

THE IDEA OF THE LIFE-WORLD¹

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Resumo: Life-world is a concept present in various texts about Husserl's phenomenology. Some interpreters consider it a late and inconsistent concept present in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. In this paper, I argue that the idea of the life-world had already been thought in Husserl's early texts such as *Ideas II* (first manuscript 1912). This idea was firstly named as surrounding world (*Umwelt*), then world of experience (*Erfahrungswelt*), and finally life-world (*Lebenswelt*). However, despite the different nomenclature, the essence of the life-world remains the same throughout his work. The life-world is a priori, transcendent, and co-given. I will analyze each of these characteristics and conclude in favor of a conceptual monism running through Husserl's work.

Palavras-chave: Husserl, life-world, a priori, transcendent, co-given.

Much has been said and written about Husserl's "life-world". The term first appeared in *Crisis* (1936), but his students were already familiar with it. Then it began to be studied by phenomenologists and philosophers and became widely adopted in other areas of knowledge, such as sociology and anthropology. There are different views on the life-world among Husserl's interpreters. Some understand that

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there is a break between his early texts and *Crisis* (Lee, 2020; Staiti, 2018; Belousov, 2016), but I would like to contribute to this debate by adding an argument in the opposite direction.

In this article, I defend a conceptual monism: a single unit that runs through Husserl's works from 1910 to 1938. Despite the nomenclature change, the idea of the life-world remains the same and its essential characteristics are consistently maintained. The life-world is (i) a priori, (ii) transcendent, and (iii) co-given.

Ultimately, I conclude that although different names, approaches, and emphases are possible, the idea of the life-world is the same from beginning to end.

1. THE IDEA OF THE LIFE-WORLD

It must be recognized that the nomenclature of the life-world varies throughout Husserl's works. In the 1910s, in *Ideas II* (1912), Husserl uses the term "Umwelt" (surrounding world). In the 1920s, in *First Philosophy* (1923/1924) and *Phenomenological Psychology* (1925-1928), Husserl adopts the term "Erfahrungswelt" (world of experience). In the 1930s, in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (1935-1938), Husserl settles on the term "Lebenswelt" (life-world).

However, the idea of the life-world is already present in his early texts. Føllesdal writes:

It is often thought that it constitutes a major break in Husserl's development, from the "early" Husserl of the *Ideas* to the late Husserl of the *Crisis*. Is it such a break? And secondly, what exactly is the life-world, and what role does it play in phenomenology? On the

former question my answer is a definite “No.” (Føllesdal, 2010, p. 27).

Perhaps the idea of the life-world was being developed even earlier.

The problematic of the life-world is intimately connected with the distinction between the natural attitude and the transcendental, or phenomenological, attitude, which Husserl introduced in 1906-07. The first mention of the problematic for which he later introduced the term *Lebenswelt* occurs shortly thereafter, in his lectures “Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie” in 1910-11, that is, already before the *Ideas*. (Føllesdal, 2010, p. 38)

In the same sense, Sowa (2007, XXVI) maintains:

The concept of the life-world and the idea of a science of the life-world was only brought in connection with Husserl's last creative period, especially with his last writing, the 1936 partially published treatise *The Crisis of European Sciences and the transcendental phenomenology*; but the concept of the life-world and the idea of its scientific treatment appear much earlier at Husserl, and that already in his Göttingen years⁴.

The essential characteristics of the life-world are maintained in Husserl's works throughout the decades. There may be different names and approaches, but this does not imply inconsistency. From his first manuscript, *Ideas II* (1912), to the *Crisis* (1935-38), the same three essential characteristics are present. The life-world is *a priori*, transcendent, and co-given: *a priori* because it is universal and

⁴ Der Begriff der *Lebenswelt* und die Idee einer Wissenschaft von der *Lebenswelt* werden gewöhnlich nur mit Husserls letzter Schaffensperiode und insbesondere mit seiner letzten Schrift, der 1936 teilweise veröffentlichten Abhandlung *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie*, in Verbindung gebracht; aber der Begriff der *Lebenswelt* und die Idee ihrer wissenschaftlichen Behandlung tauchen bei Husserl sehr viel früher, und zwar schon in seinen Göttinger Jahren auf.

necessary, a *substractum* of invariant structure; transcendent because it is beyond the bounds of immanency – mind independent and prior to and condition of any science; co-given because all subjects share and live in the same life-world and constitute it intersubjectively.

