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**«BODY-IN-SPACE»
IN PHENOMENOLOGICAL REFLECTION:
FROM VISUAL IMAGE TO SYMBOL****«ТІЛО-В-ПРОСТОРІ»
В ФЕНОМЕНОЛОГІЧНІЙ РЕФЛЕКСІЇ:
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The concept of fleshliness in the phenomenology of E. Husserl and M. Merleau-Ponty is regarded as a process of human fleshliness symbolization, the formation of a symbolic «body-in-space». The spatial localities symbolizing in the phenomenological tradition has been accentuated. The key phenomenologic concepts «body», «flesh», «fold» («pli»), and others are considered in the context of symbol-creative aspects of fleshliness.

Keywords: philosophy of culture, phenomenology, visual image, symbol, the symbolization of spatial localities, symbol-creative aspects of fleshliness, «body-in-space».

Концептування тілесності в феноменології Е. Гуссерля та М. Мерло-Понті розглядається як процес символізації людської тілесності, формування символічного «тіла-в-просторі». Акцентовується на символізації просторових локальностей в феноменологічній традиції. Ключові для феноменології поняття «тілесність», «плоть», «складка» та інші розглядаються в контексті символотворчих аспектів тілесності.

Ключові слова: філософія культури, феноменологія, візуальний образ, символ, символізація просторових локальностей, символотворчі аспекти тілесності, «тіло-в-просторі».

(стаття друкується мовою оригіналу)

The problems of fleshliness has occupied a strong place in modern philosophical-anthropological and philosophical-cultural studies. Various philosophical aspects of fleshliness were studied within the framework of the philosophy of culture by E. Cassirer, M. Foucault, A. Gehlen, P. Gurevich, E. Husserl, M. Merleau-Ponty, H. Plessner, V. Podoroga, A. de Suznel, and others. Among Ukrainian scientists, the philosophical aspects of fleshliness are considered in the works of L. Gaznyuk, O. Gomilko, A. Osipov, V. Ryzhko, N. Khamitov, and others.

Recently, the comprehension of fleshliness problems in anthropological and philosophical-cultural concepts of media culture has acquired a special relevance (as, for example, in the framework of the cinema semiology of J. Deleuze, which makes it possible to analyze the film through tactility, affinity, gesturing and other manifestations of the body). Understanding the visual arts and the visual technology as a *human space*, that is, a special space that is constantly created, recreated, inhabited and interpreted

by man, is extremely interesting and relevant. This approach contributes to overcoming the modern crisis of philosophical anthropology and the philosophy of culture associated with the emergence of concepts along the lines of a «non-anthropological turn» in philosophy (there are primarily structuralist and post-structuralist approaches, as well as the popular theories of Speculative realism by Q. Meillassoux, R. Brassier and G. Harman).

In contrast to the ordinary perception of the human body, based on feelings, emotions, sensations, subjective assessments, etc., and aesthetic reflection based on the position of conformity / non-conformity of the hierarchy of aesthetic values, philosophical approach to the study of the problems of body involves *the interpretation of symbols* and the *analysis of image* as the initial methodological positions. As it seems to us, the search for points of contact and the identification of mutually influencing and mutually determining factors between the visual image of the body and the symbolism of fleshliness is especially interesting.

The *object of our exploration* is phenomenological approach to the problem of fleshliness. The *topic of our investigation* is phenomenological understanding of the symbolization of fleshliness as a process of transformation of a visual image into a symbol. The *main aim of the paper* is determination of the main features of the symbolization of fleshliness as a spatially localized phenomenon in the phenomenological tradition.

It has been no part of our aim to make a comprehensive survey of symbolization or conceptualization of body, space and fleshliness in the works of representatives of phenomenology. One may put forward a working hypothesis to achieve this aim: how do we think, fleshliness is symbolized in phenomenology as a kind of «*body-in-space*» (definition suggested by us).

Now a few words about the *methods*. V. Podoroga, suggesting a method of combining a phenomenological and topological analysis of bodily practices, indicates that the second approach is based on «failure to rely on the normative values of perception», as well as an attempt «to take into account its perceptual *non-determination* in its *description* of one or another physical phenomenon (H. Bergson), that is, exactly what the phenomenological subject does not take into account from the very beginning» [7, p. 7–8].

