



The Experience of Nature in the Lifeworld

A experiência da natureza no mundo da vida

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Abstract

The problem posed to phenomenology with regard to nature is to counteract current trends that overlook the surrounding world of human beings. It is the lifeworld with which we are connected in our everyday life through perception, bodily movements, and immediate action. A true and authentic rationalism cannot ignore the lifeworld as the realm of original and ultimate evidence. The trend to regard it as unworthy must be set aside because intuition in prescientific life provides the foundation for the exact knowledge of science. In this manner, what remains outside the scope of scientific method is not a realm of unwarranted statements, and science itself can have a foundation. Great scientific discoveries entail as a negative side a concealment that concerns nature in general and in particular our lived body as an organ of perception and movement. The purpose of this paper is to explore the main characteristics of this development, that is to say, (i) the overlaying of a garb of ideas on the surrounding world, and (ii) the domination of the environment in an attitude that does not let things remain according to their own being, but rather forces itself on them. Both the concealment of the lifeworld by science and the incorporation of the products of science of the latter into the former entail a domination that requires a human answer. The overall situations of concealment and domination are reflected in the consideration

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of our lived body by means of (iii) a process of objectification that covers up its primal traits, and (iv) views that overlook its intrinsic correlation with nature.

Keywords: Lifeworld. Concealment. Domination. Lived body. Objectification.

Resumo

O problema apresentado à fenomenologia com relação à natureza é neutralizar as tendências atuais que ignoram o mundo circundante dos seres humanos. É o mundo da vida com o qual estamos conectados em nossa vida cotidiana por meio da percepção, dos movimentos corporais e da ação imediata. Um racionalismo verdadeiro e autêntico não pode ignorar o mundo da vida como o reino da evidência original e definitiva. A tendência de considerá-lo indigno deve ser deixada de lado porque a intuição na vida pré-científica fornece a base para o conhecimento exato da ciência. Dessa forma, o que permanece fora do escopo do método científico não é um reino de afirmações injustificadas, e a própria ciência pode ter um fundamento. As grandes descobertas científicas têm como lado negativo uma ocultação que diz respeito à natureza em geral e, em particular, ao nosso corpo vivo como um órgão de percepção e movimento. O objetivo deste artigo é explorar as principais características desse desenvolvimento, ou seja, (i) a sobreposição de uma roupagem de ideias ao mundo circundante e (ii) a dominação do ambiente em uma atitude que não permite que as coisas permaneçam de acordo com seu próprio ser, mas que se impõe sobre elas. Tanto o encobrimento do mundo da vida pela ciência quanto a incorporação dos produtos da ciência no primeiro implicam em uma dominação que exige uma resposta humana. As situações gerais de ocultação e dominação se refletem na consideração de nosso corpo vivido por meio de (iii) um processo de objetivação que encobre suas características primárias e (iv) visões que ignoram sua correlação intrínseca com a natureza.

Palavras-chave: Mundo da vida. Encobrimento. Dominação. Corpo vivido. Objetificação.

1. The concealment of the surrounding world

The lifeworld is the world that is always straightforwardly there as an underlying ground. It is the world of our everyday pre-theoretical experience that Edmund Husserl describes as “the forgotten meaning-fundament of natural science” (Hua VI: 48; 48).¹ A concealment of this natural and cultural primal human environment is produced by the development of scientific idealizations. We will begin by showing 1) the earth as the ground of all our actions, 2) the founding of sciences on the lifeworld, and 3) the incorporation of the products of science to the realm of everyday life.

1.1. Husserl has described the basis on which all human action evolves. The earth provides support for physical bodies that detach themselves from it and also for our lived bodies whose movements as a primary praxis presupposed by every kind of praxis take place on it. Thus every human being and every community have a home on the earth that, as a common play-space, sets the limits for concordant possibilities actualized by human beings. The earth can be depicted with the Biblical image of the arc, that is to say, a huge boat in which the whole mankind dwells. An acknowledgment of the importance of our everyday experience of the world amounts to an inversion of the Copernican theory. It is an experience in which the earth is not perceived as a body that moves, but rather as an orientation center or reference-point in relation to which movement or rest can be established. Even if science has shown that as a physical body it moves between other bodies and can be observed in all its sides, the earth always keeps a “constitutive dignity” in a priority that can be concealed, but not altered. Husserl contends that

the earth cannot at all lose its sense as ‘primal homeland’ (*Urheimstätte*), as arc of the world, just as my lived body cannot lose its sense as a primal lived body, from which every lived body derives a part of its being-sense [...] (1968, p. 319).