2. SURROUNDING WORLD (UMWELT), WORLD OF EXPERIENCE (ERFAHRUNGSWELT), AND LIFE-WORLD (LEBENSWELT).

Before analyzing each of the characteristics, I will emphasize how the idea of the life-world is already present in Husserl's early texts. In *Ideas II*, the so-called surrounding world (*Umwelt*) is the predecessor of the life-world (*Lebenswelt*). I quote Husserl in *Ideas II*:

As person, I am what I am (and each other person is what he is) as *subject of a surrounding world*. The concepts of Ego and surrounding world are related to one another inseparably. Thereby to each person belongs his surrounding world, while at the same time a plurality of persons in communication with one another has a common surrounding world. The surrounding world is the world that is perceived *by the person* in his acts, is remembered, grasped in thought, surmised or revealed as such and such; it is the world of which this personal Ego is conscious, the world which is there for it, to which it relates in this or that way, e.g. by way of thematically experiencing and theorizing as regards the appearing things or by way of feeling, evaluating, acting, shaping technically, etc. (HUA IV, 185).

This surrounding world is perhaps, or it harbors in itself, my theoretical surrounding world. More clearly put, this surrounding world can present to me, the actual subject (not me, the man), all sorts of theoretical themes, and I can even become a practitioner of natural science by theoretically investigating the nexuses of reality. In setting after the real or in elaborating real actuality, I arrive at “true nature”,

which manifests itself in the given things of the surrounding world as appearances of it. (HUA IV, 219).

In these two passages, Husserl argues that the surrounding world, the future-named life-world, is already there available to the subject, is always the same universal world co-given to any person, and is *a priori*. The surrounding world is given to the subject, it is previous and independent of the subject, and it manifests itself in the given things; therefore, it is transcendent. The surrounding world is the world in which all subjects are inserted. It is stable and guarantees predictable relations, being the ground on which objective sciences and culture are intersubjectively built.

In the 1920s texts, *First Philosophy* (1923/1924) and *Phenomenological Psychology* (1925-1928), Husserl maintains the same understanding about the life-world, named as the world of experience (Erfahrungswelt), and keeps the same characteristics present in *Ideas II*. In *First Philosophy*, even though is part of the phenomenological method to question world existence (HUA VII, 340; HUA VIII, 126), this does not imply its denial.

If we therefore decide, for systematic reasons, to favor the second path, then it seems that the leading question concerning the instances of immediate evidence that are potentially to precede all the sciences, and then, consistently therewith, concerning the experiences that stand at the head of such instances of immediate evidence – it seems that this question leads to the world of experience, as something whose existence cannot be doubted. (HUA VIII, 41).

I would say that it is possible to suspend world existence (in *epoché*, for instance), but it is not possible to consistently doubt it and certainly never deny it. One of the

consequences of world denial would be to deny all objective sciences that depend on the aprioricity and transcendence of the world. The objective sciences depend on world regularity and this regularity cannot originate in subjectivity since it is contingent and varies in space and time. I quote Husserl:

The second path I conceived as taking its point of departure from the contrast of the mythical-practical worldview and the worldview of theoretical interest. In the latter respect lies the actual beginning: the establishment of purely theoretical experience and cognition, of the “sober” worldview, from which arises autonomous culture, communal life and communal accomplishments in sober “reason” – and under the guidance of doxic reason. I then wanted to view the *world of “purely theoretical” experience*. It gives itself as existing, as continually abiding as identical and harmonious in the stream of experience. I want to come clear on what belongs to the world of experience, when I conceive of experience in all earnestness in the pure identity of the experiencing agent, hence as continuing to exist in pure harmony. I reflect, thus, upon experience and the world of experience and pursue the universal structures that this pure world of experience exhibits and then – in an eidetic modification in free variation – which it must exhibit as a necessary system of invariants. (HUA VIII, 252/253).

Along the same lines, in *Phenomenological Psychology* (1925), Husserl comprehends the life-world as a world of experience (Erfahrungswelt), a common surrounding world populated by objects, animated and inanimate, whose states and relations are shaped by laws of essence. The subject experiences objects as mentally relevant things, endowed with meaning in a material-mental eidetic relationship; that is to say, there is a correspondence between the structure of the sensorially experienced matter and the mental structure.

By the title “experiential world” we mean clearly what makes up the

unity of concordant total actuality which is continually reestablished in the course of our experiences. Our experience is of such a disposition that, in spite of all occasional discordances in single cases, everything is resolved finally into the harmony of one accord, in other words, that, to every illusion there corresponds in its place an actual existence, which fits in harmoniously there, and which is to be found by experience. (HUA IX, 60).

