

Nature and Spirit : from Ideas II to Nature and Spirit

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| メタデータ | 言語: eng 出版者: 公開日: 2008-01-25 キーワード (Ja): キーワード (En): 作成者: Hamauzu, Shinji メールアドレス: 所属: |
| URL | https://doi.org/10.14945/00000446 |

Nature and Spirit

- from *Ideas II* to *Nature and Spirit* -

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In my first article published 20 years ago in Japanese, I discussed the mind-body problem in Husserl, comparing *Ideas II* with Descartes. My first book, entitled *Husserl's Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity* which I published seven years ago in Japanese, was based on my dissertation. This monograph was a result of my study in Germany for two years beginning with reading the three volumes of *Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity* (*Husserliana* Bd.XIII-XV). These volumes are indispensable to understand the background of *Cartesian Meditations*, a Japanese translation of which I've published last year. From Husserl's unpublished manuscripts that have been only accessible to those who could go to the Husserl-Archive, many texts have been published one after another in the last decade. Also last year two of these texts were published: one is *Bernau's time manuscripts* and the other is a lecture manuscript *Nature and Spirit* given in 1927. The latter text has a deep relationship with *Ideas II* and also leads to *Crisis*, so it has interested me for quite some time. In this article I would like to discuss this text and its context. The theme treated in *Nature and Spirit* is related to a problem to which I was led through a collaboration with several natural scientists inside and outside of my university. At the end I would like to address such a problem.

1. From *Ideas II*

Volume 32 of *Husserliana*, published last year entitled *Nature and Spirit*, is composed of the main text of a lecture manuscript presented in 1927 and several relevant supplements. Husserl gave some lectures and seminars with a similar title repeatedly since 1912, just since manuscripts for *Ideas II* and

Ideas III that he began already to work before the publication of *Ideen I* (1913). We noticed that the theme "nature and spirit" originated in problems of these works. For this reason I would like to address *Ideas II* at first briefly.

The attraction of *Ideas II* is well-known. Compared with the programmatic *Ideas I*, *Ideas II* is intended as a concrete analysis. Although Husserl had repeatedly wrestled with the manuscript for *Ideas II*, he couldn't conclude it. As his assistant Edith Stein had edited it (1918), Landgrebe continued her effort with typewritten manuscripts (1924-25), but it was not before Husserl's death, but as the fourth volume of *Husserliana* in 1952 that the work was finally published. Even though the history of *Ideas II* is very interesting, an unfinished text can be difficult to deal with, because lacking of coherence makes it possible to read it in a variety of ways. This would be also a reason why the influence of *Ideas II* was more extensive than that of *Ideas I*.

For example, Heidegger read manuscripts of *Ideas II* during the period of his lecture *Prolegomena for the history of time-conception* in Marburg (1925). On the 8th of April in the next year, at party celebrating Husserl's 67th birthday, Heidegger's *Time and Being* was presented "with respect and friendship" to Husserl. This work implied intense criticism of Husserl without naming him directly. In the preceding lecture, *Prolegomena*, Heidegger traced Husserl's phenomenology with courtesy, identified points of contention with his own developing position and continued the stream of thought that would be developed in *Time and Being*. It is therefore a lecture where Heidegger declared his farewell to Husserlian phenomenology even while confessing that he had read manuscripts of *Ideas II*. Some researchers suspect that the description of "being-in-the-world" in *Time and Being* was influenced by *Ideas II*.

It is also well-known that in 1939, soon after the Husserl Archive in Leuven was established with rescued manuscripts, Merleau-Ponty visited the archive to read the manuscripts of *Ideas II* and got from it the suggestions for his *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945), e.g. his concepts such as "living body" and "nature". We could notice in his lecture *The idea of Nature* (written in the

1950s), that he had a great interest in the manuscripts of *Ideas II*. Similarly we could say about Levinas (who studied with Husserl in his later years and introduced his phenomenology to France), that he was influenced by *Ideas II*. According to some researchers the idea in his main work *Totality and Infinity* (1971) that "the truth presupposes justice" was conceived from the concept in *Ideas II* that "the naturalistic attitude subordinates to the personalistic attitude."