1.2. A true and authentic rationalism cannot ignore the lifeworld as the realm of original and ultimate evidence. The trend to regard it as unworthy must be set aside because intuition in prescientific life provides the foundation for the exact knowledge of science. In this manner, what remains outside the scope of scientific method is not a realm of unwarranted statements, and science itself can have a foundation. It would lack this support if it exhausted all the possibilities of reason. Husserl contends that reason is “a broad title,” and this means that “a one-sided rationality can certainly become an evil” (Hua VI, pp. 337-338; 290-291). Thus there is a previous rationality pertaining to the lifeworld because, for example, geometrical space is advanced beforehand in the lived space that is structured around the lived body according to its movements. In other words, science is not established on irrationality because scientific reason is preceded by the legitimation provided by a verification pertaining to the experience of the lifeworld. To uncover this previous stage does not entail disregarding the importance of science as “a triumph of the human spirit” (Hua VI, p. 343; 295), but rather is an attempt to show, as Ladrière stresses, the true scope of reason (1973, pp. 28-31).

Science can overlook its conditions of possibility and give rise to a scientific objectivism that overcomes the relativity of subjective experience by resorting to constructions that are characterized as determinations of things themselves. In this way there emerges a contrast between subjective-relative truths and the logical-objective truths of science. The former can be experienced in sensuous

¹ The reference is to *Husserliana. Gesammelte Werke*, cited as Hua, with the indication of volume and page. In the following section, quotations of Heidegger are to the *Gesamtausgabe*, cited as GA, with the indication of volume and page. See the Bibliography at the end of this paper. When both the original text in German and the English translation are consulted, the page number of the English translation will follow a semi-colon and the page number of the German text. All other translations are the author's.

perception whereas the latter are not perceived in this manner. Objectivism emerges when scientific formations separate themselves and become independent of the ground that supports them and the retrospective inquiry into their sense-origin is set aside. Husserl states that scientific knowledge is a “garb of ideas” (*Ideenkleid*) (Hua VI, p. 51; 51) that is thrown on the world of immediate experience. This is necessary from a methodological standpoint because it renders the attainment of a knowledge that otherwise would be impossible but is legitimate only if the outcome obtained is conscious of the limits of its field of research. Thus objectification as a matter of method is constituted as a second-order formation on the basis of the lifeworld.

The construction of a world in itself by means of science is paralleled by the substitution of the environment experienced in perception. The former is placed as the true world under the latter, and the latter is reduced to the condition of a mere appearance that conceals the true reality. This “theoretical-logical substruction” (Hua VI, p. 127; 130) occurs, for example, when the geometrical “construction” of a circle is placed “under” a round perceived figure that has its own inexact essence which is independent from the determinations of science. If the true meaning of the method of science is not kept in sight, the lifeworld is devalued. Nevertheless, it is not nullified in this concealment, and therefore the everyday life of perception and bodily actions can always come forth again if scientific-objective knowledge is bracketed.

Husserl’s point is that, by virtue of the relationship of founding, science receives a justification that contrasts with the lack of sense that affects objectivism. The process of founding has many facets. Some procedures of science are pre-delineated in the lifeworld. It is the case of measure and foresight. The empirical art of measuring enables us to determine sensuous experiences so that they can be communicated with an increasing degree of exactness. This means that the practical surveying of land comes before geometry that determines ideal forms objectively and overcomes the relativity of subjective apprehensions. Furthermore, the surrounding world given in sensuous intuition entails a foresight of the unknown according to an everyday induction that relies on regularities in the behavior of things and the relationship between them, and whose hypotheses remain within the limits of an approximating typicality. Thus, scientific induction develops as a perfected outcome of what is already operative in prescientific life.