In such a way, in *First Philosophy* and *Phenomenological Psychology*, Husserl maintains the three characteristics of the world of experience, the future-named life-world. The world of experience (Erfahrungswelt) is *a priori*, transcendent, and co-given. The life-world is *a priori*, universal, and necessary, a *substratum* to any experience. It exists in a continuous fluency founded in a universal, harmonic, and invariant structure of essences that guarantees the consistency and harmony of living experiences. It ensures that the relationships between physical things, between subjects and objects and between subjects are stable, varying in degrees of predictability. The life-world is transcendent, beyond immanency, mind independent, prior to and condition of objective sciences. Each personal Ego is conscious of the world in its unity, which is continually reestablished each time the subject returns to the object of personal living experiences. Besides, the world is the same co-given world to any Ego. Every Ego floats on the same stream of space and time grounded in an invariant structure of essences. This is the grounding for communication, knowledge, and science. Once all subjects share the same life-world, stable and harmonious, shaped by relationships of essence, co-given to everyone, it is possible to communicate and intersubjectively produce science and culture. In other words, the experi-

ential world is the *substractum* of science. Its invariant structure guarantees predictable and stable relationships, allowing subjects to constitute mathematics, logic, objective science, and culture. These are all based on essences and relations of essences manifested in the world, intuited through experiences, and constituted intersubjectively.

True to the same understanding, in *The Crisis of European Knowledge and Transcendental Phenomenology* (1935), Husserl develops the concept of the life-world. The life-world is the only effective world (HUA VI, 49), and is universal-common (HUA VI, 128). The life-world is given to perception as the only experienced and experienceable world (HUA VI, 49/162), the dominion of the original evidences (HUA VI, 130), our daily, pre-scientific world, surrounding world (HUA VI, 50/162).

Even the *epoché*, necessary as a starting point to ground objective sciences, does not prevent the life-world becoming the subject matter of a science. The universal structure (*allgemeine Struktur*) of the life-world, to which everything is bound, can be attended to and fixed once and for all in a way equally accessible to all (HUA VI, 142). Firstly, it is necessary to promote a separation: on one side, the universal life-world *a priori*; on the other, the universal “objective” *a priori*. The first is prior to the second, or the second is grounded in the universal life-world *a priori* (HUA VI, 144). In this sense:

Even without any transcendental interest – that is, within the “natural attitude” (in the language of transcendental philosophy the naive attitude, prior to the *epoché*) – the life-world could have become the subject matter of a science of its own, an ontology of the life-world purely as experiential world (i.e., as the world which is coherently,

consistently, harmoniously intuitable in actual and possible experiencing intuition). (HUA VI, 176).

The life-world is occupied by countless objects whose existence and relationships depend on a structure of essences. Subjects, as part of the life-world, also have their existence and relationships guided by this structure of essences. Hence subjectivity is related to the life-world and vice versa, but not arbitrarily. This relationship “*holds to its essentially lawful set of types, to which all life, and thus all science, of which it is the “ground”, remain bound*” (HUA VI, 176).

In other words, having a living experience, an object is presented to us and constituted through our consciousness. However, all beings have an uncountable number of properties and possibilities; throughout a stream of living experiences, a constant alteration and correction is inevitable but not capricious (Brainard, 2007). Because the objects are constituted in consciousness, “*this does not mean that we create them or bring them about, merely that the various components of the noema are interconnected in such a way that we have an experience as of one full-fledged object*” (Føllesdal, 2010, p. 32). Brand (1973, p. 158) also maintains:

The world in its actual mode of appearance is the historically given cultural, economic, social, political world, the real world for me. This world is encompassed by the latent horizon of the world which is common to all at all times, and thereby it is also for me. That it is given in its actual mode of appearance is itself a structure of the universal apriori of the life-world.

Thus, the idea of the life-world permeates all of Husserl’s texts through the decades, despite the different nomenclatures. Still, in order to support this hypothesis, I will analyze each of the three characteristics separately.

2.1. THE LIFE-WORLD IS *A PRIORI*

According to Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason* (CPR, B3–B4), the *a priori* is necessary and universal. Necessary is what can only be thought of as such and not derived. Universal is that which does not allow exceptions. There is the pure universal, the true and rigorous universality, absolutely independent of all experience, and there is the empirical universal, the supposed and comparative universality, apprehended by induction. Kant exemplifies the pure universal with the judgments of mathematics and the empirical universal with the proposition that “every change has a cause” because change is a concept that can only be extracted from experience.

Taking this definition as a reference, the first characteristic is that the life-world has a pure universal structure to which every relative entity is tied; that is to say, the life-world has an *a priori*, universal, and necessary structure, which guarantees world regularity, and is a condition for the possibility of objective sciences (HUA VI, 142).

