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*The problem of lifeworld
in the philosophy of Husserl, Heidegger and Patočka*

DOCTORAL THESIS

ABSTRACT

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Keywords

life-world, natural attitude, natural world, environmental world, idealisation, existence, Dasein, being-in-the world, mundanity, anxiety, attunement, being-together, transcendental historicity, forming of sens, transmission, corporeity, asubjective phenomenology, the three movements, polemos, care of the soul

***The problem of lifeworld
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Abstract

To discuss the problem of the natural world in a proper manner means to make an attempt to describe the structure of the world based on the sensible perception and on intuition, without implying any metaphysical presupposition. Consequently, the description of the natural world, the unfolding of the meaning of the natural world means to reveal the structure of the everyday medium of life, to uncover the system of relations of the I, the others and the environment.

Husserl was the first to spot light on the fact that in the natural attitude we all are acquainted with the world, the world as horizon is present all the time for our consciousness, though we do not thematize the world as such. Through the transcendental epoché we suspend the naive “living-in-the-world” attitude, thus the correlation of the consciousness and world, which can be studied through reflection, shows the way in which it comes into existence the consciousness of the horizon of the objects which exist for us, i.e. the world. For Husserl to discuss the problem of life-world means – on one hand – to reveal the pre-predicative intuitive evidences of the life-world as the fundamental ground of the sciences, on the other hand to discover the invariant structures of the life-world, respectively to bring the life-world as constituted configuration as the basis of the system of the transcendental philosophy.

Martin Heidegger connects to the problem of life-world through the development of the concepts of environmental world and of the world from the perspective of the there-being (*Dasein*). Heidegger rejects the transcendental reduction and instead of the consciousness he tries to describe the existential structures of being-in-the-world of *Dasein* in its everydayness, with the help of the concepts of attunement, comprehension and anxiety.

Jan Patočka rejects the reduction of the problematics of life-world to a "*life-word a priori*", to an invariant a priori structure and looks to those factors which are common in all modalities of the human existence. Through the asubjective interpretation of the phenomenological field uncovered by Husserl in his *Logical investigations* and by avoiding the absolutization of ego cogito, Patočka shows that by the hypostasizing of the *sum*, it is

possible the interpretation of the existence as movement and the uncovering of the structure of life-world.

The hypothesis our dissertation started with is that Husserl – namely in the *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* – arrives only to diagnose the crises caused by the sciences and the solution offered by him remains within the framework of the transcendental phenomenology, the analysis of life-world serving merely for a more precise description of the transcendental epoche. By involving the analysis of the life-world, Husserl strives to offer a better foundation for his philosophy based on the transcendental subjectivity and intersubjectivity and his final aim the transformation of mankind with the help of the phenomenological attitude. Husserl interprets the original evidences of the life-world as the final ground of the philosophy and of the sciences. By understanding the life-world as ground and horizon and by the unfolding of the a priori structure (leading to a static analysis), Husserl only delimits the task of the ontology of life-world. Within the framework of the transcendental phenomenology it is impossible to bring to end the task of the ontology of life-world. The static analysis of life-world can only unfold an invariant structure of essences, not being able to complete the analysis of the fundamental moments of the world from ontological point of view, such as the space, the time and the movement. The genetic analysis of the life-world is also capable only to uncover the meaning of origin of geometry and philosophy, without being able to go back to the layer of the factual human life which deploys himself in history.

For Patočka, it is unacceptable the reduction of the phenomenological field to the appearance belonging it, described in the *Logical investigations*, given that the absolutization of the ego cogito leads inevitably to a certain sort of subjectivism. According to Patočka, this results in the splitting-in-two of the phenomenological field, although – together with the cogito – the moment of *sum* has the same ontological apodicticity. This is the reason he rejects the transcendental reduction and – by emphasizing the ontological role of the corporeality and embodiment –, strives to renew the existential analytics started by Heidegger. The aim of Patočka is to make possible to show the centrality of *sum*, along with the investigation of the appearance and the phenomena which appear, by which he ascertains the validity of interpretation of the existence as movement.

Our dissertation reaches at this point the following thesis: Through the interpretation of existence as movement, Patočka reconfigures the concept of husserlian life-world. At the same time, he achieves the task to describe the ontology of the life-world, proposed by

Husserl. Also, through his asubjective phenomenology, surpasses the transcendental phenomenology, giving place to the discussion of historicity and intersubjectivity.

