions, displacements, breathings, reactions we can see the game of discovery, both the visible and the invisible one. „In the world of people and the relationships with others only through perceptions and acts but it does form a perpendicular direction compared to the time-space multitude of actualities”. (Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 2007, 162) Through

perceptions the young child first reacts instinctively through reflexes then starts to walk the bumpy road of motion development assisted by his own reflex responses.

Since – in Merleau-Ponty’s words – the child cannot be uprooted from my existence to the Other and the intersubjective interactions, the environment cannot be locked out during evolution. Evolution should be examined through a dynamic system approach. The child’s entire personality, physical and mental aptitude, personal and material environment are all part of the whole system. The absence, multitude, exaggeration of stimuli namely the unpredictable imbalance of it may lead to consequences. The right stimuli of the environment around us play a major role in the child’s development but not the excess or insufficiency of it. In this sense the dynamic balance both of the child and the environment (family, friends, toys, media, sounds etc.) are of huge importance in the first period of life. The reactions given to the first stimuli are primitive reflex responses which are not conscious acts yet but the postural reflexes and the conscious motion based on more and more motion experiences will later be built on them. Examining the evolution of reflexes paediatrician Domokos Boda extricates the following phases of development: 1. Primitive reflexes, 2. Primitive motion reactions, 3. Postural reflexes. The very first reflex motion might seem even strange for the child but at the same time this is the first subjective phenomenon and „own” body experience.

Going through the context of Merleau-Ponty’s observations we might be pondering „when we declare that the other is not else than the unknown origin of my seen-self. Here however we should add that the other can be the source of my seen-self only because I see that he/she is looking at me and he/she can look at me – the invisible – only because we belong to the same system of existence, we are phases of the same matrix, reckon with the same world, rise from the same Existence.” (Maurice Merleau-Ponty 2007, 99). We must attribute major importance to Existence since the conception of life!

From the point of view of the development of the nervous system we must presume that the environment, perception, sensation, touch as most essential forms of cognition of the world around us, the self-world and the Existence are decisive in every single moment.

Since the nervous system develops according to the stimuli and the responses to them, the motion progress of a new-born baby is of important significance. „The nervous system is not just an input-output switch but a purport-producing system.” (Lajos Horváth 2011, 1306-1315 ) If we examine the nervous system phenomenologically which is the „purport-producing system” according to Lajos Horváth, then the nervous system is one of phenomenology’s foundation stones from the point of view of body interpretation. Motion progress can be called the first form of cognition. A game between the baby and the environment, the environment and the baby, the baby and the baby’s inner world. We might recall the picture where the child contemplates into the endless distance radiating calmness and complacency. Can we presume that this is also a game with self or something? Can we say that the child is looking to nowhere but does nowhere really exist? Or we can surmise that something really happens in and around the child. In this hyper-sensitive age any deficit, deficiency, stress might be enduring for the child. In Domokos Boda’s mind the primitive reflexes and reactions in the neonatal and infant age can be triggered age-relatedly during the normal process of motion development. Its persistence means delay in the maturation of the nervous system and the pyramidal path which even if not in a permanent manner but may cause definite lags. According to Sally Goddard „the infant-age reflexes never really pass away but they get blocked in the first few months of life by the development of more advanced cerebral areas. They might remain active however if these areas get damaged in the early age (p.e. Little’s disease) or when an accident/injury happens (p.e. after cerebral haemorrhage at head injury) in later age or if degenerative diseases of the central nervous system (sclerosis multiplex, Alzheimer’s disease) occur.

As per medical theory infant-age reflexes may not remain active at the majority of people after the age of 6 months. Yet if they can be called forth then it is a sign of a larval pathological state. More and more recent evidences however imply that the traces of primitive reflexes (remaining reflexes) might stay active at lot of people even with no recognizable diseases. (McPhillips et al. 2000; Goddard Blythe, 2001; McPhillips and Sheehy, 2004; Taylor et al. 2004; Goddard Blythe, 2005; McPhillips and Jordan-Black, 2007). An embryological questionnaire compiled by the Chester Institute of Neuro-Physiological Psychology and applied for more than 30 years consistently show that in case of group occurrence of specific circumstances (medical problems during pregnancy or childbirth, retarded progress in the first 12 months etc.....) the child has bigger chance to keep the early reflexes leading to negative influences in the school performance. (Goddard Blythe and Hyland, 1998).” We can say that the persistent ubiquity of primitive reflexes at children above the age of 6 months is the clear indicator of neuromotor immaturity which hampers the process of learning both individually and in group.

„The experience of the first sight, the first touch, the first pleasure do not denote a sort of material content but it does open up a new dimension which will never be closed anymore, outspread a horizon, a background and all later experiences shall be positioned compared to them.” (Maurice Merleau-Ponty 2007, 171) If this experience is deficient or hurt, it may cause abiding or re-occurring difficulties in the child’s life.

### **The body is an intersubjective system**

In phenomenology the objectivity of the body does not exist in itself but only in interaction with the subjective body. It is very interesting that in the first period of life the child also experiences this same state of „intersubjective constitution” (Husserl 2000, 115). This is the first experience in LIFE. The discovery of the own body, my body, not my body. I already know it but still I don’t know it yet, I keep learning day-by-day more and more about it yet it is unknown. This is a ball. I touched it. The hand touched it. Did my hand touch it? What is my hand? Is this my hand? This is my hand. In this cognition process reflexes help a lot. These involuntary motions shall assist first the child’s experience then later it will break away to expressions like the body, motion, hand, foot, move, lift, jump, object, ball, outside world etc. This is the way how the body’s norm-creating function, the notions, the extents get sense and become internal. I am able to perceive my hand with my other hand, my eye with my hand through which an active organ will become an object while an object will be transformed into an active organ as described by Husserl the game practised by the child in the first years of age and maybe throughout a whole life. Utilizing this experience the INPP training program produces more and more precise recognition about the body in subjective and objective reality through the exercise of the various phases of motion progress in the new-born age, the deliberate re-experiencing of them and the deliberate body training while the body shall also get to know itself more deeply. „... during the unfolding of self, it will conceive its own „world” from „inside” while on the other hand by pervading the world recognizes itself as member of the world’s externalities and makes difference between the „outer world” and itself.” (Edmund Husserl, 2000) During the conscious re-learning of the motion program these experiences – the subjective and objective ones – shall be positively confirmed which is the route of awareness and at the same time a learning-enhancing program and training of the nervous system through its own kinesthetic experiences. Learning in my own body and about my own body. With the passing of time this game shall have less and less importance in human life. The typical childhood process of learning through action is not the classical interpretation of learning but it is a continuous, playful, spontaneous way of gaining experiences where the objective and subjective world gets mixed up. This is the game between the body, body members, tract systems and the outside world. In this age the body

experiences and stimuli from the outside world are processed mainly in a playful, spontaneous manner to become later more organized and controlled in the school environment. During the reflex correctional motion program by re-living the neonatal age motions, the child shall live through again the phases of remembrance, reproduction, re-learning, extinction.

As I already mentioned the development of the motoric abilities stems from common effect of the body regulation, the sensomotoric relationships and the intersubjective interaction. This process cannot be riven because it is a dynamic system ensuring the subjectivity of the body experience and the optimal motion progress.

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