The subject is inserted in this life-world (in *Ideas II*, “surrounding world”); it is the subject for whom the world presents itself. That is to say, the subject and the world are inseparably referred to each other (HUA IV, 185) under laws of essence. The subject does not apprehend the world itself in all its fullness. The subject relates to the world through acts – represents, feels, evaluates, strives – standing in relation to something. In this sense, the objects I experi-

ence are objects of my surrounding world (HUA IV, 186). As mentioned above, these relations are stable but with varying degrees of predictability. The relations between objects are determined by physical laws, which in turn are supported by laws of physics, mathematics, logic, and essence. The relations between subjects and objects vary depending on the type of relation. If it is a purely physical relationship – for example, taking an object – it is quite predictable, but if it is an ethical relationship – for example, value attribution – its degree of predictability is much lower. However, this does not mean it is unpredictable or completely arbitrary. A song, for example, supports the value of beauty, it can be pleasant or not, but it does not support the value of truth, it is neither true nor false.

In other words, the surrounding world is not something “in itself” but rather a world “for me” (HUA IV, 186). But this relationship is neither discretionary nor capricious. The initial relations are causal and are gradually incremented by a relation of motivation, and not only a personal motivation, rather intersubjective motivation. People are reciprocally “acting” on objects and on one another; each of these relations is guided by its essences. I quote Husserl:

The things of our socially common world, the things of the world of our dialogue and praxis, have precisely those qualities we actually (optimally) see them as having. (HUA IV, 235).

A thing has its individual essence as that which is here and now. But this “what” is itself a “universal”. That means that each thing is an example of a universality. (HUA IV, 299).

In *Phenomenological Psychology* (1925-28), Husserl insists on the universal character of essences that manifest them-

selves in current things in the world of experience. To start the phenomenological method, the first step is to assume a phenomenological attitude, an attitude that allows the seeing of things themselves, as they appear: suspending all judgment, abandoning all expectations, and simply seeing. It is not a sensory seeing but a categorical “seeing.” I cannot see the universal red as I see the individual red, but I can grasp in this individual living experience the universal that manifests itself in it. Specifically, I cannot see the ideal red, in all its redness, but I can see a red coat, a red car, and a red flower, and I can grasp the essence of red, its redness. What do they have in common that allows them to receive the same name and evoke the same meaning? They share the same essence: “*The seeing of universalities therefore has a particular methodic shape wherever the point is to see an a priori, a pure eidos*” (HUA IX, 86). What is meant is to grasp the ideality, the redness, the purely ideal kind of “color.” Something that has a name is part of a type and is conceivable without the presupposition of any factual actuality, although it cannot be defined.

What Husserl consistently argues in his works is that there is an *a priori* structure of essences that precedes and sustains factual relationships. In his words:

The universal truths in which we merely explicate what belongs to pure essential universalities, precede in their validity all questions concerning facts and their factual truths. For that reason the essential truths are called *a priori*, preceding in their validity all establishments based on experience. (HUA IX, 86).

This realm of essences can be reached through the ideation process, which is not a reference to subjective ideas,

dependent on the subjects, but a reference to the realm of essences (*eidōs*) manifested in the actualities, the experiences of which are an opportunity (or a gateway) to access them. Husserl goes further: “*only that such a real thing is not otherwise experienceable except in a disclosable horizon and in the form of existence of an individual thing of a surrounding world to which it must be adapted – that is a priori*” (HUA IX, 97).

Therefore, this realm of essences, or *a priori* structure of essences, or universal life-world *a priori*, sustains the universal “objective” *a priori* of all objective sciences, mathematics, and logic. Furthermore, the mathematical *a priori* and the *a priori* of all objective sciences is an ideation of the life-world *a priori* (HUA VI, 143). In this context, Husserl states that to conceive logic as entirely autonomous and *a priori* universal science fundamental to all objective sciences is naive (HUA VI, 144), not because it is a historical and arbitrary human construction, but because it is not questioned on its fundamentals. It is necessary to return to the pre-logical universal *a priori* from which all logic is possible (HUA VI, 144): a science of the *a priori* life-world, a science that studies the hierarchy of essential and *a priori* structures that shape all relations. This explains why Husserl’s project is to develop the ontology of the life-world (HUA IX, 110).

