



Rethinking Husserl's lifeworld: The many faces of the world in Heidegger's early Freiburg lecture courses

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Abstract

This paper examines the concept of the world elaborated by Heidegger in the early Freiburg lecture courses of the years 1919 to 1923, in which he proposes a renewed conception of phenomenology through a comparison with Husserlian phenomenology. First, I show that although the theme of the lifeworld became central only in late Husserlian works, especially in *The Crisis of European Sciences*, Husserl began to deal with this concept before 1920, anticipating some fundamental issues of the *Crisis*, as it results from the lectures of 1919 on *Natur und Geist*. Husserl had addressed the concept of the world already in the lectures of 1910/11, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, and, subsequently, in the second book of *Ideas*, which was published posthumously, but which was known to the young Heidegger. Then, I discuss the way in which Heidegger revisited the issue of the world in the early Freiburg lecture courses by means of a critique of Husserl's analysis, focusing on perceptual experience as “environmental experience” and on the “world-character” of life. Particular emphasis is placed on the distinction between “envirning-world,” “with-world,” and “self-world,” which Heidegger introduces in the lectures of 1919–1920. Finally, I point out that the Heideggerian rethinking of the concept of lifeworld is closely connected to the recognition of the immanent historicity of life, while Husserl only later takes into account the historicity of the lifeworld.

Keywords Husserl · Heidegger · Phenomenology · Lifeworld · Experience · Historicity

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1 The early Husserl on lifeworld

Heidegger develops the concept of the world already in the early Freiburg lecture courses of the years 1919 to 1923, in which he proposes a renewed conception of phenomenology through a comparison with Husserlian phenomenology, and in particular with the Husserlian concept of “Lifeworld” (*Lebenswelt*). In this paper, I first want to show that although the theme of the lifeworld becomes central only in later works, especially in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, Husserl begins to deal with this concept before 1920, anticipating some fundamental issues of the *Crisis*.¹ Moreover, I intend to discuss the way in which Heidegger revisited the issue of the world in the early Freiburg lecture courses by means of a critique of Husserl’s analysis, focusing on perceptual experience as “environmental experience” and on the “world-character” of life. Finally, I will point out that the Heideggerian rethinking of the concept of lifeworld is closely connected to the recognition of the immanent historicity of life, while Husserl only later takes into account, but in a different way, the historicity of the lifeworld. In fact, the major point I want to make is that Heidegger’s understanding of the lifeworld radically differs from Husserl’s precisely in its emphasis on the historical nature of *life* itself. Although in the 1920s Husserl’s concept of the lifeworld expands to include the historical and cultural dimension, it should be noted that for Heidegger it is the *self* that is historical in itself.

Husserl’s concept of lifeworld is linked to that of “natural attitude” (*natürliche Einstellung*). In the lectures of 1923/1924 on *First Philosophy* Husserl explains that in the natural attitude the intentional life of consciousness does not manifest itself, because it is completely “given over and lost in the world.”² The natural attitude is based on an unexpressed and naive faith in the real existence of the world, which is experienced in its obviousness. Instead, Husserl intends to bring to light this intuitive world, which is already given in pre-scientific experience, since it is the presupposition of all science.

Husserl addresses this theme already in his teaching years in Göttingen, and specifically in the lectures of the 1907 summer semester entitled *Ding und Raum*, where he claims that “in the natural attitude of spirit, an existing world stands before our eyes,” a world in which we are included: “We find ourselves to be centers of reference for the rest of the world; it is our environment. (...) In this same world I also find other Egos. They, like us, have their environment in this same world.”³ Husserl intends to demonstrate that this immediately given perceptual world is the basis not only of science, but also of phenomenology as a rigorous science. However, the natural attitude must be replaced by the phenomenological attitude, which can be obtained through the phenomenological *epoché*, which suspends the naive belief in the existence of the world.

¹ Cf Husserl (1970). On the many meanings of lifeworld in Husserl, cf. Claesges (1972). See also Lee (2020).

² Husserl (2019, p. 324). Husserl’s concept of the natural attitude, together with its correlate, i.e. the “surrounding world,” is a “major discovery” (cf. Moran 2013, p. 111).

³ Husserl (1997, pp. 2–3).