The text of *Ideas II* is full of interesting themes, such as "nature," "spirit," "living body," "person," a sprout of "life-world," and so on. What is moreover interesting about the total structure of *Ideas II*, is that although the "constitution" of three regions is argued in a process from "material nature," "animal nature" to "spiritual world," there suddenly appears a kind of conversion: namely the argument begun at first as if it would move with a one-sided foundation, but then we notice that the "personalistic" attitude coming after in the text is in truth fundamental. If we seek Husserl's goal in *Ideas II*, we could find that it contains another conversion. The conclusion of "relativity of nature and absoluteness of spirit" at the end of the third chapter (entitled "constitution of spiritual world") is one to which he was led by following both of the naturalistic attitude and the personalistic one, but did not reach the proper conclusion of Husserl's transcendental phenomenology. Both attitudes stand on the natural attitude, the basis of which Husserl would inquire back into.

In relationship with *Ideas II* he developed the theme "nature and spirit". But if we widen our view and trace Husserl's thinking, we should take into consideration his criticism in his article *Philosophy as a rigorous science* (1911) against two opposing tendencies in the modern philosophy of those days, namely naturalism and historicism. Since Wilhelm Wundt established the course of experimental psychology at Leipzig university as the first in the world in 1879, more and more posts of philosophy in German universities were replaced by experimental psychologists. In those days, the establishment of a psychology different from natural-scientific psychology and the

establishment of Husserlian phenomenology have common enemies, even if their purposes are different. Therefore it was necessary for Husserl to argue the subtle, but decisive nuance between phenomenology and psychology. This became one branch of the theme "nature and spirit" and led to the lecture *Phenomenology and Psychology* (1917) and the lecture *Phenomenological Psychology* (1925). And with these problems it was at last linked to *Crisis*, the latest work of Husserl (a part of which is entitled with "the way from the psychology to the transcendental phenomenology").

2. To *Nature and Spirit*

Now I would like to focus my attention on the lecture *Nature and Spirit*. Although *Ideas II* analysed the concepts of "nature and spirit" that natural sciences and spiritual sciences respectively presuppose, and investigated the "constitution" in each region only by touching on the distinction between the natural and spiritual sciences, this work left the relationship of both sciences to the phenomenology for *Ideas III*. In the lecture *Nature and Spirit* this theme moved to the central problem of the theory of the natural and spiritual sciences.

As is touched at the beginning of chapter three entitled "constitution of spiritual world" in *Ideas II*, there were controversies concerning the theory of sciences in those days, especially controversies about natural sciences and spiritual sciences in which Dilthey, Windelband, Rickert, Simmel and Münsterberg have participated against positivism and naturalism. Against the background of the controversies in the late 19th century (that were performed between the positivistic-naturalistic current centering in the Vienna-school on one hand and the hermeneutic-spiritual sciences of Dilthey and the neo-Kantian current which emphasizes the difference between "natural and spiritual / cultural sciences" on the other), it was Husserl's aim to develop a theory of sciences from the stand point of phenomenology.

Since 1897, Husserl discussed philosophy from Kant to contemporary

philosophers, namely the neo-Kantians with whom he had also personal correspondence. In his seminar *Philosophy of history* (1905) he argued the positions of Rickert and Dilthey. On the occasion of the 200 year anniversary of Kant's birth (1924) he delivered a memorial speech "Kant and the idea of transcendental phenomenology" at Freiburg University. In the seminar during the same semester as the lecture *Nature and Spirit* (1927) he discussed the philosophy of Kant. In such a context his relationship with Kant and the neo-Kantians came to the forefront of this lecture.

Related to Kant I would like to add, that in *Crisis* the "life-world" is introduced as "Kant's tacit presupposition." This idea could be traced back to the first manuscript written in 1912 for *Ideas II*. The term "life-world" appeared in Kant-speech (1924), in the lecture *Phenomenological Psychology* (1925) and in a supplement of the lecture *Nature and Spirit* (1927). At the end of this lecture he touches on "the method of transcendental logic" referring to Kant, and says that "thereby an a priori and inevitable structure will be got." At the end of *Formal and Transcendental Logic* (which he began just after this lecture and was published in 1929 in the *Yearbook*), he mentioned the subject of "transcendental aesthetics" (reminiscent of Kant) treating the "world of pure experience", and noted the term "life-world" at the margin of the same place. Seeing that, we notice that the term "life-world" appeared in problems surrounding *Nature and Spirit*, in the context of Kant-criticism.