Our research has in its center the problem of the life-world, therefore we have to sketch the history of this concept within the history of philosophy, we need to identify and interpret the different meanings of this concept, as well as the connected concepts used by our main authors. The methodology used in our analysis are the critical reconstruction, as well as the tracing of the different trains of thought and the interpretation of these ways of thought. The precise use of the terminology is crucial, since often the different use of the same term are hiding different philosophical intentions, and by the clarification of the difference of meaning of the same term we can get to a different interpretation of certain views (for example, the husserlian and heideggerian interpretation of historicity opposed to the interpretation made by Patočka). Given the fact that in the conception of Patočka the return to the original meaning of the life-world is – at the same time – the revision of the metaphysics, this means that we have to trace back the different basic concepts to their original meaning, which supposes also the use of the hermeneutic methodology.

The first chapter of our dissertation discusses in three sub-chapters the antecedents of the concept of natural world. The first sub-chapter reaches to the conclusion that the husserlian phenomenology is not without antecedents, given that Avenarius, in his *The human concept of the world*, has inspired the research of concepts of natural world, the ambiance, the notion of putting in parantheses, or of the notion of suspension. The system of relations between the I, the others and the ambiance represented the core of the problematics that lead Husserl to the analysis of the natural attitude and the natural world. We stress on the important difference that lies between the the use of these concept at Husserl and Avenarius and we try to describe how the meaning of this concepts suffers a radical change within the framework of husserlian phenomenology. At the same time, the critics brought by Husserls to Avenarius is not an exclusive one, the attitude of Husserl towards Avenarius is rather that of the acceptance. Namely, Husserl agrees with Avenarius on the fact that the natural world has to be described in its relation to the pure experience. In return, he finds Avenarius' methodology to "purify" and to put in parentheses the experience as being altogether insufficient. Husserl considers the description of the natural attitude to be primary compared to the "concept of natural world", the natural attitude being the one which have had a prevalence over the course of the history both in the everyday knowledge and in the attitude of the specialized sciences.

In the second chapter of the dissertation we discuss the central role of the concept of life-world and the multiple meaning of the concept of life-world within the system of transcendental philosophy. The first two sub-chapters try to clarify the history of idealization of the genesis of sense, respectively the different meaning of the concept of life-world. In the description of the history of idealization of the genesis of sense we attempt to describe the processes of objectivation of the world of experience realized by the mathematics and geometry, objectivation which covered up the original intuitivity of the donation of sense, giving to this latter a sort of "ideatic cloth". The uncovering of the history of the idealization of the genesis of sense explains and makes for us understandable the crisis and renders necessary the elaboration of the science of life-world. The second sub-chapter discusses the different – apparently contradictory – layers of meaning of the concept of life-world. In this sub-chapter we arrive to make a fundamental distinction between the concept of transcendental life-world and the concept of concrete life-world(s). Husserl gives a transcendental status to the concept of life-world when he discusses the essential typicality of the life-world, when trying to establish the a priori invariant structures of the life-world. The definition of the life-world as ground and as horizon implies the static characterization of this concept. The static analysis of the life-world uncovers – within the everyday environment – those intuitive, pre-predicative evidences, which precede and at the same time offer a basis for the sciences, such as: causality, spatiotemporality and the corporeal and lived perception of the spatial bodies. The life-world constitutes that ground for the sciences, which offers the basic evidences for any scientific activity, given that without these basic evidences it would be impossible to practice any science. Consequently the life-world is – on one hand – the basis of any science, and is - on the other hand "doxa", a simple supposition. The life-world is the basis which is implied by the sciences as self-evident, the basis to which any kind of meaning implicitly refers back. The life-world occupies a central place, compared to the natural world, in the reconstructed system of phenomenology. Through the analysis of different meanings of the life-world two facts become clear for us: on the one hand, the life-world serves for the sciences as a hidden ground, the evidences of which are rooted in the life-world. On the other hand, the life-world is a "mere" component of the transcendental subjectivity, that is, the life-world is the result of the constitutive performance of the transcendental subjectivity. Husserl shows the way in which all practical and scientific activity is rooted in the life-world, the latter being the a priori ground of any logic-scientific output. The opposition between the sciences and the life-world leads to paradoxes, but these paradoxes, according to Husserl, can be resolved. Irrespective of the polysemy of the life-

world, the concept of the life-world makes possible a more precise elaboration of the transcendental reduction.

The life-world, at the same time, possesses an a priori structure, which can be uncovered with the help of the ontology of life-world, but this structure remains undeveloped in the *Crisis*. The genetic concept of the life-world uncovers those institutions of sense, which were decisive both for the philosophy and for the sciences. Two examples of such institution of sense are the geometry and the philosophy. Husserl investigates the reason why these institutions of sense did not become decisive in the European history. For this, we have to find out in the history of philosophy the guiding idea that - once reactivated - can help us in the re-foundation of philosophy/ In *The crises of the European sciences and the transcendental Phenomenology*, Husserl tried to reach intersubjectivity through the way of the life-world, his ultimate goal being the grounding of the performing transcendental ego.

