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THE MIND-BODY PROBLEM(S) IN DESCARTES' "MEDITATIONS" AND HUSSERL'S "CRISIS" (Part 2)¹

The main topic of this paper is the mind-body problem. The author analyzes it in the context of Husserlian phenomenology. The key texts for the analysis and interpretation are Descartes' magnum opus "Meditations on the First Philosophy" and Husserl's last work "The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology". The author claims that already in Descartes' text instead of one mind-body problem, one can find two: the ontological mind-body problem (mind-brain relation) and conceptual one ("mind" and "body" as concepts). In Descartes' "Meditations", the ontological level is explicit, while the conceptual level is implicit. In Husserl's "Crisis", on the other hand, the situation is different: the conceptual level of the problem (as the opposition between transcendental phenomenology and natural sciences) is explicit, while the ontological level is implicit. Nevertheless, it seems that Husserl has answers to both the "traditional" as well as the "conceptual" mind-body problems.

Keywords: ontological (traditional) mind-body problem, conceptual mind-body problem, transcendental phenomenology, the lived-body (*der Leib*), Descartes, Husserl

Husserl's "Crisis" in the context of the Cartesian framework

"One can truly say that the idea of nature as a really self-enclosed world of bodies first emerges with Galileo. A consequence of this, along with mathematization, which was too quickly taken for granted, is [the idea of] a self-enclosed natural causality in which every occurrence is determined unequivocally and in advance. Clearly the way is thus prepared for dualism, which appears immediately afterward in Descartes" [Husserl, 1970: p. 60; Hua VI, S. 61].

¹ See the first part of the article in: Leonov, A. (2020). The mind-body problem(s) in Descartes' "Meditations" and Husserl's "Crisis" (Part 1). *Філософська думка*, 4, 91–100.

In this section, I want to clarify the connection between Descartes and his two mind-body problems (as I understand them) and Husserl, and how the latter dealt with them in his “Crisis”. As in the Descartes’ section, I will start with the “traditional mind-body problem” and then will continue with how the “conceptual mind-body problem” can be seen in Husserl’s “Crisis” as well. And what is more important — how the latter (conceptual) problem initiated one of the crises, as described in Husserl’s last work, namely that between the *objective sciences and transcendental phenomenology*.

2.1. Husserl’s understanding of Descartes

It’s a famous fact that Husserl understood his phenomenology as the “final form of transcendental philosophy” [Husserl, 1970: p. 70; Hua VI, S. 74]. And namely Descartes, in his “Meditations”, was not only the founder of the modern philosophy, and of “objectivistic rationalism”, but he was also the *primal founder* (der Urstifter) of the whole *transcendental realm* [Husserl, 1970: p. 73; Hua VI, S. 74-75].

For Husserl, the first two *Meditations* are the most important ones in Descartes (though, he also mistakenly includes there the proof of God from the *Third Meditation*). The general structure of those *Meditations* he sees in the following way: “the progress to the *ego cogito*, the *ego* of the *cogitationes* of the various *cogitata*” (der Gang zum *ego cogito*, dem *Ego* der *cogitationes*, jeweiliger *cogitata*) [Husserl, 1970: p. 75; Hua VI, S. 76]. Philosophical knowledge for Descartes is *absolutely grounded* (absolut begründete) knowledge. And its grounds are *immediacy*, *apodicticity*, and *self-evidence* which excludes *all* conceivable doubt. In general, every step of *mediate* knowledge is also able to achieve this kind of self-evidence [Husserl, 1970: p. 75; Hua VI, S. 77]. But how is one to achieve this solid foundation of knowledge? Cartesian doubt, the very method for it, Husserl calls *radical skeptical epoché*, or simply *Cartesian epoché* (die *Cartesiansche epoché*), “which places in question all his hitherto existing convictions, which forbids in advance any judgmental use of them, forbids taking any position as to their validity or invalidity” [Husserl, 1970: p. 76; Hua VI, S. 77]. For Husserl, the “Cartesian epoché” puts out of play not only natural sciences, and the life-world (i.e., the world of experience, given through *senses*), but even mathematics with its apodictic self-evidence [Husserl, 1970: p. 76; Hua VI, S. 77]².

If every physical object, as well as the objects of the life-world are put out of play, then what is left instead? Husserl’s answer is the following: *I*, the *ego*, which is carrying out the very epoché is left and *it* is the source of apodictic knowledge³.