A second modality of anticipation has to do with the contents of science. The lifeworld shows a relative-subjective or pre-logic a priori that differs from the objective-scientific constructions. It is characterized by a temporality structured around our lived present, a spatiality adjusted to the situation of our lived body, and a causal style that reflects the induction operating in the life-world:

As lifeworld the world has, even prior to science, the ‘same’ structures that the objective sciences presuppose in their substruction of a world which exists ‘in itself’ and is determined through ‘truths in themselves’ [...] (Hua VI, p. 142; 139).

Furthermore, scientists presuppose the lifeworld inasmuch as they see or listen to instruments. Smell plays a role in the task of a chemist. Subjective-relative aspects cannot be eliminated because scientists have to revert to what is given in sensuous perception. This is not what they attempt to study, but remains as an inescapable presupposition. Thus the experience of the lifeworld is not irrelevant because the world that is given through the senses of sight, hearing, touch and smell precedes theoretical operations, even if it is not the true real world for the scientist.

1.3. The lifeworld is not only the underlying ground for the constructions of science. It also includes them by way of sedimentation. The truths of science become formations within the subjective-

relative world. This means that scientific knowledge and the instruments produced by it can be used in everyday life without being thematic as such. Objective sciences render possible objects that are given in our immediate experience and with which we deal in a very familiar manner because we know how to use them and with what purposes. Also, the objective ideal truths of science belong to the concreteness of the lifeworld insofar as they provide information that has an effect on practical life, even if knowledge of their theoretical grounds is lacking. It is an information that increases the content of the lifeworld without imposing its ideal and exact view. The world must not necessarily be interpreted according to this view in order to live in a realm in which the consequences of science are experienced. This means that the contrast between the lifeworld and the world of science is weakened by this incorporation of the outcome of scientific activity into our everyday life.

2. The domination of the environment

Both the concealment of the lifeworld by science and the incorporation of the products of science of the latter into the former entail a domination that requires a human answer. A background for the analysis of the imposition of a “garb of ideas” on the lifeworld is provided by Martin Heidegger’s analyses on the contrast between imposing our views on things and letting them be as they manifest themselves. We must consider 1) the modes in which things come to presence, 2) the development that leads to the technical world, and 3) the ways in which this situation can be faced.

2.1. An analysis of things according to the modes of their coming-to-presence reveals different figures that have shaped their appearing in a process of increasing domination. Being revealed itself in the dawn of Western thought as “the coming-to-presence of what is present” (*das Anwesen des Anwesenden*). Being as coming-to-presence is what comes out of concealment and remains in unconcealment as the appearing in which what is present (beings) shows itself. Among the “fundamental characteristics of the coming-to-presence of what is present” (GA 8, p. 241; 237), we find unconcealment (*Unverborgenheit*), the coming hereby and the going away (*das Herbei- und das Hinweg*), the abiding while (*die Weile*), gathering (*die Versammlung*), and absenting into concealment (*das Abwesen in die Verborgenheit*). Heidegger’s example is that of mountains as they lie before us and are examined not from the viewpoint of geology or geography, but only as regards their coming-to-presence:

[...] what is present also has entered into what was already unconcealed: the mountain lies in the landscape. Its coming-to-presence is the rising entry into what is unconcealed (*aufgehendes Eingehen in das Unverborgene*), [...] (GA 8, p. 240; 236).

All this occurs as a coming forth that shines, abides, and can become concealed. Heidegger characterizes thinking as the letting-lie-forth and taking-under-care (*Vorliegen lassen und in der Acht nehmen*) beings in their Being. This reflects his reading in early Greek thought of the close kinship between *voεῖν* interpreted as letting what shows itself come forth and *λέγειν* interpreted as a gathering together and arrangement of what shows itself: “Care (*Acht*) is the wardship (*Wacht*) which takes under care (*in die Wahr nimmt*) the lying forth, and itself still needs the guarding which is accomplished in the *λέγειν* as gathering.” (GA 8, p. 210; 207)