We can take this approach as a basis, because in the concept of fleshliness by Valery Podoroga, an attempt is made to interpret the phenomenon of the body as something original, *before the image*: «In one case, we strive to see a kind of object, thing or car in our body, in other case – a kind of moving system of obscure, fluid images that can not be translated into a single and distinct *body image*» [7, p. 12]. And the author asks a question that arises naturally: «how can the body be thought, and can we abandon the phenomenality of inner body experiences in favor of the *body imaginable?*» [7, p. 13].

In our opinion, one of the main functions of literature and art (especially visual arts, such as cinema,

theater, painting, sculpture, photography) consists in fixing the human body in the form of an artistic image and the development of ideas about the body as a phenomenon revealed through figurativeness. As for the philosophical understanding of the body, imagery alone is not enough. There is a need for a symbol and symbolization as a transformation of an image into a symbol.

Let's start with the concept of «image». The terms of «body image», «body schema» and «body as an artistic image» were fixed in scientific application. The first two concepts were proposed by psychologists, but applied in other sciences, including philosophical studies. The concept of «body image» was introduced by the Austrian psychoanalyst Paul Schilder as far back as Freud's era, in 1935, to convey the personality perception of the attractiveness of his body. In the psychology, the «body schema» is called the subconscious idea of the structure of one's own body. Speaking about the role of fleshliness in the construction of an artistic image, we must first consider the aesthetic prerequisites: what semantic or emotional load does the image carry, what does it tell us about the character as a subject of fleshliness, and finally, what function does this image perform in the structure of the artistic work in whole?

According to Hegel, the artistic image arises, «when two phenomena or situations (more or less independent when taken by themselves) are unified, so that one situation affords the meaning which is to be made intelligible by the image of the other» [1, p. 408]. Hegel, philosophically interpreting the peculiarity of sculpture as an art form, noted that «in contrast to architecture, sculpture works heavy matter into the concrete expression of spiritual freedom by giving it the shape of the human being» [1, p. 790]. Thus, the essence of an image in a work of art is dialectical; it contains the expression of various constituent elements, combined into one whole; and on the basis of the combination of several elements a new value is born. The visual image, according to Hegel, generates a value associated directly with the comprehension of human existence, and therefore has an ontological character.

In nonclassical and post-nonclassical Western philosophy, the problem of the image and symbolism of the body is viewed from different angles. Thus, in the philosophy of M. Foucault and in many respects by J. Bataille, the formation of an artistic body image in European literature of the 19th and 20th centuries is analyzed in the coordinate system «normal / abnormal». Moreover, the «discourse of normalization» lies at the heart of the attitude of European society and culture to the problem of fleshliness in the 19th and 20th centuries [5].

Another vector of philosophical understanding of this problem is set in the 20th century in the phenomenology of E. Husserl, M. Heidegger and M. Merleau-Ponty.

Thus, E. Husserl traces in detail the constitution of fleshliness as a *carrier of localized sensations* in his fundamental work «Ideas pertaining to a pure phenomenology and to a phenomenological

philosophy». The body, according to Husserl, is «*co-given*» with every experience of space-real objects.

The philosopher introduces a distinction between the concepts of *Körper*, *Leib*, *Leibkörper* to illustrate his thought. The first is the material, physically sensed body, the body as an object. The second is the body as the carrier of feelings, sensations, the body as flesh. The third concept is intended to denote a «body-thing», which differs from all other material things in that it is *localized*, that is, it is *located in space* not only by certain physical or physiological laws or, for example, due to certain circumstances, but primarily due to the ability to be perceived, recognizable as a kind of phenomenon. Our sensations, tactile and visual, are localized in parts of the body (for example, in the hand), and the part of the body itself, like the body as a whole, is localized in space. The body ceases to be just a physical thing, but becomes a body as such, self-sufficient in its phenomenal «co-reality» due to *touch*, as well as to other kinds of various sensations [2].

As E. Husserl points out, «the body is constituted initially in two ways: on the one hand, it is a physical thing, *matter*, it has its own extension, which includes its real properties – color, smoothness, hardness, warmth and all that can also be attributed to material properties; on the other hand, I find on it, I *feel* «on» it and «in» it: heat on the back of the hands, cold in the legs, sensations of touching on the fingertips» [2, p. 721–722].