² Which appears to be not true. For Descartes, even after his epoché, mathematics still remains to be certain and indubitable. See section 1.2. of this paper. Though, Husserl is correct in his understanding that mathematics, as according to Descartes, is given primarily to *ego*, the main difference is that in Husserl interpretation of Descartes, mathematical axioms are open to doubt and thus, are conceivable of being false and not apodictic. While for Descartes, it is not the case, mathematics is still given to ego’s intuition as the very *source* of the evidence.

³ “I, the ego carrying out the epoché, am not included in its realm of objects but rather—if I actu-

After the procedure of bracketing, everything, except the ego who brackets, and *the world itself* becomes the mere *phenomenon*. But nevertheless, "the whole life of acts — experiencing, thinking, valuing, etc. — remains, and indeed flows" [Husserl, 1970: p. 77; Hua VI, S. 79].

The structure of *Descartes' intentionality*, according to Husserl, is the following: *ego cogito — cogitata qua cogitata*. Thus, after the epoch, the *world itself* becomes our *ideae*, which are inseparable from our *cogitationes* as their *cogitata*, and I, the ego, who performs epoch, is "the only thing that is absolutely indubitable, that excludes in principle every possibility of doubt" [Husserl, 1970: p. 78; Hua VI, S. 79-80].

In this sense, I understand the wax example, from the Descartes' *Second Meditation*, as a very good example of *transcendental phenomenological analysis*. Wax, in its sensory and imaginary givenness (color, smell, shape, touch etc.), is bracketed, and what is left is "wax" as given to *mind* (*mens*) or intellect (*intellectus*): wax as "extended, flexible and changeable".

Husserl identifies Descartes' *mens* with the *absolute ego*, and the discovery of the *transcendental* realm. But the very mistake of Descartes was that he identified his *mens* (the transcendental realm) with the pure soul⁴ (the psychological realm). Though, it is only in Descartes that the world itself becomes the *phenomenon*⁵, the latter, when still trying to find out the nature of the ego, was mistakenly identified with the *soul* (*animus*). Thus, in Descartes there is a confusion of two different attitudes: the transcendental phenomenological and the psychological. Therefore, according to Husserl, the world itself is treated phenomenologically as a *phenomenon* and at the same time as *objectively* existing. For Husserl, that which *grounds* objective knowledge (including philosophy) cannot itself be grounded *within* it. What *brackets* the world *itself* (and thus it becomes a *phenomenon*) and is the *source* of meaning *about* it (intentionality)⁶ cannot simultaneously be the subject-matter *in* that which is bracketed⁷. In this sense, the soul is bracketed in the epoché and can be investigated only as a *phenomenon*, given to the ego (*mens*)⁸. Therefore, the

ally carry out the epoché radically and universally—am excluded in principle. I am necessary as the one carrying it out. It is precisely herein that I find just the apodictic ground I was seeking, the one which absolutely excludes every possible doubt" [Husserl, 1970: p. 77; Hua VI, S. 81].

⁴ [Husserl, 1970: p. 80; Hua VI, S. 82]

⁵ [Husserl, 1970: p. 80; Hua VI, S. 82]

⁶ According to Husserl, one cannot doubt "a true presentation and treatment of the subject of intentionality [in Descartes]" [Husserl, 1970: p. 83; Hua VI, S. 85].

⁷ "The ego is not a residuum of the world but is that which is absolutely apodictically posited; and this is made possible only through the epoché, only through the "bracketing" of the *total* world-validity; and it is the only positing thus made possible. The *soul*, however, is the *residuum* of a *previous abstraction* of the pure physical body. ... But abstraction (and we must not overlook this) occurs not in the epoché but in the natural scientist's or psychologist's way of looking at things, on the natural ground of the world as pregiven and taken for granted" [Husserl, 1970: p. 79-80; Hua VI, S. 81].

⁸ As Husserl puts it: "...the *mens*, which at first stood by itself in the epoché and functioned as the absolute ground of knowledge, grounding the objective sciences (or, universally speaking, philosophy), appeared at the same time to *be* grounded along with everything else as a legitimate subject matter *within* the sciences, i.e., in psychology. Descartes does not make clear to

transcendentalism of Descartes still remains “psychologically adulterated” [Husserl, 1970: p. 83; Hua VI, S. 86].