Heidegger contends that, for Greek thinkers, what is present discloses itself in a facing which never has the character of an object as in the modern philosophy in which the *Gegen-* of *Gegenstand* is determined as “in front of” a representation that is thrown forth by the subject in a placing opposite

within a contrast. On the contrary, for Greek thinkers, the *Gegen-* of *Gegenüber* is disclosed in what suddenly comes upon us. In the verb *überkommen*, to overcome and surprise, the prefix has, more than the meaning of “over” and “beyond,” the meaning of coming unexpectedly to someone as in the verb *überraschen*, to surprise. Thus Heidegger’s contrast between the subject-object relation and the “realm of facing” (*Bereich der Gegenüber*) goes hand in hand with a difference between two extreme manners of developing the correlation: the manner in which the object depends on the subject, as Heidegger’s descriptions on machination show, and the manner in which the subject is guided by and abides by what is present as the descriptions of letting-lie-forth and taking-under-care suggest (see GA 10, p. 120, 129-130).

2.2. In further developments, our disclosure of things can be guided by the Aristotelian examination of beings as the realization of a form in a matter by means of production, the Cartesian figure of beings as an *ens certum* whose truth is posited by a subject that has certainty, the Kantian figure of beings as an *ens objectivum* whose objectivity is posited by an objectifying subject. Once beings are conceived as objects, the path is open for their coming-to-presence as supplies (*Bestände*) in the securing of stocks (*Bestandsicherung*). Technicity consists in a challenge to nature in order that it may free its potential energy. What manifests itself in this manner is present in the mode of stock materials and quantities that are calculated. Heidegger uses the word *Ge-Stell*, that can be translated as im-position in order to designate the mode in which modern technicity develops. This designation gathers, with the prefix *Ge-* that has a totalizing meaning and joins the nuances of unconcealment and defiance in words that include the German verb *stellen*, “to posit”: “put out” (*heraus-stellen*), “reserve” (*be-stellen*), “produce” (*her-stellen*), “represent” (*vor-stellen*), and “set forth” (*dar-stellen*). Im-position can also be characterized by the word “machination” (*Machenschaft*), whose distinctive traits are calculation, acceleration, and the outbreak of massiveness. All beings must adjust to calculation, and what is incalculable is only what has not been yet mastered in this way. Acceleration consists in the increase of technical speeds, “which means not-being-able-to-bear the stillness of hidden growth and awaiting, [...]” (GA 65, p. 84; 120-121). And the outbreak of massiveness is the outcome of calculation and acceleration, and can be exemplified by “the calculated, swift, massive distribution of information that is not understood to as many as possible in the shortest possible time” (GA 65, p. 85; 121-122). Heidegger refers to “the darkening of the world and the destruction of the earth in the sense of *acceleration, calculation, the claim of massiveness*” (GA 65, p. 83; 119). The growing significance of these three facets of the unboundedness of machination amount to the particular features of our epoch: “There is in principle no ‘impossible’: one ‘hates’ this word; everything is humanly possible, if only everything is taken into account in advance, in every aspect, and if the conditions are furnished” (GA 65, p. 95; 136).

2.3. Machination is contrasted with “releasement” (*Gelassenheit*) as an attitude that lets things be in their pristine condition without anticipating what could amount to a domination. *Gelassenheit* is a word that, in opposition to *Gestell*, joins series of compounds of the verb *lassen* that means “to let be”: “to give away” (*sich loslassen*), “to introduce oneself” (*sich einlassen*), and “to abandon oneself” or “to devote oneself wholly to” (*sich überlassen*). These meanings converge in the characterization of a manner of acting, feeling, and thinking required to deal with machination. Releasement lets things appear in the originary realm in which they are manifest in and through themselves.