Husserl makes a very important remark: our body is perceived, felt by us not just as a thing, but as a sensual phenomenon, and we feel not a body taken by itself, but a *body located in space*. For example, «I feel the oppression and movement of clothes that are widespread outside the body surface»; fingers feel the same with which a person moves and so on [2, p. 722].

E. Husserl also gives an example with a paperweight. When a person touches by hand, for example, this object, he keeps the tactile (*taktuel*) sensations associated with this touch in his memory. If, after some time, the same person looks at his hand, all the sensations directly connected with touching the object (feeling of a smooth surface, edging, etc.) will come to life in his memory [2, p. 722].

Husserl introduces the concept of «double seizure» (*Doppelauffassung*): «we have a tactilely constituted *external object* and the second object is *the body*, which also tactilely constitutes in the tactile region (...). Here, then, is the very double seizure: the same tactile sensation, perceived as a sign of an «external» object and perceived as a sensation of the body-object (*Leib-Objekt*)» [2, p. 723].

The concept of *localization* is extremely important in the theory of Husserl. The human body as an object can be considered as part of a certain space and only in relation to space. Otherwise, the body as a phenomenon cannot be extended and cannot be singled out as something special, different from its environment.

Speaking of the body as a *localized phenomenon*, we are talking primarily about the *body-in-space* (the term was proposed by us), that is, a phenomenon that combines the properties of the body-object, and the body-subject, and material, and symbolic properties

too. Any body perceived by man, his carrier, as *body-in-space*, is a symbol, since it is both a part (of space) and a whole (a phenomenon that absorbs the properties of space into itself), has a depth and range of semantic shades.

At the same time, Husserl proves the irreducibility of the body's tactile experience to the visual (for this purpose, the concept of double seizure was developed). If a person is both tangible and be tangible in the act of touching, then the eye does not have a localized zone of bodily sensation; the eye cannot see and be visible at the same time. There is no double grasp in the act of seeing. Hence, Husserl's conclusion: «a subject who has only vision could not have a manifested body» [2, p. 723].

The role of the vision process was analyzed in the phenomenology of M. Merleau-Ponty. He showed how *touch-in-itself* (*tangible-en-soi*) happens. According to Merleau-Ponty, there is always what is seen in the visible, and in touch, what is touched. This presence is not only a potential opportunity, but also an actual presence.

It can be said that the concept of the *flesh* in Merleau-Ponty philosophy is to a large extent symbolic, since it is intended to unite and express both the material and the spiritual principles; this concept has no analogues in traditional philosophy [5, p. 210]. In the main work of the French philosopher «The Phenomenology of Perception» it is also absent [6]. Merleau-Ponty notes that he is only trying to approach the issue, «to formulate our first concepts, while avoiding classical dead-ends, if possible» [5, p. 206]. The philosopher tries to get closer to the truth of being with the help of the symbolization of the image. Therefore, *flesh* acquires ontological significance. Merleau-Ponty, referring to Descartes, introduces another symbol, the «*spiritual eye*» in his «ontology of the visible». Thanks to it, literature and painting open up new meanings from a certain secret source, without resorting to judgments, unlike science. «The artist introduces his body, (...) since it is unclear how the Spirit can paint» [4, p. 16].

Thus, our fleshliness is realized by us through the Other, who is always invisibly present behind the wrong side of the visible image of the body. This «inseparable bending», when the perceiver and the perceived are in a single perceptual cycle and mutually transform into each other, Merleau-Ponty, like Heidegger, calls a *fold (pli)*. The continuous transition of the external to the internal (as in the Möbius strip) forms a fold, which symbolically most fully expresses the continuity of the body and the surrounding (absorbed) space, their mutual dependence.

This body-flesh (chair), not physical, not anatomical, but comprehended in a phenomenological way, located on the other side of the visual image, and unthinkable without the surrounding and creating space can be called a *symbolic body*. One of the achievements of phenomenology is that its representatives showed how and for what the visual image of the body transforms into a symbol of the body, that is, a process of *symbolization of fleshliness*.

As a *conclusion*, we note: 1) the classics of phenomenology (in particular, E. Husserl and M. Merleau-Ponty) attempted to give an ontological substantiation of the phenomenon of fleshliness; 2) the body and fleshliness are viewed through the prism of the symbol; 3) the symbolization of fleshliness in phenomenology makes it possible to supplement the visibility of an image with a deep philosophical meaning, to comprehend fleshliness as a phenomenon localized in space.

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