Now, let’s look at Husserl’s understanding of Descartes’ *mens*. According to Husserl, after the Cartesian epoché, nothing is left: the sensible world as well as the living-body⁹ are put out of play, which allows Descartes to define the ego as “*mens sive animus sive intellectus*” [Husserl, 1970: p. 79; Hua VI, S. 81]. Now, let’s recall the ambiguity of the notion of intellect in Descartes himself, precisely, a difference of the use of this notion in the *Second* and the *Sixth Meditations*.

It’s true that in the *Second Meditation*, Descartes says “I am, then, in the strict sense only a thing that thinks; that is, I am mind (*mens*), or intelligence (*animus*), or intellect (*intellectus*), or reason (*ratio*)...”, and finds it *necessarily true* [Descartes, 2008: p. 18; 1957: p. 27]. But does this mean that he has no sensory perceptions after bracketing? Here is how Descartes saw himself and the world after the epoché: “... it is also the same I who has sensory perceptions, or is aware of bodily things as it were through the senses. For example, *I am now seeing light, hearing a noise, feeling heat*¹⁰. But I am asleep, so all this is false. Yet, I certainly *seem* to see, to hear, and to be warmed. This cannot be false; what is called “having a sensory perception” is strictly just this, and in this is restricted sense of the term it is simply thinking” [Descartes, 2008: p. 19; 1957: p. 29].

This passage makes it abundantly clear that here is the case of Descartes’ *intentionality* (which Husserl himself was really sure of), and the “sensory perceptions” can be understood in its terms as well, i.e. as *cogitata of ego’s cogitationes*. From this it follows that Husserl’s understanding of Descartes’ intellect is much closer to the Cartesian *Sixth Meditation* (as a kind of *information-processing tool* with nothing subjective as its companion), rather than to the *Second*. Therefore, even though in the *Second Meditation*, Descartes identifies *mens* with *animus*, the previous example clearly shows that here we still have *mens* (or intellect) as the *transcendental realm*, rather than the *psychological* one. I think that this is *really* what Descartes meant to convey through this example.

2.2. Husserl’s answer to the traditional mind-body problem

According to Husserl, Descartes failed to follow the transcendental lead and thus, the dualism of nature (*die Natur*) and mind (*der Geist*)¹¹ was born, where the latter

himself that the ego, his ego deprived of its worldly character [*entweltlicht*] through the epoché, in whose functioning *cogitationes* the world has all the ontic meaning it can ever have for him, *cannot possibly* turn up as subject matter *in* the world, since everything that is of the *world* derives its meaning precisely *from these functions*—including, then, one’s own psychic being, the ego in the usual sense” [Husserl, 1970: p. 81-82; Hua VI, S. 83-84].

⁹ The discussion of the *living-body* in Husserl and Descartes, see in the next section.

¹⁰ *Italics* are mine. — A.L.

¹¹ In the English translation of Husserl’s “Crisis”, *der Geist* is mostly translated as *spirit* (though sometimes a reference to “mind” and “mental” is made as well). But the notion “spirit” itself has cultural and religious connotations. Is it the case in Descartes in his first two Meditations, where is still no proof of God, and which Husserl conceives as the most important Medita-

was identified with the *soul* (or better, *psyche*) and thus, a way for a new naturalistic psychology was suggested [Husserl, 1970: p. 62; Hua VI, S. 63]¹².

Nature appears to be "in its 'true being-in-itself' mathematical" [Husserl, 1970: p. 54; Hua VI, S. 54]. Such an understanding of nature started with Galileo and clearly corresponds to the Cartesian *res extensa*¹³. As was shown earlier, the latter is a physical-mathematical concept, which expresses the *meaning of the natural sciences*. And both in the Cartesian epoché, and in the natural scientific attitude, the *life-world* ("the forgotten meaning-fundament of natural science" [Husserl, 1970: p. 48; Hua VI, S. 48]) is bracketed (in the former) or forgotten (in the latter).

According to Husserl, the *life-world* (*Lebenswelt*), is "the only real world, the one that is actually given through perception, that is ever experienced and experientiable..." [Husserl, 1970: p. 49; Hua VI, S. 49]. This world is the world of the direct intuition (whose object is *prescientifically* intuited nature). To the life-world belong not only physical objects (*Körper*), but also our "bodily [*leiblich*], personal (*persönliche*) way of being (*Seinsweise*)" [Husserl, 1970: p. 50; Hua VI, S. 50]. The latter distinction requires serious attention, in so far as, in my opinion, it is Husserl's direct way of approaching the *traditional mind-body problem*.