In a development of Heidegger’s meditation on technicity, Jan Patočka states that technical civilization renders possible what no previous community has been able to produce: a life devoid of violence with equal opportunities for all. It is impossible to fight against misery if we overlook the means that technical civilization has provided. Yet the situation is more complex than this because a struggle against misery cannot be accomplished only with technical means. The reason is that reality

as a whole has been mobilized by them in order to achieve a liberation of forces, and this leads to conflicts with a planetary scope. Confronted with this situation, we must stop believing that we have “the right to use and make abuse of what the persevering and unconscious labor of the sun and the stars has accumulated during billions of years” (1990, p. 324). This means that, in a due consideration of future generations, an era of economizing must be imagined. The fact that current times are characterized by collective work and understanding, in which groups of individuals working together in a cooperative activity are the owners of knowledge, could lead to an acute responsibility regarding these generations if this collective situation is conceived in a horizon of succession and not exclusively in a horizon of simultaneity. A new view on the idea of freedom will enable us to understand that, instead of making permanent demands, we must turn down possibilities in a continuous task of self-limitation.

3. The objectification of the lived body

A characteristic of the process of objectification and manipulation is the consideration of our own body as a thing among things. This leaves aside its originary condition of a lived body. In this regard three topics must be dealt with: 1) the originary relation of the lived body with the world; 2) the originary relation of the lived body with itself; and 3) the loss of these originary relations.

3.1. The originary relation of the lived body with the world has been described by Maurice Merleau-Ponty by means of two simultaneous and convergent phenomena. On the one hand, the lived body belongs to the visible and tangible world. It is a thing among sensuous things that are accessible to our senses, but we cannot experience inwardly. On the other hand, the lived body is capable of seeing and touching things by means of an inversion of what is experienced as visible and tangible into a vision and touch that experiences them. Thus the lived body shows itself as a prolongation of the world in which all other things are registered, and the world as a prolongation of the lived body because all other sensuous things are extracted or uprooted from it. Merleau-Ponty speaks of an actualization of the hidden visibility and tangibility of nature, and understands experience as an adherence of what experiences to what is experienced and of what is experienced to what experiences. Both sides of this correlation are named the flesh of the lived body and the flesh of the world.

Flesh is the dimension in which nature and consciousness can communicate in a deeper relationship which is prior to the view according to which nature is an independent reality and consciousness is a representation of objects. The link of the lived body with two different orders introduces a “sensuous sentience” and a phenomenon of reversibility by which both sides make up an originary interweaving of the lived body with nature. This implies a one-in-another (*Ineinander*) in a relationship in which each of the related terms is at the same time a term that involves the other and is involved by it. This relationship of reciprocal belongingness is described as a simultaneous process in which nature dominates us insofar as we apprehend it, and, inversely, we take possession of it in knowledge insofar as it takes possession of us. These views make nature understandable as “the other side of human being (as flesh – and in no manner as ‘matter’” (1964, p. 328). Merleau-Ponty refers to a structure that is present now, is always new, and is always the same: “Nature is [...] our basis (*Boden*), not what is in front of us, but rather what supports us (*ce qui nous porte*)” (1968, p. 20).

Limits to construction are set by the facticity of Nature as a dimension that, in the depth of the present, withdraws itself in a resistance to the attempts of disclosure made by intentional analysis. This dimension amounts to a primal order to which every construction must submit because, as Merleau-Ponty puts it: “The natural world is the horizon of all horizons, the style of all possible styles, which guarantees for my experiences a given, not a willed, unity underlying all the disruptions of my personal

and historical life" (1945, p. 381). Merleau-Ponty contends that there is a "gift of nature" to which a new meaning must be given, and highlights that "nature finds its way to the core of my personal life and becomes inextricably linked with it, [...]" (1945, p. 147). The natural world includes the earth as the ground that supports from below all the movements of the lived body. Our condition of terrestrial beings joins our bodiliness to define "the carnal *Urhistorie*" (1964, p. 312), or, as Husserl put it, the "unique primal history" (*einzigste Urhistorie*) with reference to which "relative histories" are to be considered "episodes" (1968, p. 319). Nature entails a productivity that permanently interpellates us and puts limitations on our possibilities of construction. The relationship between interpellation and response makes a way to the distinction between originary productivity and artificial productivity: "The concept of nature," as Merleau-Ponty writes,

not only recalls the residuum of what has not been constructed by me, but also a productivity that is not ours although we can employ it, an originary productivity that continues under the artificial productions of human beings (1995, p. 169).