2.2. THE LIFE-WORLD IS TRANSCENDENT

Like Kant, Husserl adopts a definition of “transcendent” that takes “immanent” as a reference. Transcendent is what is beyond a certain limit, or the realization of an operation that goes beyond this limit. Kant (CPR, A296) defines

immanent as those principles that remain within the limits of possible experience and transcendent as those that go beyond these limits. Husserl (HUA XIII, 68 / HUA IV, 205 / HUA IX, 171) defines immanent as the processes whose intentional objects belong to the same stream of mental processes to which they themselves belong; therefore, consciousness and object form a unity formed by mental processes. Transcendent acts “*are all acts directed to essences or to intensive mental processes belonging to other Egos with other stream of mental processes, and likewise all acts directed to physical things or to realities of whatever sort*” (HUA XIII, 68).

Husserl (HUA XIII, 92/93) adds one more distinction. An immanent being is by essential necessity a necessary and absolute being, the phenomenological *residum*, pure Ego, consciousness. A transcendent being is presented and legitimated in consciousness by appearances; that is to say, the world of transcendent “re” is entirely referred to consciousness. Something transcendent is given to consciousness by virtue of certain concatenations of experience. It is an adumbrated being, not capable of ever becoming given absolutely. It is merely accidental and relative. At this point, is it conceivable that the transcendent world does not exist? Yes. At this point, Husserl is explaining “The region of pure consciousness.” As a transcendental idealist (CADENA, 2017), consciousness is where everything is perceived, adumbrated, thought, known, judged, and more; consciousness is the phenomenological *residum*, the field of phenomenology. However, even at this point (HUA XIII, 92), he asks: Could a conscious subject, in his free activity of theoretical experiencing and of thinking oriented accord-

ing to experience, could affect all such concatenations, keep the pertinent regularities universally and, not miss anything which is requisite for the appearance of a unitary world and for theoretical cognition of such a world? No. About this regularity perceived by any subject and more by the physicist, Husserl writes:

Only this much can be said: The physical thing appearing with such and such sensuous determinations under the given phenomenal circumstances is, *for the physicist*, who has *already carried out* in a *universal* manner for all such physical things, in phenomenal concatenations of the sort in question, *their determination by means of concepts peculiar to physics*, an indicative sign of wealth of causal properties belonging to this same physical thing which, as causal properties, make themselves known here – by being made known in intentional unities pertaining to mental processes of consciousness – is obviously something essentially transcendent. (HUA XIII, 100).

Whether a singular physical thing exists or not is irrelevant. Evidently that singular being may or may not exist; its existence is not necessary. However, if it exists, it will be shaped by the realm of essences, the *a priori* structure of essences, the universal life-world *a priori*. These essences are universal and necessary and manifest themselves in singularities apprehended in living experiences. Living experiences are, therefore, opportunities to access the transcendent realm of essences; the phenomena open the door to the *a priori* structure of essences or the universal life-world *a priori*.

This universal life-world *a priori* also guarantees the regularity and identity of things. The manifestation of real properties of physical things persists each time the subject returns to the thing. To arrive at a positing of identity, or at

the body as the same, or at the same objective properties, it is necessary to recognize that the body has its own structure, extension, spatial corporeality, color, brightness, and smoothness; it sounds; it radiates warmth or coldness; and its motion has rules which are predictable and follow a pattern (HUA IV, 39). The recognition of its identity requires not only an intersubjective normality but a normality as a thing in itself in relation to all rational, logical, and mathematical rules and nexuses of experience (HUA IV, 132). Its recognition does not depend on the subject or his knowledge; the object, the physical thing, is mind independent – it is transcendent.

This transcendence reaches everything. The experience of other animated beings also takes place under laws of essence. Husserl explains: “*Thus, on the one hand consciousness is said to be the absolute in which everything transcendent and, therefore, ultimately the whole psychophysical world, becomes constituted; and, on the other hand, consciousness is said to be a subordinate real event within that world*” (HUA XIII, 103). Likewise, the mental processes of apprehension, cognition, and judgment of living experiences are also under laws of essence. The experience of a physical thing (or animated being) has a correspondent state that points back to regularities of absolute mental processes in which they become constituted, in which they take on transcendent form state (HUA XIII, 105).

Time is also affected by transcendence. Each person has its own subjective time, an individual temporality in the course of living consciousness. Simultaneously, every stepping forth of the pure Ego has its position in external time; every act has its temporal extension in it. When I experi-

ence a physical thing, the subjective moment of an intentional living experience not only contains my temporal moments in the sense of real parts, but as intentional also contains such a thing as an object presented in it (HUA IX, 172). Even experiencing different sides and moments of the thing, the object appears to be same as identical. Even in the stream of multiple hyletic data, the appearances have a real unity that bounds to one another the different moments and characteristics of it. They are constituted temporally in such a way that immanent time and transcendent time are essentially correspondent. “*This carries over to all unities constituted intersubjectively to this extent that, apriori, Objective time and subjective time (my immanent time and space-time) are a single order of time*” (HUA IV, 205). Therefore, immanence and transcendence do not exclude each other but are essentially bound together (HUA IX, 175).