Thus, Husserl distinguishes between physical-mathematical objects (*der Körper*) and the living-body (or body as *lived*) (*der Leib*). *Der Körper* clearly express what Descartes meant by *res extensa*: physical bodies, which are the subject-matter of pure mathematics. Roughly, these are bodies as given from the *third-person of view*. *Der Leib* expresses the body as given to *me* in sense perception: *my* living-body. Thus, *der Leib* means *one's own* bodily givenness from the *first-person perspective*.

tions? According to Husserl's interpretation, the Cartesian epoché, through which Descartes got to his *mens* is the first attempt to do *transcendental phenomenology* where everything, including the sensible-world is bracketed (where everything cultural, personal and religious is bracketed as well). The same goes for Husserlian transcendental phenomenology in his *Ideas I*. And the very Descartes' mistake, as according to Husserl, was the identification of the *transcendental mens* (mind) with the *psychological animus* (soul), and therefore, a substitution of transcendental phenomenology for the objective naturalistic psychology. In the latter, one can also find nothing "spiritual" in the given sense. Thus, translation of *Geist* as "spirit" appears to be as a methodological mistake, which contradicts to the very *Husserlian* approach to Descartes. It also seems that "soul" (*die Seele*) Husserl uses in a *non-religious* sense as well, which is indicated by Husserl's binding this notion to the *natural scientific realm* (psychology).

¹² "Naturally, as soon as Descartes had proclaimed the idea of a rational philosophy and the division of nature and spirit, a new psychology was an immediate requirement, and it already made its appearance in Descartes's contemporary, Hobbes. It was, as we have already indicated, a psychology of a sort completely unknown to earlier times, designed concretely as a psychophysical anthropology in the rationalistic spirit" [Husserl, 1970: p. 62; Hua VI, S. 63].

¹³ "One can truly say that the idea of nature as a really self-enclosed world of bodies first emerges with Galileo. A consequence of this, along with mathematization, which was too quickly taken for granted, is [the idea of] a self-enclosed natural causality in which every occurrence is determined unequivocally and in advance. Clearly the way is thus prepared for dualism, which appears immediately afterward in Descartes" [Husserl, 1970: p. 60; Hua VI, S. 61].

Ego communicates with Körper through Leib. This communication takes place through the *kinesthesia*: "... primarily through seeing, hearing, etc.; and of course other modes of the ego belong to this (for example, lifting, carrying, pushing, and the like)" [Husserl, 1970: p. 108; Hua VI, S. 110]. According to Husserl, der Leib has a mediating function between the ego and the physical reality. Schematically, it is the following: *ego — living-body (der Leib) — physical bodies (der Körper)*. While speaking of the living-body, Husserl uses the metaphor of the "organ": it is through *kinesthetically functioning living-body* the ego holds sway (waltet) and immediately communicates with the environment [Husserl, 1970: p. 107; Hua VI, S. 109].

Namely the life-world and the living-body Husserl sees as missing in both Galileo and later in Descartes, who inherited the mathematical view of nature from the former. In Husserl's interpretation, after the "psychologization" of the mens, Descartes substitutes his just discovered transcendental realm for the natural-scientific (psychology), that is the way of *res extensa*.

But I think the situation is different: the body as a *physical-mathematical object* (Husserlian Körper) is *indeed* bracketed in the Cartesian epoché, but the body as *lived* (as in its "sensory perceptions" from the *first-person point of view*: which *feels* heat, *sees* light, *hears* noise etc.), that is, as *my* body (or *meum corpus*) is *not*¹⁴.

In the *Second Meditation*, Descartes anticipated the living-body from the point of view of the *transcendental mens*: even if there is no material body (as *res extensa*), there still are the *sensory perceptions*, as if the body existed as *my* body. (One can be *really* a brain in a vat, or even the software program in the Matrix, but nevertheless one would still *sense and feel* his body as *his own*, as *lived*, though it is not existent at all).