Thus nature is presupposed as a "matrix" that situates all human beings in a unique world, and Merleau-Ponty can speak of "a common truth (*une vérité commune*) that subjects would continue, but of which they would not be the beginners" (1995, p. 111).

3.2. According to Michel Henry, there is something prior to the bodily knowledge of the world described by Merleau-Ponty. It is life described as the self-experience of the lived body or flesh, that is to say, the knowledge that the lived body has of itself. The ability to know the world by means of the lived body—as the totality of our powers we have regarding the world—has to be previously within our power in order to be put to practice. The intentional lived body that opens up the world presupposes the originary "I can" of the subjective body that reveals itself to itself in the inner experience of movement and emotional feeling. For example, the prehensile power of our hands cannot be, in the actuality of putting it into practice, an external and strange power. It is the first power of taking possession of oneself and coinciding with oneself in the immanence of a radical inwardness. Powers placed in the emotional immanence are given constantly with no discontinuity. Situated in the powers as their innermost possibility, self-affection can set them in motion at will. All the lived body's powers regarding the world cannot operate if they are not given to themselves in self-affection. In other words, Henry distinguishes between appearing in the perception of the external world and appearing in the domain of inwardness, and states that "our own living body is, with its duplicity, at the same time an effect of the duplicity of appearing and its irrefutable proof" (2000, p. 216).

A process is described that begins with the lived body, goes through the organic body and the body conceived as a thing, and ends in an object of manipulation. The lived body is given in the inner experience of movement and feeling, whereas the organic body is the immediate and movable term of that movement. The organic body adapts itself to the prompting of the living body and offers a first relative resistance. Its different organs are not external to each other because they are kept together by the "I can." Another mode of resistance emerges when the thrust of the lived body comes across an absolute obstacle established by an opaque and inert mass that limits its powers. This occurs when the lived body is unable to insert its self-affection in the organic body. The body itself is then experienced in an external perception as a thing that appears in the world and of which we have sensations that render possible the constitution of objective sensuous qualities similar to other things. Considered objectively and reduced further to an object of scientific investigation, the body is eventually exposed to technical manipulation. To consider life as something impersonal and, therefore, as a

physicochemical reality implies “an interpretation of human reality which will identify it, as in cognitivism, with its neuronal and genetic potentiality. The time of Nazi physicians is not far away” (2000, p. 259; see pp. 209-222, 232).

3.3. Life can be experienced in two radically opposite ways. It can be lived according to accomplishments that compose the self-realization of subjectivity as a self-experience or self-affection. But it is also possible to forget this emotional relationship in the process of objectification. Science is also a modality of culture because it is the self-actualization of a potentiality of life and thus a manifestation of affectivity associated, even if this is not its purpose, with the pleasure of understanding and knowing. Nevertheless, science is a peculiar modality of culture because it turns against life inasmuch as it undertakes a twofold abstraction. First, it advances in the abovementioned abstraction that, according to Husserl, defines the scientific world as such. All subjective properties are set aside in order to maintain only those forms that submit to an ideal determination. Secondly, in a strong exclusion, which goes beyond the elimination highlighted by Husserl, science proceeds to the exclusion of life itself with the supposition that truth is alien to the sphere of subjectivity and belongs exclusively to the domain of objectivity. It implies a self-negation of life because it considers scientific culture as the only mode of culture with the aim of discrediting all the traditional modes. This has guided the Modern age toward a situation of helplessness and leads to barbarianism understood as a regression in the modalities in which life can be accomplished, that is to say, a disappearance of the aesthetical, ethical, and religious dimensions of culture. Henry contends that knowledge is reduced to the knowledge of science, culture is identified with scientific culture, and the ideologies of barbarianism emerge as views that rely on objectivity and withdraw from life (see 1987, pp. 110-112, 127-130).