In *Ideas I*, Husserl (HUA XIII, 107) makes a point of clarifying that all reality is constituted by consciousness, as the field where sense is bestowed. This does not mean that reality depends upon, or is created by, or is an illusion of, of the subject. He rejects any similarity with an ontological idealism. Reality is mind independent and transcendent. The life-world is transcendent and, although he recognizes that there is some difficulty in explaining its independence from subjectivity, or its objectivity, considering that the first *epoché* had suspended judgment about its existence and about all objective sciences, he states:

But this embarrassment disappears as soon as we consider that the life-world does have, in all its relative features, a general structure. This general structure, to which everything that exists relatively is bound, is not itself relative. We can attend to it in its generality and,

with sufficient care, fix it once and for all in a way equally accessible to all. As life-world 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” (this substruction being taken for granted due to the tradition of centuries); these are the same structures that they presuppose as a priori structures and systematically unfold in a priori sciences, sciences of the logos, the universal methodical norms by which any knowledge of the world existing “in itself, objectively” must be bound. (HUA VI, 142/143).

Bello (2016, p. 102) explains: The world is the starting point that has to be analyzed, because it presents itself as a hard concretion that has to be broken down if it is to be understood; for him the problem is not that of guaranteeing the objectivity of the world, but of understanding how this objectivity comes to be constituted.” Between the subject and the life-world, there is a relationship of reciprocal determination according to the a priori structures of essences. The relationship between the subject and the object is determined by their essential properties, which regulate, enhance, and limit it. For example, a mathematical operation supports the value of truth, but it does not support the value of justice. A mathematical operation is true or false, but it is neither just nor unjust. This is a relation shaped by essences. This a priori structure of essences, or universal life-world a priori, in addition to being universal, necessary, and transcendent, is the same life-world co-given to all subjects, and that is how it is constituted.

2.3. THE LIFE-WORLD IS CO-GIVEN

We, as subjects, always perform acts of different levels within our living experiences. At first, in terms of the subject/object and person/life-world relationships, there is a causal relationship with the realities of nature, then a relationship of motivation, practice, and evaluation. In other words, thing-units (noematic units) are starting points, giving rise to different uses, modes, purposes, interests, meanings, relationships, senses, concepts, and values, always according to their essences and at new levels.

At this moment, the body plays a significant role as a mediator between the self and the life-world; that is, the body is an instrument of consciousness to deal with world. In *Ideas II*, Husserl explains how the relationship between the self and the life-world takes place through the body. The body has two dimensions: one internal and the other external. *“They are, in fact, two moments of the same event. The body is the inner face of the perceived outer world. Husserl uses two words to distinguish these two moments: Körper and Leib, both translated as body. Körper is the body as a thing, and Leib is the body as a perceptive organ”* (CADENA, 2019, p. 512). Emphasizing the *Leib* dimension, Husserl explains in *First Philosophy* that the *“Ego is appresented, it is co-given as Ego that perceives its lived-body, moves its lived-body as perceptual organ, perceives its surrounding through it, and so on”* (HUA VIII, 493). My body is permanently in my field of consciousness, always within my reach in a stream of reciprocal and simultaneous stimuli (HUA VII, 153). Among the stimuli received through my body, other subjects are given to me by reference to their bodies. Empathy allows the subject to

recognize the consciousness of the alter Ego as capable of spontaneous movements and actions – a co-presence sharing the same horizons (CADENA, 2019). In fact, these horizons are co-given and this indicates that the other subjects have their own sensory perception, that they experience the same sensory things that I do, that we have in common one and the same world.

These living experiences are not only given to me in isolation but are shared with other subjects. I can return to the same object that is the same not only for me but for all other subjects around me. It might have different perspectives, interpretations, uses, functions, senses, and values, but it is the same object, and the possible relations between the object and me are shaped by the *a priori* structure of essences that mold the entire life-world. In this sense, Brand (1973, p. 158) emphasizes:

There are two important elements here which cannot be stressed enough. The constitutive element of the life-world is intersubjectivity, not the Ego. Second, the life-world for a concrete we and a concrete I with its actual modes of appearance is a universal apriori precisely because it shows that the subject-relativity is a universal structure.