The notion of natural attitude was developed in the lectures of 1910/1911 on *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, the subtitle of which indicates that the central theme is the “natural concept of the world.” This concept had previously been elaborated by Richard Avenarius, to whom Husserl dedicates an “instructive *excursus*.”⁴ The natural concept of the world is of fundamental importance for Husserl precisely because it is that of the natural attitude.⁵ Indeed, the lectures begin with the description of “the *natural* attitude, in which we all live and from which we thus start when we bring about the philosophical transformation of our viewpoint.”⁶ This attitude, in which the ego “*finds* himself, and he finds himself at all times as a center of a *surrounding*,” lies at the basis of the “phenomenological reduction,” which Husserl introduced for the first time during the lectures of 1906/1907.⁷ Husserl states that “the natural attitude is therefore the attitude of experience,” but the crucial point is that “experience has its legitimacy,” on which the judgments of science are also founded.⁸ In fact, even when the sciences refer to what is not experienced, as in the case of the exact sciences, they remain dependent on this foundation of legitimacy, that is, on the immediate given of experience. In this regard, Husserl notes that the world of the natural attitude is not something that is definitively overcome once the scientific attitude is adopted: “The natural concept of the world is not that concept which humans have formed for themselves prior to science; rather, it is the concept of the world that comprises the sense of the natural attitude both before and after science.”⁹ Indeed, Husserl maintains that the natural concept of the world is not contingent, but “*valid in an absolute and a priori sense*.”¹⁰ On the contrary, Avenarius does not exclude that the natural concept of the world could be rationally modified on the basis of reasons deriving from experience. By means of *epoché* and reduction Husserl intends to achieve that “transformation of our viewpoint” that characterizes phenomenology. In this way we can understand another criticism addressed to Avenarius, who would not make the fundamental distinction between the empirical ego, which is present in the world, and the transcendental ego.¹¹ The reason is that Avenarius had not grasped the need to implement that neutralization of the thesis of existence in which the phenomenological *epoché* consists.

Husserl takes up the description of the natural attitude and the natural concept of the world in the first book of *Ideas* (1913), at the beginning of the second section, entitled *The Considerations Fundamental to Phenomenology*. Indeed, in a 1937 text, published as an appendix to *Krisis*, Husserl states that “in *Ideas* the starting point of the path was the ‘natural concept of the world.’ It is the ‘concept’ of the world of the

⁴ Cf Husserl (2006, pp. 22–28).

⁵ Cf *Ibid.*, p. 15. In these lectures, the description of the natural attitude, though short, is “extraordinarily rich” (cf. Carr 2014, p. 176).

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2. Cf Husserl (2008b, p. 206).

⁸ Husserl (2006, pp. 10–11).

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 27, note 43; trans. modified.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 26. See Carr (2014, p. 180).

¹¹ “One must differentiate, and Avenarius has not done so, the process of finding things in advance in experience and finding things in advance in the phenomenological attitude” (*Ibid.*, p. 110).

‘natural attitude’ or, as I say better now, the pre- and extra-scientific lifeworld.”¹² In fact, in the first book of *Ideas*, Husserl connects the natural attitude to the “*natural world*,” that is, to “the world in the usual sense of the word,” which must be “put in brackets” by means of the phenomenological *epoché*.¹³ However, the approach of *Ideas* is somewhat different from that of the lectures of 1910/1911, because in the volume of 1913 the eidetics has priority, with the aim of showing the radical difference between the way of being of consciousness and that of the world. On the other hand, in the lectures on *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* Husserl intends to carry out “an experiential phenomenology (...) which is not a theory concerned with essence.”¹⁴

The text in which Husserl uses the term *Lebenswelt* for the first time is probably Appendix XIII to the second book of *Ideas*, which dates back to the late '10s.¹⁵ It is noteworthy that Heidegger was familiar with the research contained in the second book of *Ideas*, which is composed of materials dating largely from the later years of Göttingen (1912–1915), and he appreciated them more than those of the first book.¹⁶ In Section Three, entitled *The Constitution of the Spiritual World*, Husserl describes the “surrounding world” (*Umwelt*) in relation to the “personalistic attitude,” partially taking up the analysis of the lectures of 1910–1911 and of the first book of *Ideas*. The surrounding world as “personal world” is the world that the egological subject experiences, and therefore is “a world ‘for me.’”¹⁷ This text thus anticipates, at least in some respects, the theme of the lifeworld that Husserl will develop in *Krisis*. But it is only in Appendix XIII that Husserl introduces the concept of lifeworld, noting that “the lifeworld of persons escapes natural science.”¹⁸ In fact, from a methodological point of view, the lifeworld is not about causality but about motivation. More precisely, “the lifeworld is the natural world—in the attitude of natural life we are living functioning subjects.”¹⁹ Phenomenology, as “apriori description,” has to address the life of the subject in order to identify “the essential form of a surrounding world” and, correlatively, “the essential form of personality.”²⁰ In this text, however, the concept of lifeworld also takes on a second connotation, which comes closest to the natural concept of the world, since Husserl intends to describe “the essential structure of a world that remains intuitive,” that is, “the ‘transcendental-aesthetic world.’”²¹

Husserl therefore begins to deal with the theme of the lifeworld at the end of the '10s, contrary to the claim of some interpreters, who suggest that it assumes a certain

¹² Husserl (1993, p. 425; trans. mine). Cf Moran (2013, pp. 106–107).

¹³ Husserl (1983, p. 54). “In the natural attitude nothing else but the natural world is seen” (Ibid., p. 66).

¹⁴ Husserl (2006, p. 1, note 1).