The argument of "life-world" in *Crisis* has another context of criticism against the natural sciences since Galileo. Also in the lecture *Nature and Spirit* he is aware that "we are now in a revolutionary period of development of physics," and points out that "individual sciences based on unclear fundamental concepts make a true cognition of world impossible," and gives birth to an idea of criticism against the sciences which would lead to *Crisis*. Since these days it was born in him a consciousness to live in the time of "crisis" and in just such a context he addressed the "dissociation of sciences and life" and the "rehabilitation of their relationship."

3. The lecture *Nature and Spirit* (1927)

Now I would like to enter into the lecture itself and begin listing the important points:

At first Husserl touches here again on the idea of "philosophy as rigorous science" since 1911 and argues a criticism against sciences. Beginning with a consideration about the relationship between philosophy and the individual sciences, he comes to diagnosis that the development of individual sciences in the present age has arisen from a "unhealthy making independent" of individual sciences, that yielded the "opposition of philosophy and sciences," and that we live now in the time of reaction against it and it gives rise to the modern controversy of "inquiry into the basis." According to Husserl, at the basis of not only physics but also biology there lies "something enigmatic and not understandable." "In the astonishing results of positive sciences" the truth is "hidden" and "covered with mystery." The sciences are "certainly a building from surprising technics of architecture, but they neglect ascertaining their grounds and materials." It is necessary to demand the "method of inquiring presuppositions" and to investigate the "inseparable unity of fundamental concepts," which would be regarded as the subject of philosophy and as "the sole universal science with fundamental foundations." Husserl talks about the relationship between sciences and philosophy by using the Cartesian metaphor of "a tree of philosophy," wherein "each individual sciences is a branch which grows from the one tree of *mathesis universalis*."

Secondly, his idea of "philosophy" is nevertheless different from Descartes who regarded *physica* as the stem of the tree. It is namely different from naturalism which "follows the model of natural sciences" by bringing the method of natural sciences into spiritual sciences, which "regards also spiritual sciences as natural sciences" and intends to build a "unitary science." At this point Husserl leaves Descartes and opposes not only Cartesian dualism, but also post-Cartesian naturalism. Also in *Philosophy as a rigorous science*, he criticized

naturalism that was born from the rise of experimental psychology in those days. He was also convinced early in this period that the psychology built on the model of natural sciences would fail to catch the proper essence of the psychic. Just in this point he was in sympathy with Rickert. In the point of declaring war against the naturalistic monism that was going around between the latter half of 19th century and the beginning of 20th century, Husserl appreciated Rickert.

Third, stating that "all positive sciences are related to the always pre-given world," Husserl calls the above-stated presupposition of positive sciences "the world of experience." According to him, this world "is there before all sciences, far from that, before all arguments, namings and judgments of the everyday world," and each individual thing is "no other than that which was caught out from the relating being-horizon, heard out and seen out," and therefore "the world is not only the sum of things."

Fourth, since about 1902 Husserl was interested in Avenarius' "concept of the natural world," and touches it briefly here. What is above thirdly stated, is connected to this "concept of natural world." His aim is however not only rehabilitation of this concept, but by going back to this world to elucidate "the natural ground of the pre-given experience-world" on which positive sciences naturally and naively stand, and through it to found sciences related to this world. Therefore he doesn't forget to add that such an inquiry leads to "the transcendental."

Fifth, I have to give an addition to his characterization of this "experience-world." In this lecture it is said that "for each who live in the modern scientific culture, much more for those who know nothing about such culture, 'the' world is there before all saying, naming and judging of the everyday world." It is also said that "the experience is in itself dumb" and that "in the unity of experience, before all saying, considerations and reasoning, there is one world without split." Therefore it would be necessary for fundamental investigations to "start with the silent experience without

concepts" and to "go back to the conceptually dumb experience and the experience-world." Here sciences and experience are distinctly opposed, and sciences and "life before sciences" are too.