The life-world is co-given, given intersubjectively; it is the same world for all beings that inhabit it. People are not isolated in this world; the world is populated with “selves.” The co-given horizons, meanings, and values are evidenced collectively; there is a reciprocal understanding according to their essence, what Husserl (HUA IV, 193) calls “communicative.” Every person keeps a selfish surrounding world and also, next to it, a communicative surrounding world, and the selfish surrounding world forms the essential nu-

cleus of the communicative surrounding world. The egoic experience of the life-world is the core of the intersubjective and communicative life-world. They are not two life-worlds; it is the same life-world experienced from different perspectives – the personal and the collective.

I am referred to the real life-world (in *Ideas II*, surrounding world); I experience things and people. It is an intentional reference to something real. This intentional reference has a given object. When there is a real object, there is a parallel intentional and real reference; when there is no real object, there is only an intentional reference. The object stimulates me according to its properties, always depending on the universal life-world *a priori*. In this relationship, it is possible to be passively determined by something, to suffer for something, or to react to being actively aiming for a goal, depending on the type of relationship that those essences make possible. It might not be a real psychophysical relation but an intentional relationship (HUA IV, 218/219). For example, I cannot help feeling hungry, but I can decide to go on a hunger strike in the name of a purpose. I can react only at the psychophysical level by assigning a merely sensitive value, or I can react at the spiritual level by giving an axiological sense to the gesture. Simply put, my relationship with an object might be a theme of my freedom. Therefore, the world is not just a psychophysical world but a thematic world of an intentional life living in a community.

This life-world includes a theoretical world and, theoretically exploring the nexuses of reality, the subject collectively produces knowledge, sciences, and culture. And at a higher level, the subject can plead ultimate teleological

questions, theory of values, theory of rational praxis, and theory of reason.

I quote Husserl:

The subject is subject of an undergoing or of a being-active, is passive or active in relation to the Objects present to it noematically, and correlatively we have “effects” on the subject emanating from the Objects. The Object “intrudes on the subject” and exercises stimulation on it (theoretical, aesthetic, practical stimulation). The Object, as it were, wants to be an Object of advertence, it knocks at the door of consciousness taken in a specific sense (namely, in the sense of advertence), it attracts, and the subject is summoned until finally the Object is noticed. Or else it attracts on the practical level; it as it were, wants to be taken up, it is an invitation to pleasure, etc. There are countless relations of this kind and innumerable noematic strata which the Object assumes with these advertences and which are built upon the original noema, or in the case of things, on the pure thing-noema. (HUA IV, 220).

It is important to emphasize that this subject-object relationship is not selfish but collective, which does not mean that it is a social construction. For Husserl, the entire relationship is always enhanced and limited, linked to and dependent on its essences. The essences are in turn *a priori*, universal and necessary, the same for any and all subjectivities. In this sense, Nenon (2013) explains how the typically spiritual activity of the Ego is important for the transition from the individual to the intersubjective dimension:

[T]he ego is not merely passive [...] we are not just active in the sense of “reacting” passively and do not necessarily always simply follow those immediate urges, but can also respond to them actively in a further sense, not just in actions in the sense of interactions with things in the world, but also in our own responses to these immediate impulses.

This consideration leads in the direction of a different point, namely human as “*geistige*” is something that we as persons not only experi-

ence, but also shape and perform [...].

The *geistige* world is not the natural world of theoretically determinate realities, but rather the practical world in which our understanding of value-predicates and ends is constitutive for our experience of realities (and idealities) that we experience there. The description of the life-world as one that is above all a practical world [...] (NENON, 2013, p. 152/153).

In *Phenomenological Psychology*, Husserl follows the same path. He delves into the initial stage of investigation of the life-world. Because the life-world is co-given, it is open to physical science, and even its objective pretension leads back to the initial intersubjectivity. We all live within the natural world of experience, every action or thematic attitude is related to it. In it, upon experiential givens, any object or any region of intersubjective agreement is established in order to produce sciences of whose intersubjectively confirmable truth we can convince ourselves. Although each objectivity is given for each of us in a subjectively varying manner, physical scientists exclude it to single out the objectively identical and true. They want to pursue only this objective line, the unities of experience that are physically objective.

Nonetheless, focusing on the objective dimension does not separate it from the subjective (and intersubjective) dimension once the subjective is already pre-thematically related to objectivity. Subjectivity combines in concrete unities all objectivities in its own essential manner. So the question is: How is it all connected? How is the subject position in the spatial world in a natural attitude directed toward what is natural in the broadest sense?