¹⁵ Cf Husserl (1989, pp. 382–386). Marly Biemel, editor of the volume, dates it to 1917, Dermot Moran to the years 1918–1920 (cf. Moran 2013, p. 115).

¹⁶ Heidegger refers to the research of the second (unpublished) part of the *Ideas* in a note in paragraph 10 of *Being and Time* (cf. Heidegger 1962, p. 489, note ii).

¹⁷ Husserl (1989, p. 196).

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 384.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 385.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 385.

²¹ Ibid., p. 386. Cf Kerckhoven (1985, p. 186).

importance only in the late period.²² However, in the texts of the *Nachlass* published under the title *Die Lebenswelt* and dating back to these years, there is neither a single definition of the term *Lebenswelt*, nor a systematic treatment of this concept, which takes on different meanings.²³ In the '20s Husserl's investigation, which was initially addressed to the field of "transcendental aesthetics" and considered the lifeworld as a world of intuition and perception, expands, taking into consideration also the historical and cultural dimension of the lifeworld, which will become central in *Krisis*.²⁴ It is precisely here that a fundamental difference emerges compared to Heidegger's analysis in the early Freiburg lecture courses, since from the beginning the lifeworld is for him a "temporal-historical phenomenon."²⁵

The concept of lifeworld is present in the lectures given by Husserl in Freiburg in the 1919 summer semester, entitled *Natur und Geist* (Nature and Spirit). These lectures are particularly important because they are among those that Heidegger attended.²⁶ Here Husserl uses the term *Lebenswelt*, without, however, explicitly clarifying it, to express the pre-scientific world of experience: "A world of experience, an intuitive world is already given to our scientific activities even if only occasionally, a world that, in accordance with consciousness, is there for us immediately and remains there, even if all thoughts (...) that come from science disappear."²⁷ The scientific operations thus form an "upper layer" that is founded on the lifeworld.²⁸ With reference to Kantian transcendental aesthetics, understood as a doctrine of sensible and intuitive objects, Husserl intends to develop an a priori science of the world of experience. This "transcendental aesthetics" concerns "the *typical structure of the pre-given world*."²⁹ Husserl's analysis is therefore aimed at the "pre-given lifeworld," understood as the "world of pure and sensible intuition."³⁰ In this way Husserl outlines "the necessary task to describe the intuitive lifeworld in its concrete typicality," even if in the lectures he actually limits himself to a transcendental aesthetics of the physical nature.³¹

These quotes already suggest the closeness between the Husserlian issue of the lifeworld and the analysis that Heidegger carries out in the early Freiburg lecture courses, starting from the one held in the war emergency semester of 1919. How-

²² See for instance Landgrebe (1981, p. 122).

²³ Cf Husserl (2008a).

²⁴ On the Husserlian transcendental aesthetics, see Rochus Sowa's introduction to *Die Lebenswelt* (cf. Husserl 2008a, pp. L–LII). Some interpreters believe that in the Husserlian texts there is a discrepancy between "lifeworld as cultural world and lifeworld as world of immediate experience" (Carr 1970, p. 337), while others argue that if the concept of perception is correctly understood as "original, intuitive givenness," then there is no difficulty in assembling under the concept of lifeworld both the world of perception and the cultural world (cf. Staiti 2014, p. 249).

²⁵ Cf Campbell (2012, p. 232). In this respect, Heidegger was strongly influenced by the *Lebensphilosophie* and therefore by authors such as Dilthey.

²⁶ Cf Kisiel and Sheehan (2010, p. 116).

²⁷ Husserl (2002, p. 18, note 1; all translations of this work are mine).

²⁸ Cf *Ibid.*, p. 18, note 1. Husserl also speaks of a "pre-theoretical lifeworld" (*Ibid.*, p. 223).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 227–228.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

ever, some fundamental differences also emerge. First of all, Husserl conceives phenomenology as “transcendental phenomenology,” i.e. as “a priori science of pure consciousness.”³² Furthermore, the phenomenological attitude that Husserl describes implies that the phenomenologist is a “radically uninvolved spectator of the world.”³³ On the contrary, Heideggerian phenomenology does not address pure consciousness, but “life in and for itself,” in which we are necessarily involved, since life is “something from which we have no distance to see it (...), because we are it itself.”³⁴ The phenomenology of the young Heidegger therefore appears as a “hermeneutical phenomenology of the lifeworld,” whose starting point is not the critique of the “natural attitude,” as in Husserl, but the critique of the theoretical attitude, which characterizes not only the sciences, but also Husserl’s phenomenology itself.³⁵