In the *Sixth Meditation*, the situation is modified: there is no doubt that my material body (*corpus*) exists, but here one can see that body here can be treated as something *biological*, namely as *flesh*: a mix of blood, organs, muscles, bones etc. That is, in the *Second Meditation*, the body can be viewed *transcendentally*: as the merely *cogitata of my own cogitationes* (even when the real (material) body is put out of play). But in the *Sixth Meditation*, the view is more *realistic*: the material body (*corpus*) exists, but the ego is *not* just a captain on the ship (or intellect in its second meaning (as an information-processing tool), but an *active participant of it* or that, which *holds sway* (if to speak in Husserlian term), — the material body (*corpus*) is *lived in* and *from* its *union* with the *ego*, and thus can be understood as the *living-body* (der Leib) in the Husserlian sense. Thus, schematically, it can be seen like this: *mens — meum corpus — corpus (res extensa)*¹⁵.

¹⁴ Also, let's recall the important Cottingham's note regarding the ambiguity in Descartes' usage of *corpus* in the *Sixth Meditation*: "The Latin term *corpus* as used here by Descartes is ambiguous as between 'body' (i.e. corporeal matter in general) and 'the body' (i.e. this particular body of mine). The French version preserves the ambiguity" [Descartes, 2008: p. 54].

¹⁵ Now, we can clearly see that in Cottingham's suggestion, Descartes' "corporeal matter in general" directly corresponds to Husserl's *Körper*, and "this particular body of mine" — to Husserl's *Leib*.

It seems that Husserl connects the living-body to the life-world. In Husserl's understanding, Cartesian epoché excludes the life-world and the living-body altogether. I tend to agree with the exclusion of the former, but disagree with that of the latter. Thus, it seems that Descartes' living-body still can be understood *transcendentally* as *cogitata of one's own cogitationes* (in the *Second Meditation*), as well as in the more *realistic* approach, i.e., as Leib (in the *Sixth Meditation*)¹⁶.

I understand Husserl's discussion of the *living-body*, as a kind of "phenomenological 'third way'" of dealing with the *traditional mind-body problem*, as opposed to the existence of just immaterial mind and material body.

Descartes' case is more difficult: it seems, that his own *explicit* solution to the ontological (traditional) mind-body problem lies in the study of the brain (or the *neuroscientific* approach, to speak in modern terms). The discussion of "sensory perception" after the Cartesian epoché in the *Second Meditation*, and of "meum corpus" in the *Sixth Meditation*, can now be seen as a direct anticipation of the living-body discussion in Husserl.

2.3. Husserl on the "conceptual" mind-body problem

Let's recall what was meant by the "conceptual" mind-body problem. In my understanding, Descartes' *res cogitans*, or *mens*, is a *phenomenological* concept, which opens the door to the dimension of *phenomenological meaning*. On the other hand, *res extensa* is a concept of something *physical*, which is the subject-matter of pure mathematics, and thus, expresses the *meaning of the natural sciences*. Thus, the essence of the *conceptual* "mind-body" problem can be seen as the *gap* between *phenomenological meaning* and *that of the natural sciences*.

Husserl's analysis in his "Crisis", clearly showed Descartes as the "primal founder" (der Urstifter) of transcendental phenomenology and a discoverer of *transcendental subjectivity* (expressed by his *mens* or *ego*). Now it can be clearly seen that what was meant under the conflict of *meanings* in Descartes can be understood as the conflict between the meaning of the transcendental phenomenology ("transcendental subjectivism") and that of the natural sciences ("physicalistic objectivism")¹⁷. Although Husserl recognized the origins of the transcendental phenomenology in Descartes; he failed to recognize the origins of one of the "crises of the European sciences"¹⁸ in the Cartesian metaphysics. This "crisis" can be clearly seen in Descartes' distinguishing between *res cogitans* and *res extensa*. Especially, given that Descartes greatly influenced Husserl's transcendental phenomenological

¹⁶ From this it could follow a suggestion that in so far as we have a real anticipation of Husserlian Leib already in Descartes' *Sixth Meditation*, where material objects exist, there can be born a suggestion that *implicitly*, there is also an anticipation of the *life-world* as well and *res cogitans* and *res extensa* methodologies are in a way two different approaches to one "object", i.e., the *life-world itself*. But so far, I find it too speculative and leave it aside.

¹⁷ "[N]euzeitlichen Gegensatzes zwischen Physikalistischem Objektivismus und transzendentalen Subjektivismus" [Hua VI, S. 18].

¹⁸ The other one is a gap between the life-world and the natural sciences, which started with Galileo.

project *per se*¹⁹, and also is considered in the “Crisis” as the first one to get to the dimension of transcendental subjectivity.