Beginning with the experience of the spatial world, physicists acquire their natural theme by eliminating what is merely subjective. At first, they perceive a continuity of spatial thing by grasping it. This continuity contains multiple changes and includes multiple contents, but it also includes something identical: the thing itself. The unity which permeates the continuity of this multiplicity is also perceived. In this reflective attitude, phenomenologists can grasp that the thing itself is found only as offering itself in these subjective modes. Turning the attention towards the objective element, the unity of appearances becomes an object of consciousness in a distinctive synthesis, amid the variation of its modes. The same appearing object stands out as an ideal pole of intersection. This pole must fit together as such, not arbitrarily; it combines the data of different fields in a unity. This order of combinations is based on the *a priori* structure of essences, the universal life-world *a priori*. Turning the attention toward the subjective element, the task is a rigorously scientific treatment of the subjective. Husserl presumes, in light of previous investigations, that we know that subjectivity is embodied in nature, so the question is: How is the subjective element related to the *physical things*? Despite different perspectives, the multiplicities in its continual change and the unity which appears in them are inseparably united. They belong to perception even if the perceiver does not notice the multiplicity at all (HUA IX, 159). Therefore, in the reflective attitude, we realize that the respective perspective of the single thing leads back to us as a stable form that persists. “*In this way we have also gained a very marvelous distinction of two domains of objects:*

the objective data which are straightforwardly perceived in the perceiving of spatial things refer back to subjective data, the “hyletic data”, the pure sense-data” (HUA IX, 163).

Neither domain occurs in an arbitrary manner but according to the universal life-world *a priori*. Because the life-world is the same for every being and has its own order, and its order is mind independent, it is possible to establish an intersubjective harmony of the reciprocal experiences through intersubjective communication. Walton (1997, p. 13) clarifies:

The world as the universal horizon lies in the background behind and abides within each world-representation. As a non-thematic consciousness of the world, horizon-consciousness sustains the thematic consciousness and appears again and again in every explicit world-representation with a twofold role. On the one hand, it affords the ground for the possibility of the intersubjective process of expansion or enlargement. For each world-representation has along with its content “an horizon whose correlate is the ‘infinite’ humanity which is always already co-valid for me” (Hua XXIX, 200). On the other hand, horizonedness renders possible the immanent legitimation of its objects and hence undermines the difference between representation and world as such.

All human beings, the nature they study and the world in which they live are part of the same one world, which is identified and corrected in social interaction; it is also identified as the same world of objective science (HUA VI, 191). In *The Crisis of European Sciences*, Husserl argues:

(...) the synthesis of intersubjectivity, of course, covers everything else as well: the intersubjectively identical life-world-for-all serves as an intentional “index” for the multiplicities of appearance, combined in intersubjective synthesis, through which all ego-subjects (and not merely each through the multiplicities which are peculiar to him individually) are oriented toward a common world and the things in it,

the field of all the activities united in the general “we,” etc. (HUA VI, 175/176).

It is in this world, given and shared by spiritual beings, that through communicative (HUA IV, 171) and social (HUA IV, 184) acts it is possible to experience traditions, religion, politics, culture, sport, art, etc. The world is the everyday world, the life-world made stable by its *a priori* structure of essences. A world molded by motivation that constitutes sociability, a community of senses donated in a communal way through communicative and social acts, but limited by the essences manifested in the common surrounding world (HUA IV, 191).

3. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper was to demonstrate a comprehension of the life-world as a coherent and unique idea throughout Husserl’s work.

Phenomenologists look to the things themselves, and in doing so, it is possible to see that Husserl’s idea of the life-world was already being gestated in *Ideas II* and it was consistently maintained from that point on. The life-world is *a priori*, transcendent, and co-given. If we vary any of its characteristics, we will see that we would be speaking of something else, not the life-world. It cannot be thought of as *a posteriori*, contingent, or derived from experience; it is neither immanent nor transcendental as in Kant’s synthetic *a priori* judgments; it is not individual or private. As demonstrated, no matter when or how Husserl speaks or writes about the life-world, the same idea and the same three es-

sential characteristics are present. Of course, there are different names and different emphases, but this does not affect the *core* of the life-world.

Furthermore, what was not theme of this paper but is also consistently present in Husserl's writing is that the approach and concern about the life-world is continuous. Phenomenologists are constantly fighting against the veiling of the life-world and trying to see things as they are, going back to things themselves, unveiling the life-world as it is: pre-predicative, pre-thematical, pre-logical, and pre-scientific. It is never enough to stress that this phenomenological mission was already set in *Logical Investigations*. To conclude, it is vital to see the life-world as *a priori*, transcendental, and especially co-given to put back on trail the European sciences and culture. Husserl's denunciation of the application and use of science without due teleological and axiological concern was already present in *Logical Investigations* and is consolidated in *Crisis*; however, this is a theme for another paper.

For all these reasons, I conclude that the life-world is a consistent idea that can be characterized as a conceptual monism.

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