2 Revisiting the lifeworld with the young Heidegger

Already in the lectures held in the war emergency semester of 1919 Heidegger introduces the theme of the “environmental experience” (*Umwelterlebnis*) in order to criticize the “theoretical attitude,” which in his opinion includes Husserl’s phenomenology.³⁶ Incidentally, the term *Lebenswelten* (in the plural form) is also present in the preparatory notes, dating back to the years 1918–1919, for a lecture course on *The Philosophical Foundations of Medieval Mysticism*, which was supposed to be held in the winter semester of 1919/1920.³⁷ In its place, Heidegger gave the lectures entitled *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, where the theme of the world becomes central. In the lectures of 1919 Heidegger rethinks Husserl’s phenomenology in order to develop a pre-theoretical “*primordial science*,” thus laying the foundations for a *hermeneutic* conversion of phenomenology itself, no longer based on the method of reduction.³⁸ This is confirmed in *Being and Time*, where Heidegger writes that “the analysis of the environing-world (*Umwelt*) and, in general terms, the ‘hermeneutics of facticity’ of *Dasein*” have been elaborated “since the winter semester of 1919/1920.”³⁹ However, Heidegger begins to deal with the theme of the world already during the war emergency semester of 1919, even if in these years he does not even use the term “*Dasein*,” but speaks of “factual life.”⁴⁰ In particular, Heidegger refers to the

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 85–86.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

³⁴ Heidegger (2013, pp. 2, 24).

³⁵ Cf Gander (2017, p. XIX).

³⁶ Cf Heidegger (2008, p. 56).

³⁷ Cf Heidegger (2004, p. 248).

³⁸ Cf Heidegger (2008, p. 75). Heidegger states that in the phenomenological reduction “I am precisely *not* participating, I take no position,” while “if one starts out from understanding itself then one comes directly to the demand to ‘participate’ in personal life-experience” (Heidegger 2013, p. 192).

³⁹ Heidegger (1962, p. 490, note i; trans. modified).

⁴⁰ Cf Heidegger (2013, p. 188). On the possibility of backdating Heidegger’s remark, cf. Kisiel (1993, p. 16).

“world-character (*Weltcharakter*) of life,” which indicates the context of significance in which life is situated.⁴¹

Heidegger's “phenomenological decade” thus begins in 1919, although there are several differences between the “hermeneutics of facticity” of the early Freiburg lecture courses and the analysis developed in the lectures held in Marburg and in *Being and Time*.⁴² The fundamental difference is represented by the “question of being” (*Seinsfrage*), which becomes central in the work of 1927. Here Heidegger argues that the theme of the world must be understood on the basis of a “fundamental ontology,” while in the early lectures the theme of the world was not at all connected to the question of being, which had not yet been introduced.

In the lectures of 1919 Heidegger outlines the essential characteristics of experience, considering it from the beginning as situated in the world. With an emphatic expression, he says that philosophy itself is at a “methodological cross-road.” It has to decide whether to turn to objectivity, through knowledge, or to environmental experience, through a “leap” into the world.⁴³ In the lectures of the years 1920/1921 Heidegger maintains that “life experience is more than mere experience which takes cognizance of. It designates the whole active and passive pose of the human being toward the world.”⁴⁴ In this context, he indicates “what is experienced—what is lived as experience—as the ‘world,’ not the ‘object.’ ‘World’ is that in which one can *live* (one cannot live in an object).”⁴⁵ The world is therefore the context of significance in which there is the possibility of experiencing.

Moreover, in the lectures of 1919 Heidegger focuses on perceptual experience understood as “environmental experience.” By means of a sort of “phenomenological exercise” he intends to describe what we properly see when, upon entering a university classroom, we come across the lectern from which the professor lectures. This exercise has a methodological goal, since it aims to show that the use of objectifying categories is inadequate. In fact, Heidegger states that, upon entering the classroom, I do not actually perceive sense data, but “I see the lectern at which I am to speak (...). In pure experience there is no ‘founding’ interconnection, as if I first of all see intersecting brown surfaces, which then reveal themselves to me as a box, then as a desk, then as an academic lecturing desk, a lectern (...). All that is simply bad and misguided interpretation, diversion from a pure seeing into the experience.”⁴⁶ First of all, we cannot postulate an isolated subject who first perceives sense data, from which it constitutes the object with its own meaning. On the contrary, “I see the lectern in one fell swoop.”⁴⁷ Secondly, we cannot think of the lectern as an isolated object, given that we encounter it within an environing-world, that is, in a context of significance: “In the experience of seeing the lectern something is given *to me* from out of

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁴² Cf Kisiel (1993, p. 59). See also Greisch (1996, p. 134).

⁴³ Cf Heidegger (2008, p. 51).

⁴⁴ Heidegger (2004, p. 8).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁴⁶ Heidegger (2008, p. 57).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 57. “The lectern is given to me immediately in the lived experience of it. I see it as such. I do not see sensations and sense data” (*Ibid.*, p. 66).

an immediate environing-world.”⁴⁸ The object, as individually considered, is instead the result of an operation of abstraction. In environmental experience, each object is therefore meaningful from the start. In the lectures of 1919/1920 Heidegger introduces the expression “‘as’ (als) of meaningfulness,” in order to indicate that we experience something *as* something, e.g. as a lectern, within a context of significance.⁴⁹ In this way Heidegger deconstructs that hierarchy, based on the primacy of perception, in which the knowing subject attributes meanings to merely sensible objects.