But now, let’s try to see *why* Husserl failed to see it. It seems that the problem lies in the mixing of, and trying to balance between, two different phenomenological approaches as discussed in his “Crisis”. The first one is developed in his *Ideas I* and is called the *transcendental phenomenology*. In that work, Husserl clearly follows Descartes in his Cartesian epoché, while trying to fix what Descartes got wrong [Husserl, 1970: p. 155; Hua VI, S. 157-158]. The second one is the *life-world approach*, which is clearly incompatible with the “Cartesian way” as developed in his *Ideas I*. So, at first, let’s try to clarify what makes transcendental phenomenology *transcendental*.

Since Descartes is considered its Urstifter, let’s look at what makes *his* philosophy *transcendental*. I agree with Husserl that the first two *Meditations* are enough to grasp fully the importance of the Cartesian phenomenological method. In those *Meditations* Descartes “brackets” the whole sensible world in order to find its *essential structures*. As it was noted before, I find the wax analysis in the *Second Meditation* to be a very good example of transcendental phenomenological analysis. Wax as given to the senses is *bracketed* (in the “Cartesian epoché”), and only its *essential structure* as given to *mind* (mens) or *intellect* is grasped, and it is wax as “extended, flexible and changeable”. Thus, after its bracketing as a *physical object* (as *contingent* in its essence), wax became a *phenomenon* (as *intentional object*), where we got its *essential structure* (which is not contingent, but *necessary*).

The same strategy was taken by Husserl in his *Ideas I*, where he described transcendental phenomenology (as a “descriptive science of essential Being”) [Husserl, 2012: p. 3; Hua III/1, S. 6], as attained through phenomenological *epoché*, which is about disconnecting and putting out of play everything that “concerns spatio-temporal existence (Dasein)” [Husserl, 2012: p. 59; Hua III/1, S. 65]. Thus, all sensory givenness is subject to bracketing as *contingent*, and that’s the only means by which we can get to what is *essential*, and thus, *necessary*²⁰. Therefore,

¹⁹ For example, Husserl’s confession of this in his “Cartesian Meditations” [Husserl, 1960: p. 1; Hua I, S. 43] or *Cartesian cogito* as his starting-point in his “Ideas I” [Husserl, 2012: p. 53, 64; Hua III/1, S. 58-59, 70].

²⁰ For example, as Husserl puts it in “Ideas I”: “*The thesis of my pure Ego and its personal life, which is ‘necessary’ and plainly indubitable, thus stands opposed to the thesis of the world which is ‘contingent’. All corporeally given thing-like entities can also not be, no corporeally given experiencing can also not be: that is the essential law, which defines this necessity and that contingency*” [Husserl, 2012: p. 88; Hua III/1, S. 98] Regarding the contingency of the “physical truth”, see [Husserl, 2012: p. 90-91; Hua III/1, S. 99-100].

Or through his appeal to the *possible-worlds semantics*: “... ‘the real world’, as it is called, the correlate of our factual experience, then presents itself as a special case of various possible worlds and non-worlds, which on their side, are no other than correlates of the essentially possible variations of the idea ‘empirical consciousness’, with its more or less empirical connections” [Husserl, 2012: p. 91; Hua III/1, S. 100-101].

transcendental phenomenology in both Descartes and Husserl is about grasping (through the epoché or reduction what appears to be *contingent*) what is *essential*.

If physics and mathematics are suspended, then what is the source of the evidence of what is essential? For both Descartes and Husserl, it is definitely *I, the ego*. Namely the latter is the *ultimate source* of the true and apodictic Being. For Descartes, in his "Meditations", it is called *mens or intellect*; for Husserl in his "Ideas I", it is the *absolute consciousness* or *transcendental ego*. In short, for both thinkers it is the *ego* after the epoch procedure²¹.

For Husserl, physical-mathematical meaning (or that of the natural sciences) is *grounded*²² upon the meaning of *transcendental subjectivity*. The latter is the primary apodictic source for the objective sciences²³. Thus, Husserl's answer to the "conceptual" mind-body problem would be in the *constant going back* to the *ultimate source* of the objective sciences: *transcendental subjectivity*. The former (objective sciences) must be always given and clarified through the latter (transcendental subjectivity).