The first sub-chapter of the third chapter, through the analysis of the early heideggerian writings, tries to show the way in which, instead of the "givens" of the transcendental consciousness, with the help of the self-comprehension of the factic life for the philosophy is given a non-theoretical point of departure, which does not falsify the mode of being of the human life. According to Heidegger there is a more original starting point than the transcendental consciousness, namely the self-comprehension of the factic life, the task being the uncovering of the existential structure of this factic life. It is important to highlight this aspect, because in this context Heidegger still uses the concept of life-world, together with the concepts of environmental world (*Umwelt*), common world (*Mitwelt*) and the (*Selbstwelt*), which designate three coequal directions of meaning. In this respect being opposed to Husserl, Heidegger's philosophical concern isn't the description of the intentionality of the lived experiences of our consciousness, his endeavor being the "concretisation" within the life-world of the "lived experiences" through the meaningfulness of our "lived experiences" By sketching the different orientations of meaning within the notion of "life", separates the meaning of existence and the meaning of "there is". By highlighting the fact that the meaning of existence can be explored by the uncovering of the structure of the basic-historical experience of the caring possession of the Self, he pre-configures the phenomenon of the conscience and the intention to investigate the historicity of the existence. The meaning of "there is" is explicated in the threefold manner described above by the terms of the environmental world, the common-world and the self-world, and this analysis implies the sensefulness of the environmental world. In the *Being and Time* the hermeneutics of facticity

becomes the radicalized method of existential analytics, where the existential structure of the being-in-the-world is summed up in the phenomenon of care (concern).

The second sub-chapter investigates the existential structure of the there-being (*Dasein*) from the perspective of the environmental world and the common-world. The wordliness of the world is determined by the whole of sensefulness of the references. Patočka draws our attention to the fact that while analyzing the worldliness of the world Heidegger determines the basic character of the world from the point of view of the tool, but he does not redefine this wordliness from the perspective of the Being-with-one-another. The other existence comes into relation with us only through the usage of the tool (utensile), the togetherness is a superfluous Being-with-one-another, since it is not our corporeality which relates our existences. The investigations of *Being and Time* related to the concept of environmental world show common features with the husserlian concept of life-world. The world, according to Heidegger, is something in which lives a factic existence qua existence. The environmental world is uncovered by our practical activity, exertion with the utensils and by the heedful concern. In the existential analytics of comprehension opens up the worldliness of the environmental world. Through the attunement is disclosed the wholeness of the Being-in-the-world, that is the Being-thrown, the Being-with-one-another and the existence. The concept of anxiety uncovers the unfamiliarity of the *Dasein* and discloses the two possibilities of the existence: authenticity and inauthenticity. Through the anxiety the existence is isolated and it manifests itself its free being towards its innermost possibilities of existing.

The sub-chapter Being-with-one-another and historicity tries to show how the contradictory choice between the authenticity and inauthenticity of the Self makes impossible the authentic modes of Being-with-one-another, on the other hand - with the pledging of the destiny and the community of destiny - seems to become possible what is called the common existence.

Patočka started the discussion of the problem of the natural world on the basis of Husserl's lessons and from this point he reaches out to the delimitation of a new paradigm in phenomenology: the asubjective phenomenology. The transformation of phenomenology through the a priori structure of the appearance, respectively the uncovering of the movements of existence is a consequence of the changes which appeared in his perspective on the problem of the natural world. In the *Epilogue*, he describes the reasons for being discontented with his earlier views on the problem of the natural world. The most important aspect of this reevaluation is the recognition that the transcendental epoche must be radically transformed, since otherwise we cannot reach out to the life which is manifesting itself through the world,

the human community and through the history. Another finding of capital importance for Patočka is that the existence itself is essentially corporeal existence, the bodily existence being for him an existentials, which must be used as a fundamental aspect of the ontology of life-world. If we are to search the mode of being of the existent things, the time becomes an essential component, since we – as finite beings – are obliged to link together the different aspects of our lived experience, we are bound to make syntheses on different levels. The problem of the natural world is not conceived by him in the sense Husserl used the term, with other words he did not consider the absolute reflection as the royal way which leads us to the life-world, for him the most important type of reflection becoming the reflection which is constitutive part of the praxis. The reflection, opposed to the reflection as pure and uninterested vision, must depart from the three ecstasies of temporality and from the movements of the existence which originates from these ecstasies of temporality, given that in these movements reside the possible ontology of the life-world.