In this regard, it is interesting to compare Heidegger’s conception with Husserl’s, taking up the *Natur und Geist* lectures that Husserl held in Freiburg in the 1919 summer semester, of which I have already spoken. In these lectures Husserl distinguishes between “real predicates,” which are independent of the operations of consciousness, and “meaning-predicates,” which instead depend on such operations.⁵⁰ According to Husserl, “the *spiritual meaning*, which consists of certain predicates belonging to the object, is originally the functional correlate of certain subjective acts that give meaning to pre-given objects. It follows that such predicates can only be fully understood if one goes back to active subjectivity.”⁵¹ Through the distinction between real predicates and meaning-predicates, Husserl arrives at “a certain *concept of reality*.” In fact, “by going back from the meaning-predicates to their substrate-objects we come to the ultimate substrates, which are already complete objects and which are still completely devoid of meaning.”⁵² Objects therefore have a *layered* structure, where the founding layer is represented by the mere sense-thing, which is devoid of the predicates deriving from intentional operations. If we go back to these ultimate substrates, “the *pure real* remains for us as an *intuitive core*, which is ultimately presupposed in all bestowals of meaning by subjective acts, as an object that *precedes all acts*, all *active* subjective operations.”⁵³ In particular, “what we call mere reality, mere object of nature, is something concrete and completely self-standing, which, even when it bears meaning-predicates, could nevertheless exist as a concrete, self-standing object even without them.”⁵⁴ Husserl therefore maintains that, in this stratification of experience, “the ideally lowest level is mere nature, which is a constant structure even in the spiritually formed world. Many layers are built upon it.”⁵⁵ In general terms, for Husserl perception represents the primary access to the world, that is, the original mode of givenness of the phenomena, and thus the fundamental layer of experience, as confirmed by the second book of *Ideas*, which Heidegger knew.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 58; trans. modified.

⁴⁹ Heidegger (2013, p. 90). This is an anticipation of the “existential-hermeneutical ‘as,’” which Heidegger discusses in *Being and Time* (cf. Heidegger 1962, p. 201).

⁵⁰ Cf Husserl (2002, p. 125).

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 123.

⁵² Ibid., p. 125.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 125.

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 127.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 141.

In fact, this book begins with an analysis of “material nature,” which represents the layer on which all the others are founded.⁵⁶

However, Heidegger believes that this layered conception of experience is by no means “the most unbiased and straightforward description of what is immediately given,” but an “inaccurate description.”⁵⁷ In fact, in everyday experience what Husserl calls “meaning-predicates” are experienced first, while sensible predicates, referring to the “mere object of nature,” come to light only later, by means of a procedure of abstraction. The mere thing is thus the result of a peculiar “deworlding” (*Entweltlichung*) starting from the concrete thing, which is always and necessarily located within the world. In contrast to Husserl, Heidegger argues that objects are experienced from the outset as “significance,” i.e. as meaningful objects. But Heidegger also understands the concept of *reality* in a different way. Indeed, he argues that reality is “a specifically theoretical characteristic,” which cannot be attributed to the enviring-world.⁵⁸ Reality is the result of an operation of abstraction, through which “the meaningful is de-interpreted (*ent-deutet*) into this residue of being real.”⁵⁹ With reference to the phenomenological exercise mentioned above, Heidegger notes that “the question ‘is this lectern (as I experience it environmentally) real?’ is therefore a *nonsensical* question.”⁶⁰ For this reason, the problem of the reality of the external world is misleading.

Heidegger maintains that every thing is a thing *of* the world, in the sense that it is understandable only within the world and that it *reveals* the world in which it is located. In fact, he underlines that, living in an enviring-world, “everything has the character of world. It is everywhere the case that ‘it worlds’ (*es weltet*).”⁶¹ In this regard, the crucial point is that in environmental experience “the ‘it worlds’ is not established theoretically, but is experienced as ‘worlding’ (*als weltend*).”⁶² Heidegger calls this experiential structure “event” (*Ereignis*), distinguishing it from the “process” (*Vorgang*), in which the relationship between the experiencing subject and the world is reduced to the cognitive relationship between subject and object. This relationship is based on a preliminary separation between subject and object, that

⁵⁶ “The *primal objects*, (...) ones to which all possible objects, in conformity with their phenomenological constitution, refer back—are the *sense-objects*” (Husserl 1989, p. 19). Husserl stresses the primacy of perception even in *Krisis*, where he claims that “perception is the primal mode of intuition” (Husserl 1970, p. 105).

⁵⁷ Heidegger (1999, p. 67). The critique of the layered conception of experience is also present in *Being and Time* (cf. Heidegger 1962, pp. 131–132).

⁵⁸ Heidegger (2008, p. 70).