Technicity is primarily a setting in motion of the powers of life, and one of the first modalities of culture based on the original “know-how” of a praxis that self-affects itself. Insofar as it coincides with individual and spontaneous activity, technicity is nothing other than an expression of life. In a second stage, in view of the impossibility of bringing about a desired effect, living individuals invent instruments that render possible a modification of the world by stamping a form on it. Instruments appear as a part of the organic body because they serve as a medium to convey the efforts of the subjective body and its “I can”. In a further step, a radical revolution that undermines human beings emerges. This happens when the possibility and regulation of action does not depend on the knowledge of life, but rather on the knowledge of science. This means that processes grounded on theory are abandoned to themselves, so that they put themselves in motion by themselves. After eliminating life by reducing it to an objective process, technicity brings forth its own end, and the outcome is that the powers of the lived body are substituted by the objective devices of machines. Living individuals are excluded and their productive activity is transferred to mechanisms that become autonomous because they regulate themselves. The only real action that remains—an action that consists in the feeling that one acts—is the movement of a propelling knob required or allowed by an objective device instructed by science. When the device is instructed in such a manner that it is capable of controlling itself, the intervention of life tends to disappear. Subjective individual praxis is not only reduced to stereotyped acts, but also becomes a total passivity when the objective device commands the nature and the modalities of the minimum that remains to be done. Henry claims that “the exclusion of subjectivity leads to the devastation of the earth by the asubjective nature of technicity [...]” (1987, p. 242).

4. The correlation between lived body and nature

After analyzing the secondary objectivation of nature and the lived body, it is worth observing the striking differences offered by the primal correlation between them. To take into account this correlation, we will examine: 1) the depth structure of the lived body; 2) the well-being of the lived body in the midst of the earth-sky relationship, and 3) the bodily appropriation by which the lived body becomes an inhabitant-owner of the earth and gives an affective coloring to the correlation.

4.1. Heinrich Rombach examines the depth structures of the lived body. First, he considers the “bodily person” (*Leibperson*) as the result of personal actions that work on the general biological system in order to generate an individual form that gives the system an individual particularity and endows it with a spiritual dimension. This is why Blaise Pascal spoke of an *esprit du corps*. That the body is a consequence of one’s own action can be seen in the neglect of the organs that are not adjusted to the acquired individual sense. The bodily person has its own language as a mode of personal manifestation. Listening to it requires an acute hearing, and Rombach argues that the motto “Back to nature” (*Zurück zur Natur*) only makes sense when it is referred to this turn in the orientation of life toward the inside and the depth of the lived body (see 1987, pp. 300-302).

Another depth structure is the “earthly body” (*Erdenleib*) by which we participate in the life of the earth. Human beings are submerged in and grounded on this structure from which they receive strength and guidelines. Therefore, they are different depending on whether they have lived on mountains, in prairies, or by the sea. Furthermore, seasons are significant in human life because diverse spaces for our lives are outlined by creative spring, the warmth of mature age, the consummation of autumn, and wintry extinction. This retrospective linkage of human beings with the earth as a depth structure has been clearly represented by the myth of Antaeus, the giant that had an enormous strength and was invincible as long as he stepped on the earth with both legs, and was only overwhelmed when Hercules raised him and interrupted this contact. Carl Gustav Carus (1789-1869), a physician and philosopher of Romanticism, has been an advocate of “earthly life” (*Erdleben*) and linked this expression with a natural religion in which the earth is the unique temple and delight with woods a distinctive trait. Rombach stresses that it is not a matter of poetical fancy, but rather the disclosure of a human dimension.

Two other depth structures of human beings are mentioned. There is an animal dimension due to the fact that the previous stages of evolution remain alive in our existence by way of comfortableness, sexuality, self-affirmation, preying, and so forth. And a vegetative dimension appears as a principle that guides growth and reproduction. In sum, human being appear as a “superformation” (*Überformung*) of all these more elementary depth structures (see 1987, pp. 302-306).

As the outcome of his views on the depth structures, Rombach stresses a distant goal to which we must strive and which is within our reach when we aim at it correctly. It is the goal in which man becomes natural and nature human:

Only when nature can reflect itself in the humaneness of man, and man can reflect itself in the naturalness of nature, does nature a such emerge in man and does man find a way back to himself as man. This is neither possible in an easy way, nor completely impossible (1987, p. 345).