²¹ In the §26 of "Crisis", Husserl is very explicit about this: "I myself use the word "transcendental" in the *broadest sense* for the original motif, discussed in detail above, which through Descartes confers meaning upon all modern philosophies, the motif which, in all of them, seeks to come to itself, so to speak — seeks to attain the genuine and pure form of its task and its systematic development. It is the motif of inquiring back into the ultimate source of all the formations of knowledge, the motif of the knower's reflecting upon himself and his knowing life in which all the scientific structures that are valid for him occur purposefully, are stored up as acquisitions, and have become and continue to become freely available. Working itself out radically, it is the motif of a universal philosophy which is grounded purely in this source and thus ultimately grounded. This source bears the title *I-myself*, with all of my actual and possible knowing life and, ultimately, my concrete life in general. The whole transcendental set of problems circles around the relation of *this*, my 'I' — the 'ego' — to what it is at first taken for granted to be — my soul — and, again, around the relation of this ego and my conscious life to the *world* of which I am conscious and whose true being I know through my own cognitive structures" [Husserl, 1970: p. 97-98; Hua VI, S. 100-101].

²² In his critique of Kant, Husserl confesses: "Kant never permitted himself to enter the vast depths of the Cartesian fundamental investigation, and his own set of problems never caused him to seek in these depths for *ultimate groundings* [*Italics* are mine. — *A.L.*] and decisions. ... a transcendental philosophy is the more genuine, and better fulfills its vocation as philosophy, the more radical it is and, finally, that it comes to its actual and true existence, to its actual and true beginning, only when the philosopher has penetrated to a clear understanding of himself as the subjectivity functioning as primal source..."

It is a philosophy which, *in opposition to prescientific and scientific objectivism, goes back to knowing subjectivity as the primal locus of all objective formations of sense and ontic validities*, [*Italics* are mine. — *A.L.*] undertakes to understand the existing world as a structure of sense and validity, and in this way seeks to set in motion an essentially new type of scientific attitude and a new type of philosophy" [Husserl, 1970: p. 99; Hua VI, S. 102].

²³ As Husserl puts it: "the objective-scientific method rests upon a never questioned, deeply concealed subjective ground whose philosophical elucidation will for the first time reveal the true meaning of the accomplishments of positive science and, correctively, the true ontic meaning of the objective world — precisely as a transcendental-subjective meaning" [Husserl, 1970: p. 100; Hua VI, S. 103].

As we have seen before, for Descartes, the situation is pretty similar: the physical-mathematical meaning, as expressed by *res extensa* is to be given through the phenomenological meaning as expressed by *res cogitans*. That is, the *essence* of the *physical* things is to be given through the *transcendental mens*.

Therefore, both Descartes and Husserl didn't deny the importance of the objective sciences. Transcendental phenomenology is supposed to be the *scientific* enterprise itself. Therefore, for them, the key point is that natural sciences are *secondary* for us, as opposed to the transcendental phenomenology, which is *primary*. In alliance with our suggestion of Descartes' solution of the "conceptual" mind-body problem, we can say that *transcendental phenomenology* and the *objective sciences*, despite their differences, must form a *scientific union*, in which the former is *primary for us*, as opposed to the latter, which is *secondary*.

Now, it will be easier to understand why Husserl didn't recognize the origins of one of the "crises" (that is, the *opposition between the transcendental phenomenology and natural sciences*) as stemming from Descartes' "Meditations". As it was noted, the other important "crisis" in Husserl's last work was the *fundamental gap between the life-world* (primarily a *prescientific sensible* world) and the *natural sciences*. One can say that actually the main topic of "Crisis" is the discussion of the *life-world itself*. It is here that I see a major shift of the phenomenological attitude in Husserl.

Thus, at the same time, the *life-world* is also considered to be the *ground*²⁴ or the "grounding soil [der gründende Boden]"²⁵ of objective-scientific knowledge. Today, Descartes is blamed for not seeing the fact that "just as the sensible world, that of everyday life, is the *cogitatum* of sensing *cogitationes*, so the scientific world is the *cogitatum* of scientific *cogitationes*"²⁶, and Husserl confesses himself that in his "Ideas I", while following and developing the *Cartesian way of doing transcendental epoché* (or Cartesian epoché), though one gets to the transcendental ego "in one leap", this ego remains "empty of content". And that's not the end of the story: one can easily fall back into the natural attitude from the very beginning [Husserl, 1970: p. 155; Hua VI, S. 158]. Therefore, our primary scientific starting-point has to be the *life-world*.