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 70. Heidegger also speaks of a “de-interpretation (*Entdeutung*) of the secondary sense qualities” (*Ibid.*, p. 70). Note the similarity between this process and that described by Husserl in *Krisis*. The formation of modern science from the lifeworld leads to a world that is in principle not experienceable (cf. Husserl 1970, p. 127).

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 58. According to Gadamer, the expression “it worlds” represents a “turn before the turn (*Kehre vor der Kehre*)” (Gadamer 1987, p. 423), that is, an anticipation of Heidegger’s mature thought, which is focused on the event (*Ereignis*). However, this expression indicates that things are encountered within the world, but there is no reference to the idea of the *withdrawal* of being in the event.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 73.

is, on a “breach between experiencing and experienced.”⁶³ According to Heidegger, knowledge “is still only a rudiment of vital experience (*Er-leben*); it is a de-vivification (*Ent-leben*). What is objectified, what is known, is as such re-moved, lifted out of the actual experience.”⁶⁴

Furthermore, the knowing subject, that is, the “theoretical ‘I’” that, according to Husserl, is a “disinterested spectator,” is radically different from the “historical ‘I,’” which is involved in experience.⁶⁵ Here the emphasis Heidegger places on the historicity of the self fully emerges, contrary to what happens in Husserl’s conception, in which the subject is precisely a *knowing* subject. Through knowledge, the historical “I” is “de-historicized,” i.e. reduced to a pure ego, understood as an identical pole of the acts.⁶⁶ As for the concept of *givenness*, Heidegger maintains that the environing-world is not something given, because “for something environmental to be *given* is already a theoretical infringement. It is already forcibly removed from me, from my historical ‘I’: the ‘it worlds’ is already no longer primary.”⁶⁷ The things of the world, like the lectern, are not given to the theoretical gaze, but encountered in their significance. Therefore, Heidegger concludes that “‘givenness’ (*Gegebenheit*) is already (...) a theoretical form.”⁶⁸

3 The many faces of the world and the historicity of life

In the lectures of the following years Heidegger progressively distinguishes his phenomenology from the Husserlian one, to the point of affirming that “we dispense with formal and transcendental considerations and start out from factual life (*faktisches Leben*).”⁶⁹ From this perspective, “factual life-experience is in the literal sense ‘worldly attuned,’ it always lives into a world, it always finds itself in a ‘lifeworld.’”⁷⁰ For this reason, Heidegger states that “our life is our world (...). And our life is only lived *as life* insofar as it lives in a world.”⁷¹ It may seem obvious, but Heidegger intends to turn to it, so that this obviousness becomes absolutely problematic.

Starting from the lectures of 1919/1920 on the *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, Heidegger analyzes the lifeworld by introducing a threefold distinction between “enviroming-world” (*Umwelt*), which is conceived as the environment wherein life takes place, “with-world” (*Mitwelt*), which is formed by the others with whom I am in relationship, and “self-world” (*Selbstwelt*), “in which I am involved and taken up in one way or another, in which something ‘happens’ to me, in which I am active,”

⁶³ Ibid., p. 76.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 59.

⁶⁵ Cf Ibid., p. 59.

⁶⁶ Cf Ibid., p. 70.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p. 69.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 69.

⁶⁹ Heidegger (2013, p. 188).

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 189.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 27.

and which “directly imparts upon my life this, my personal rhythm.”⁷² The self-world must therefore be understood as the personal way in which everyone relates to the contents of their life. In particular, Heidegger notes that life “determines itself from out of a peculiar *self-permeating* of the enviroing-world, with-world, and self-world, not out of their mere aggregation. The *relations* of the *self-permeating* are absolutely of a non-theoretical, *emotional* kind. I am not the observer and least of all am I the theorizing knower of my self and of my life in the world.”⁷³ Hence, the phenomenologist is not the “disinterested spectator” of which Husserl speaks, but is always involved in the world. Life tends to happen in an unreflective way, but I can also meet myself in life, although most of the time I am blurred in the with-world.

In articulating the lifeworld, Heidegger will give an increasing methodological importance to the self-world. In fact, the “original region” of factual life is represented precisely by the self-world, which however is not immediately accessible to phenomenological investigation.⁷⁴ Heidegger speaks of “the intensifying-concentration (*Zugespitztheit*) of factual life upon the self-world,” which life can become aware of only by distancing itself from itself and from its tendency to understand itself on the basis of the enviroing-world and of others.⁷⁵ According to Heidegger, it is only thanks to Christianity that the lifeworld has historically progressively concentrated on the self-world, while Greek science was oriented towards natural reality: “The deepest historical paradigm for the peculiar process whereby the main focus of factual life and the lifeworld shifted into the self-world (...) gives itself to us in the emergence of Christianity. The self-world as such comes into life and is lived as such.”⁷⁶ This means that in the early Christian communities a radical change occurred in the orientation of life and in the directions in which it took place. In this regard, Heidegger also refers to Augustine, whose famous expression, *crede, ut intelligas* (believe, so that you may understand), is translated as “live your self vitally.”⁷⁷ However, Heidegger notes that the self-world does not usually stand out at all, since it appears completely determined by the contents of life, and thus it is absorbed in the with-world and in the significances of the enviroing-world.