Thus far is the introduction to the lecture, then begins the main subject. In the first chapter, from "the controversy concerning the meaning of nature and spirit that continued for several decades between natural and spiritual sciences," we are persuaded to go back to the fundamental theme of the classification of the sciences. Then in the second chapter, he mentions "the formal classification of sciences" such as "a priori and a posteriori," "formal and material," "concrete and abstract," "independent and dependent," etc. And in the third chapter, as a "material classification of sciences" he argues the classification of sciences based on the Cartesian dualism of "physics and psychics." From there moreover, as "methodological classification" he begins the paragraph by referring to Windelband and Rickert critically. Now I would like to move quickly to this paragraph.

As is well-known and not necessary to explain, Windelband characterised that natural sciences are "nomothetic," while spritual sciences, represented by history, are "idiographic." By following his idea fundamentally but with revision, Rickert insisted that natural sciences are "generalizing," while cultural sciences are "individualizing." In any case, through such argument, against "naturalism" that regards natural sciences as a model of the spiritual sciences, they insisted on the methodological property of the spiritual or cultural sciences, by saying that the difference between those sciences is no "difference in regions," but "difference in method," so that the same object is divided through method into natural or spiritual sciences. As said, Husserl thought that in this point he could have the front commonly with these neo-Kantians.

Husserl's criticism against Rickert's methodology is directed exclusively to his pure formal method of "universalization" and "individualization." In the following fourth chapter, he argues this criticism as "two ways of transcendental deduction," and affirms Rickert's way as the way which "begins

with *mathesis universalis*" and descends formally to transcendental deduction," i.e. as "the way from above." On the contrary he opposes "the way which begins with the experience-world and ascends directly to transcendental deduction," i.e. as "the way from below." He declares Rickert's deduction as "formalism" and tries to criticize it by calling on the aid of Kant who "contrasted the idea of transcendental logic against the traditional formal logic." Husserl criticizes here the neo-Kantianism with the aid of Kant, so we could say that he opposes Kant as phenomenologist against Rickert as neo-Kantian (Iso Kern).

What is here called "below," is the "experience-world." So the lecture in the fourth and fifth chapter enters into the phenomenology of the experience-world. But we should notice that the experience-world is for Husserl by no means the world of "pure experience." Because the world is made of "properly experienced fields and the open horizon of the properly unexperienced," and that "over the visible there is spread the open infinity." Therefore he says, "all perceptions are mixtures of intentions and fulfillments," and "inductions as a kind of inference from the empirical given to the ungiven" are there "contained from the beginning." "What man calls association already belongs to the structure of all simple perceptions." Consequently, "our present perceptions are a heritage of our preceding experiencing life," and so "our life is thoroughly historical." The "experience-world" is a "historical cultural world" rather than a "world of pure experience." In this context Husserl begins to talk about the connection of this "experience-world" with "sciences." After stating that "sciences are a function of the community life" (in the sixth chapter entitled "scientific inductions are based on experiences"), he says that "we must understand prescientific experience in its fundamental and always presupposed function of inductions." It means that scientific inductions have their origin in inductions functioning in prescientific experiences and are connected to them. But his main text in this lecture is interrupted suddenly on the way to the completion of these arguments.

Therefore I would like to supplement this discussion with the text from the lecture *Phenomenological Psychology* in which two years before Husserl had

developed similar arguments. Also there he talked about the "return to the prescientific experience-world." But at the same time, he said that "this world has a very variable face," that "if we carefully look at the givens as seen, heard or somehow experienced, they contain in themselves some sediments from preceding psychic activities," and that "it is doubtful whether we can find really a pretheoretical world, apart from preceding thinking acts, in pure experience." Moreover in the following year, during the lecture *Introduction to Phenomenology* in the previous semester, arguing about the "experience-world", he said: "For us in European culture there are sciences, they are parts of our many-sided cultural world, whatever their validity might be, they are coexisting matter of facts in the experience-world where we live." Here he has already conceived the theme of the so-called "ambiguity of life-world" (Claesges) that would appear in *Crisis*. The experience that supports the sciences at the fundamental level is not silent, "conceptless" intuition any more, but instead experience of the concrete historical world, and therefore sciences have not only their basis in the life-world, but also they belong to the concrete life-world.