4.2. Supported by notions developed by Husserl and Heidegger, Klaus Held has analyzed our situation of human beings that live on the earth and under the sky. Both regions are referred one to another because they need each other, although at the same time they are in conflict. The earth

supports us and lets us develop because it contains the materials with which things and we ourselves are made. It both appears in this manner and conceals itself in confinement and sheer darkness. Even if we can penetrate in it and illuminate its inner darkness with technical means, earth is in itself obscure and closed. In contrast to this obscurity, sky is the dimension of clarity that lightens up things that emerge from the earth. But this clarity also has a hidden reverse because the sky is a place for many places and cannot be pointed out as the places that are outlined in it. This amounts to a luminous expansion in the sense of a space that is situated over us and cannot be apprehended.

Our lived body is situated the midst of the polarity earth-sky, which in turn is tied to the polarity between hotness and coldness and the polarity between dryness and dampness. We have a feeling of well-being when these sensuous qualities pertaining to touch keep to a normal measure. Inversely, we feel uncomfortable when a moderate degree of these sensuous qualities is lacking. These opposite poles are common invariant elements in all cultures, although their manifestation may vary in different lifeworlds. They are opposed states that depend on the intricate connection of earth and sky, and struggle to assert themselves, but only attain a provisional predominance over their opposite.

According to Held, the polarities join earth and sky together. With regard to the sky they are associated with periods of the day, the change of day and night, and the sequence of seasons. They appear as modes in which we feel well or uneasy in our bodily disposition due to our being included in the surrounding climate. Our bodily disposition is influenced by the sky as the realm in which the polarities struggle, and an equilibrium is decisive for its well-being. The loss of a normal level in favor of extreme degrees, exposes the lived body to dangers and to death. With regard to the earth, the polarities are experienced by the sense of touch as qualitative states of the material things that originate in it. We experience the inaccessibility of the earth through the resistance that it offers when heat, coldness, dryness, and dampness disturb our sense of touch (see 1998, pp. 21-41, and 1999, pp. 31-44).

4.3. If we now turn back to Henry, we find that he contends that nature is not only a depth dimension, but also a reality correlated with our lived body in its emotional dimension. The abovementioned self-denial of life leads to the idea of a nature strange to life. The true natural world is the lifeworld, that is to say, a sensuous world in which our emotions project affective states on it so that things are experienced from the very beginning as menacing, sad, or indifferent. This means that they do not acquire emotional tonalities subsequently as the consequence of a relation with our wishes and interests. We never face a pure spectacle with an empty and impersonal look, but rather inhabit the earth according to a “body-appropriation” in the sense that the earth is the fluctuating correlate of our bodily behavior and also an insurmountable limit whose fixedness is determined by this behavior. Therefore, the earth can be characterized as “bodily-appropriated” insofar as it is actualized in the realization of the potentialities pertaining to the “I can.” We must primarily consider the earth as that on which we can step, the air as that which we can breathe, surfaces and volumes as that which we can touch, light as that which lights up in the subjectivity of our visual experience, and so forth. Henry writes: “We name bodily-appropriation (*Corpsappropriation*) this original co-appropriation (*Copropriation*)—so original that it makes us owners of the world [...]”; and adds that this bodily-appropriation “makes us inhabitants of the Earth at the same time that we are its owners” (1987, p. 83).

In sum, due to the connected system made up by the radical immanence of the lived body that strives to do something, the organic body that lets itself be conducted by the striving, and the earth that resists the striving, Henry can highlight that nature is only strange to life as the outcome of an abstraction introduced by science that overlooks its sensuous condition and its relationship with the lived body. He vividly contrasts abstract nature to nature tied to self-affection in the following passage:

Such a nature, in spite of the green spaces that one pretends to safeguard in it, is neither *green* nor *blue*, is not *rosy* when the sun raises itself, nor *desolate* when the night approaches. In it brooks do not flow over stones, which do not *glitter* in light, the sky is never *threatening* nor is the river *serene*, and this is so because there is no place in it for colors, shining light, or serenity, nor for threats – because what shelters in itself colors, threats and joys, and makes them possible in its self-affection and through it, has been excluded from nature and precisely does not exist in it, and does not exist anywhere, except as this previous dimension of illusions which we are truly, is called subjectivity and has been decided not to take into account” (1987, p. 132).

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