The self-world has a specific “situational-character,” that is, it appears as the context in which I can find myself.⁷⁸ In this context, “having myself” is not the result of an act of self-reflection, but consists in “the process of life’s winning and losing a

⁷² Heidegger (2001, p. 72; trans. modified; 2013, p. 27). In the lectures of the summer semester of 1925 Heidegger returns critically to this distinction, claiming that “the others, though they are encountered in the world, really do not have and never have the world’s kind of being. The others therefore cannot be designated as a ‘with-world,’” so we have to use the term “being-with (*Mitsein*)” (Heidegger 1985, p. 242). However, it should be noted that in the early Freiburg lecture courses Heidegger does not consider others as things of the world, that is, he does not understand them in terms of significance.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

⁷⁴ Cf *Ibid.*, p. 68. See Kisiel (1993, p. 119).

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁷⁸ Cf *Ibid.*, p. 48.

certain familiarity with itself.”⁷⁹ According to Heidegger, the “primal structure of the situation” consists of three fundamental components: “Content-sense” (*Gehaltssinn*), i.e. the content of experience; “relation-sense” (*Bezugssinn*), which indicates the way in which the self refers to this content; and “enactment-sense” (*Vollzugssinn*), which expresses the fulfillment of the self, that is, the *performative* aspect.⁸⁰ Heidegger explains that these three directions of sense “do not simply coexist. ‘Phenomenon’ is the totality of sense in these three directions. ‘Phenomenology’ is explication of this totality of sense; it gives the *logos* of the phenomena.”⁸¹ The content-sense is represented by the world, while the relation-sense is not so much a form of theoretical knowledge, as a “caring (*Sorgen*).”⁸² With regard to the enactment-sense, in the lectures of the 1920 summer semester Heidegger specifies that “the relation is had *in* the enactment,” i.e. in the fulfillment of the self.⁸³

From a methodological point of view, it is noteworthy that these concepts must be understood on the basis of the notion of “formal indication” (*formale Anzeige*). Heidegger introduces this notion in order to show that the concepts that phenomenology uses “are all still entirely formal, *nothing prejudicing*, only sounding a direction,” and therefore do not objectify what is manifested.⁸⁴ By means of the formal indication, “the relation and performance of the phenomenon is *not* preliminarily determined, but is held in abeyance,” so as not to subsume life and the world under objectifying categories.⁸⁵ The problem of the “philosophical concept formation” thus becomes central, precisely because Heidegger intends to develop a new (pre- or non-theoretical) conceptuality, which should be able to appropriately describe experience.⁸⁶

But the important point is that the Heideggerian concept of lifeworld is closely connected to the recognition of the immanent *historicity* of factual life.⁸⁷ Indeed, Heidegger’s understanding of the lifeworld radically differs from Husserl’s precisely in its emphasis on the historical nature of *life* itself. Heidegger subtracts the concept of history from its understanding in objective terms, which is proper to historiogra-

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 194. Heidegger notes that “experiencing-oneself is no theoretical ‘reflection,’ no ‘inner perception,’ or the like, but is self-worldly experience” (Heidegger 2004, p. 10). On the modes of “having oneself,” cf Gander (2017, pp. 295–296).

⁸⁰ Cf Ibid., p. 196. This scheme can be considered as a reinterpretation of the Husserlian conception of intentionality, as a correlation between act and content, since Heidegger’s attempt is to insert temporality (enactment) into phenomenology on the basis of the structure of the act. In this sense, Crowell argues that the *Vollzugssinn* is “the manner in which the *Bezugssinn* is enacted (...). This corresponds to Husserl’s distinction between intending something ‘emptily’ and in an intuitively ‘fulfilled’ manner, a distinction Heidegger redescribes as the difference between authentic and inauthentic ‘having’ (*Habe*) of the content sense” (Crowell 2001, p. 126).

⁸¹ Heidegger (2004, p. 43). In *Being and Time* Heidegger takes up this definition of phenomenology as *logos* of phenomena (cf. Heidegger 1962, p. 58).

⁸² Cf Heidegger (2001, pp. 65, 67).

⁸³ Heidegger (2010, p. 48).

⁸⁴ Heidegger (2013, p. 3). On the concept of formal indication, cf. Imdahl (1997, pp. 142–174).

⁸⁵ Heidegger (2004, p. 44).

⁸⁶ If philosophy is somehow a “rational *knowledge*,” then “the question arises for it whether a consideration of living experience that does not immediately and necessarily theoretically disfigure it is possible at all” (Heidegger 2010, p. 18). Cf Kisiel (1993, p. 48).