The fourth chapter of the dissertation analyzes the process through which, by using the existential analytics of Heidegger and renewing this analytics in respect of corporeality, intersubjectivity and historicity, Patočka arrives to a new ontology of the life-world. In the existential analytics of Heidegger all three terms are problematic. The corporeality of existence appears when Heidegger discusses the spatiality of being-in and of the *Dasein*, but Heidegger rejects the analysis of the corporeality. Patočka considers in this ignorance regarding the bodily existence a certain hiatus that serves also as a foundation of the own possibilities of the existence. Our bodily existence is the totality of those possibilities, which make possible the existence in the world, our movement, the realization of certain concrete modalities of life (inhabiting a space, nourishment, self-defense, reproduction), which - although show a certain historical variety - are still given for every human being. Life as movement presupposes fundamentally the bodily existence. The existence is the modification of life and it is – at the same time – essentially a bodily existence -, while this corporeality expresses at the same time also the relation toward the great powers of the nature. The Earth, as the first and unmovable basis of every movement, is the decisive element of the general body and of any corporeality, being at the same time a spatial referential point, to which any thing and existence is bound. The Earth is the element which gives the spatial referential point, the "where". At the same time, the Earth, the modality of which is the proximity, is not the only natural referential point. The other natural referential point is the distant, which cannot be reached by bodily contact, the one which leaves unclosed our horizon: the Sky. Just as the Earth corresponds to the tactile-kinesthetic contact, the Sky corresponds to the "sense-

organ of the distance", the vision. The Sky borrows to every being the "when", being at the same time the source of the "where".

The problem of intersubjectivity is conceived as the problem of Being-with-one-another, but even the positive modalities of this intersubjectivity, such as the modalities of caring, the leaping-ahead and leaping in, are possible only on the ground of the isolated existence. The historicity based on destiny, the common destiny on the ground of which history itself becomes possible do not substitute the authentic life of the human community, the sociality. The corporeality and intersubjectivity were interconnected in the husserlian philosophy and Patočka leans on Husserl when he is developing his analytics of the movements of the existence in the life-world.

In a first step we attempted to show how Patočka thought to conduct the analysis of the life-world within the framework of the transcendental philosophy of Husserl. At later stage - thinking through the consequences of this transcendental philosophy - he arrives at the conclusion that the husserlian subjectivism leads inevitably to metaphysics of subject. The notion of phenomenological field makes possible the transformation of phenomenology into an asubjective phenomenology, at the same time giving room for a reinterpretation of the transcendental epoche without the moment of reduction to the consciousness. Patočka – trying to think the existence as movement – considers that the corporeality has a primary importance, serving as an ontological basis, and the human existence – existing for his own sake -implies that we are free to choose our own actions from our own inner possibilities. Patočka bring into light the fact that the life-world has the basic structure of "I"- "you"- "that", in which between the you and I exist a specific relation of interpellation, the "you" being the one that questions, while the "I" being the one that is questioned. The I and you constitute the proper center of the world and the most specific content of it. The structures of the life-world are revealed by the human praxis, in which the ego-like existent meets his own possibilities, the other and the things. The life-in-the-world is an autotelic praxis and therefore at the same time: movement, which is articulated according to its own temporality. The movement which corresponds to the past is the movement of anchoring, the present possesses a movement of self-prolongation, while to the future corresponds the movement of freedom, of breaking through the truth. Through these three movements Patočka highlights that our rootedness in the world is realized always through the other, the one which for as means the original home. We are not thrown into the world, the world is made our home by the other, in which we are accepted, our needs being satisfied by the other, until our own individuation, our bodily life makes us capable for us to inhabit the world as autonomous existence. After acquiring the

bodily autonomy we are ready to realize the self-alienating movement of self-prolongation through labor and taking on different roles. In this second movement we leave the sphere of the intimacy of anchoring and we are confronted with the labor, self-preservation and the others. This movement tends – through the labor – to the preservation and prolongation of our existence. Finally, through the movement of breaking through the truth we are capable of receiving our true being and to open up towards the Being. Patočka writes that these three existential movements can be found also in the prehistorical era. By the same token he describes the caesura which separates the prehistorical age from our history, caesura which precisely consists in the aghast of the conventional truths and in the experience of truth, this latter being the basis of the breaking through towards the truth.

Conclusions: In our dissertation the path we followed was the changing context of the metamorphosis, over the history of philosophy, of the term "life-world", trying to show that the concept of corporeality, existence, movement, intersubjectivity and historicity are unavoidable for a proper analysis of the human life-world. We hope to have demonstrated that the three existential movements of Patočka, based on the husserlian analysis of intersubjectivity and the heideggerian analysis of existence, are capable of transforming the life-world into a concept belonging to the sphere of historicity and to stress out the modalities in which the essential history is the medium through which the human essence is continually transmitted and transformed. Patočka, contrary to Husserl and Heidegger, insists on the fact that the polis and the philosophy, both originating in polemos, are the two basic contributors to the birth of the human freedom and – on the other hand – the care of the soul is the major element conducting to the institution of the state based on the truth and justice. The understanding of the history taken as the history of responsibility is possible based on the care of soul understood as the basic ontological project of the human existence.

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