That being said, one can see Husserl's trial of balancing between two sources for doing phenomenology (i.e., transcendental subjectivity and the life-world) ended up in the confusion of two completely incompatible phenomenological approaches: the "*Cartesian*" *transcendental phenomenology* (which brackets everything

²⁴ "If we have made our contrast with all necessary care, then we have two different things: life-world and objective-scientific world, though of course [they are] related to each other. The knowledge of the objective-scientific world is "grounded" in the self-evidence of the life-world" [Husserl, 1970: p. 130; Hua VI, S. 133].

²⁵ "The concrete life-world, then, is the grounding soil [der gründende Boden] of the 'scientifically true' world and at the same time encompasses it in its own universal concreteness" [Husserl, 1970: p. 131; Hua VI, S. 134].

²⁶ [Husserl, 1970: p. 90; Hua VI, S. 92]

sensible, spatio-temporal and relative²⁷) and the *life-world approach* (which is indeed about what is sensible, corporeal and relative). Thus, the meaning of the “transcendental” is also misleadingly changed: the “Cartesian way” presupposes (through the “Cartesian epoche”) getting from factual (empirical) to the “essential Being”, which is “irreal (or ‘ideal’)”, and thus “... phenomenology should be a theory of essential Being, dealing not with real, but with transcendently reduced phenomena”²⁸, while the life-world approach is about dealing with what is *real*, and therefore means rather a *realistic* approach, instead of transcendental in the latter’s *original* sense.

Conclusion

In this paper, the main object of the investigation was the *mind-body problem*, conceived in a *two-fold way*: the *traditional (ontological)* and the *conceptual*. Special emphasis was put on Descartes’ latter problem, which I see as the foundation of the opposition between transcendental phenomenology and the natural sciences (as one of the “crises” described in Husserl’s last work).

It was shown that Descartes, the originator of these problems, as well as Husserl, had answers to the both of them. Descartes’ approach to the *traditional* mind-body problem was *explicitly* the *neuroscientific* one, while *implicitly*, it seems, Descartes anticipated the *living-body* (der Leib), as developed in Husserl’s phenomenology later on. Regarding the *conceptual* mind-body problem, it seemed that Descartes saw the phenomenological meaning (that of *mens*) and that of natural sciences (expressed by *res extensa*) in their *unity*, where *for us*, phenomenology is *primary*, while natural sciences — *secondary*.

The same goes for Husserl: in his “Crisis”, the phenomenological “third way” solution for the *ontological* mind-body problem is to be achieved through the description of the *living-body* (der Leib); the opposition between transcendental phenomenology and the natural sciences (as stemming from Descartes’ conceptual mind-body problem) can be dealt with through constantly going back to the foundation of the natural sciences — *transcendental subjectivity*. Thus, Husserl’s solution to the conceptual mind-body problem can be understood in alliance with Descartes as well.

It became clear through the development of this work that two crises are *independent* of each other. The same goes for two different phenomenological approaches: the *Cartesian way* (originally as *transcendental phenomenology*) and the *life-world approach*. They appear to be not only *independent of each other*, but also completely *incompatible*.

²⁷ Including *culture, history, men, person, moral custom, society, law, religion* etc. [Husserl, 2012: p. 96, 111, 117, 119; Hua III/1, S. 107, 122, 129, 132]. In general, everything related to natural and spiritual sciences (Geisteswissenschaft) must be bracketed: “Therewith, *all the sciences natural and mental* (alle Natur und Geisteswissenschaften), with the entire knowledge they accumulated, undergo disconnexion as sciences which require for their development the natural standpoint (natürlichen Einstellung)” [Husserl, 2012: p. 111; Hua III/1, S. 122].

²⁸ [Husserl, 2012: p. 4; Hua III/1, S. 6].

From the point of view of the *transcendental phenomenology*, the life-world is *contingent* and *dubitable* (as given through *senses*), and thus is *relative*, which enables us to *bracket* it. Therefore, the motivation for the *transcendental phenomenology* to be *critical* stems from the *contingency and dubitability* of sensuous givenness. On the other hand, sensuous givenness is *primary* for the *life-world phenomenology*.

Husserl's attempt to balance between these two approaches ended up with confusion of the very meaning of the "transcendental".

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