⁸⁷ Cf Sheehan (1986, pp. 49–50).

phy, in order to inscribe it in the enactment of the lived experience. From this perspective, “the proper *organon of understanding life is history*, not as the science of history (...), but rather as lived life, how it goes along in living life.”⁸⁸ Referring to the proximity between the two terms, Heidegger understands history (*Geschichte*) as the occurring (*Geschehen*) of life, which in turn is strictly connected to enactment, since “enactment and enacting is an occurrence.”⁸⁹ Heidegger therefore expresses the radical historicity of the self by conceiving of history “as occurring in the event character of factual life related to factual self-world, with-world and environing-world.”⁹⁰

In the lectures of the 1920/1921 winter semester, dedicated to the analysis of the historical situation of the early Christian communities through the interpretation of Paul's letters, Heidegger explicitly states that “factual life experience is historical” and that “Christian religiosity lives temporality as such.”⁹¹ Here the historicity of life is strictly connected to temporality, understood not in a chronological sense but with reference to the enactment-sense. In fact, we have to make a “turn from the object-historical context to the enactment-historical *situation*.”⁹² Heidegger argues that the crucial point is the context of enactment in which I actually find myself, in which life has the opportunity to contrast the tendency to lose itself in worldly significances.⁹³ The self is called to decide on its own life in every moment, and therefore *every* moment is decisive.⁹⁴ For Heidegger, life is characterized by constant insecurity, since the self has the chance to conquer but also to lose itself. Life can come to possess itself when it discovers the impossibility to enact itself as a given. In fact, life happens without ever exhausting itself in specific contents, and this is the meaning of its original historicity.

This historicity of life differs from that which Husserl attributes to the lifeworld since the 1920s, which is conceived as a historical-cultural dimension. In fact, Husserl's thesis is that historical and cultural productions, including scientific theories, are “sedimented” in the lifeworld.⁹⁵ Therefore, they too constitute the overall horizon of the experience.⁹⁶ In other words, human operations “flow into” the lifeworld,

⁸⁸ Heidegger (2013, p. 193).

⁸⁹ Heidegger (2010, p. 113).

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁹¹ Heidegger (2004, p. 55).

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 63.

⁹³ In this regard, Fígal maintains that, unlike in Heidegger, for Husserl “‘being’ in the life-world is no ‘inauthentic’ existence (*Dasein*); Heidegger (...) could have found no point of reference for inauthenticity in Husserl's idea of the life-world” (Fígal 2010, pp. 150–151).

⁹⁴ With reference to the expectation of the *parousia*, Heidegger speaks of a “*kairos* decisive” (*Ibid.*, p. 106), since the second coming of Christ can happen at any time.

⁹⁵ Cf Husserl (1970, p. 116). Crowell correctly points out that the lifeworld becomes “a historical horizon (...) whereby the constitutive achievements of temporally distant subjectivities come to be ‘sedimented’ in current experience” (Crowell 2013, p. 56).

⁹⁶ Scientific theories are human formations, and thus they “belong to this concrete unity of the lifeworld (...); all of science is pulled, along with us, into the—merely ‘subjective-relative’—lifeworld” (Husserl 1970, pp. 130–131).

considered in its full concreteness.⁹⁷ In this way the concept of lifeworld expands, since it no longer refers only to the world of immediate experience, but also to the historical-cultural world, which becomes central in *Krisis*, although in this work the primacy of *perception*, and therefore the order of foundation based on it, is not at all questioned.⁹⁸ On the contrary, Heidegger maintains that historicity is *immanent* in life itself, as it is connected to the temporality of the self. As seen above, the self cannot be considered as a disinterested spectator, but rather as a historical “I,” which is not only situated in history, but is historical in itself.

In conclusion, in this paper I have shown that in the early Freiburg lecture courses of the years 1919 to 1923 Heidegger proposes a renewed conception of phenomenology through a comparison with Husserlian phenomenology, and specifically with the concept of lifeworld, which Husserl begins to deal with before 1920. Heidegger revisits the issue of the world by means of a critique of Husserl’s layered conception of experience, which is based on perception, arguing instead that experience is always an “environmental experience” and focusing on the “world-character” of life. In this context, the main point is that Heidegger’s rethinking of the concept of lifeworld is closely connected to the recognition of the immanent historicity of life. It is worth noting that this conception of historicity is quite different from that which Husserl developed since the ’20s, where historicity is understood as the historical and cultural dimension of the lifeworld. Heidegger’s historicity is instead immanent in life itself, since it refers to the temporality constitutive of experience.

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⁹⁷ Human operations presuppose “a universal accomplishment,” and therefore they “have the spiritual acquisitions of this universal accomplishment as their constant substratum, and all their own acquisitions are destined to flow into it” (Ibid., p. 113).

⁹⁸ Indeed, the lifeworld is first and foremost the “world of sense-intuition,” and “perception is the primal mode of intuition” (Ibid., pp. 105–106). On the differences between Husserl’s lifeworld and Heidegger’s concept of the world, cf. Figal (2010, pp. 150–152). See also Figal and Gander (2009).

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