In the lecture *Natur and Spirit* his argument doesn't go so far, but in a supplement to the paragraph of criticism against Rickert (that was at first written but not adopted in the main text), we find an argument from a slightly different angle, to which I would like to give attention finally. There, Husserl considers "the philosophy of life" (Lebensphilosophie) as an assertion of the property of the spiritual sciences from a different point of view. This current that appeared "with a deep reason" "against rational sciences" is discussed. It is in this context that the above-mentioned term "life-world" appears in this volume.

Husserl asks the following question with a critical implication against the philosophy of life as a "reaction against sciences in our times": "Are sciences themselves a function of our life? ... Are sciences parts of the unitary life-world?" And he continues: "Sciences became certainly dangerous first in the higher stage, became to suppress our life in spite of promoting it, and

became sick in their one-sidedness, but this probably doesn't belong to the original meaning of sciences. Because the one-sidedness probably lies in an abstract making absolute, hence in estranging of life, if sciences would draw up all abstractions from the source of intuition and won't pull out themselves from this source, all sciences would be well again." It could be said that Husserl tries to drive away on one hand the current that separates the sciences and life, opposes both and insists on the wrong rationality of sciences, while on the other hand at the same time, also the other current of the "philosophy of life" that intends to oppose the irrational life against rational sciences.

However the appearance of "philosophy of life" has, according to Husserl, "a deep reason." He said that phenomenology "would not call itself a philosophy of life, but is a philosophy of life as far as it would maintain the true ancient meaning of a universal science," that "it would overcome the stupid tension between sciences and life," and that "all possible sciences have meaning only in relationship with the reality of life." Therefore he thinks of phenomenology as philosophy that would not oppose sciences and life, but rather connect both, and found sciences from the basis in life. When I return to the proper theme of the lecture, only such phenomenology makes it possible to connect the two worlds of "nature and spirit," which seem in opposition with one another, and to understand from the bottom the relationship of "natural sciences and spiritual sciences," that seem to be as if two snakes bite the tail of each other.

Closing words

I was originally interested in the natural sciences, but studied philosophy, now I teach at the faculty of humanities and social sciences. As a result, I've continued to have a number of collaborations with colleagues from other fields in the natural sciences.

As one aspect of this, I've continued a collaboration with psychiatrists for several years. Although they work in the natural science of medicine, they

have an interest in the psychic that is also related to the human sciences. In their field people discuss a similar problem nowadays. It is said that because of the prosperity of biological psychiatry and the pragmatic *DSM-IV (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders)* from the United States, the phenomenological current in psychiatry or psychopathology, from Jaspers and Binswanger to Blankenburg, seems to be interrupted, or even that the study of psychopathology would disappear. There is the opportunity to ask anew about the relationship between the biological, natural-scientific understanding of human beings and as its rival the phenomenological, anthropological understanding of them. In such a situation there should be something to learn from Husserl's argument about "nature and spirit" from *Ideas II to Nature and Spirit*.

As another application, we recently hear frequently that the 21st century is the century of the life sciences. But is it enough to stress only the bio-sciences? Although we find in the term "life science" the connection of "life" and "science," which was Husserl's purpose in the lecture *Nature and Spirit*, as I've presented, we could hardly say that the "life science" of today is what Husserl intended. Although the modern "life sciences" try to elucidate human life with bio-chemical investigations of gene and protein, the human life as "being between man and man" seems to become more and more invisible. It is now necessary to renew a philosophy in Husserl's sense, that would connect "life" and "science" that are now dissociated. This is just what Husserl sought in the name of "phenomenology."

* This is a revised, shortened English version of my article, the Japanese version of which I've already published in the last issue of the Annual Reports, No.52-2, 2002. This is also a manuscript which I've delivered in front of phenomenologists from all over the world at the conference, which has taken place at the Academy of Sciences in Prague, November 6-10, 2002, entitled "Issues Confronting the Post European World." The conference was dedicated to Jan Patočka (1907-1977) on the occasion of the founding of the Organization of Phenomenological Organizations (OPO). In composing the English version I received cooperation from my colleague, Mr. Ken Groger. While taking this opportunity to comment on the article, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks for his ungrudging efforts. Needless to say, I am responsible for any grammatical mistakes and stylistic shortcomings that remain.