Abstract: The present article outlines the main points of Heidegger’s philosophical program developed during the first lectures of Freiburg. This program is founded in two fundamental questions. On the one hand, a thematic question: the phenomenon of life and its different forms of manifestation and apprehension, which brings the Young Heidegger to an ontologically interesting interpretation of Aristotle, Paul, Augustine, Eckhart, Luther, and Schleiermacher. On the other hand, an eminently methodological question, namely the question of how it is possible to access in a properly way to the primary sphere of life, which guides him to a first and deep questioning of Husserl’s reflexive phenomenology.

Keywords: Factual Life, Hermeneutical Phenomenology, Reflexive Phenomenology, Primordial Science

Heidegger’s early Freiburg lectures attempt to develop a totally new concept of Philosophy, which doesn’t reduce human life to the world of representations like the classical theory of knowledge does. Once and again he puts on the table the same question: how is it possible to grasp genuinely the phenomenon of life without making use of the epistemological language? The answer is emphatic: it is necessary to suspend the primacy of theoretical attitude as well as reconsider the dominance of the scientific and mathematical model of knowledge valid from Descartes to Husserl. But the phenomenon of immediate life belongs to a totally different sphere, namely the original sphere of the pretheoretical. As Heidegger insists in his first Freiburg lecture, The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview, real Philosophy, that is, Philosophy in an original sense emerges from the bottom of lifeworld. Life and world are two correlative and interdependent realities. Life is deeply related to its environmental world and the horizon of other individuals. The possibility to elaborate a new concept of Philosophy moves in the coordinates of this direct relation between life and world. No religious, scientific, political, or artistic worldview is able to grasp life in its ontologically genuine nature. Lifeworld is the primordial source of our experiencies and daily situations that we can submit to reflection only later, in a second, derivate, and artificial moment. That means the origin of all Philosophy goes back to the non theoretical deformed sub-
soil of lifeworld. World is not understandable as a receptacle which contains the totality of observed and perceived things, but as a world defined by significativity.

From this new hermeneutical point of view, we are going to outline the main points of Heidegger’s philosophical program developed during the first lectures of Freiburg. This program is founded in two fundamental questions. On the one hand, a thematic question: the phenomenon of life and its different forms of manifestation and apprehension, which brings the Young Heidegger to an ontological interpretation of Aristotle, Paul, Augustine, Eckhart, Luther, and Schleiermacher. On the other hand, an eminently methodological question, namely the question of how it is possible to access in a properly way to the primary sphere of life, which brings him to a first and deep questioning of Husserl’s reflexive phenomenology.

1. THE CORE OF HEIDEGGER’S EARLY THOUGHT: THE PRIMORDIAL REALITY OF HUMAN LIFE

Round 1919, right after the First World War, a constellation of German sociologists (Mannheim, Simmel, Spengler, Weber), psychologists (Ehrenfelds, Weininger, Freud), historians (Ranke, Troeltsch, Meinecke), artists (Kirchner, Klimt, Mahler, Schönberg), writers (Brecht, Hofmannstahl, Rilke, Mann, George), scientists (Einstein, Planck, Mach), and philosophers (Dilthey, Husserl, Scheler, Jaspers, Heidegger) are against the empire of materialism and positivism that invaded the intellectual atmosphere during decades. In all of them we assist to what Lukács characterized graphically as an assault to reason, that means: criticizing the ideological manipulation and the massive use of propaganda, in order to reveal the emergence of totalitarian mentalities, and to detect the impossibility of thought to change the social reality. A crude diagnose that Nietzsche anticipated in his Unzeitmässige Betrachtungen, where he portrayed German culture as an epoch dominated by professors and technocrats, military men and officials. We find similar reflections in Max Weber’s Wissenschaft als Beruf (1919) and Oswald Spengler’s Die Untergang des Abendlandes (1922), two works that Heidegger perfectly knew.

It is necessary to break with a kind of philosophical language that fragments human reality in logical units; it is necessary to distrust in conceptual framework of metaphysics; it is necessary to use concepts able to reach the original movement of human life. In other words, the philosopher has to practice a constant hermeneutics of suspicion in order to recuperate the capacity of thinking and acting in freedom. Philosophy has to transgress the established order and respect the phenomenological maxim zu den Sachen selbst. The young Heidegger assumes and elaborates this new concept of philosophy in his first lectures of 1919: we are, as Heidegger expresses in an expressionistic tone, in the intersection that decides «over the life or death of philosophy».

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1 For the specifically philosophical context of this period and its influence on Heidegger, see: Bambach (1995), Barash (1988); Ott (1988), and Safranski (1993).

insists constantly that we should not philosophize on life, but from life itself. We cannot establish a life system; we have to think in life and its history as the sea in which we are sailing. All people live in history, but they are not aware of it. Others know that there the time is historical, but they don’t live it as such.

From this perspective, it is possible to affirm that the fundamental question of young Heidegger’s thought is the question about the sense of factical life. In a curriculum written in 1922 as candidate for a professor position in the University of Göttingen he is very clear about his philosophical program: «the investigations that support all the work done in my lectures are directed to a systematic ontological-phenomenological interpretation of the fundamental problem of factical life»³. Human factical life and its understanding of being are the essential part of Heidegger’s early work. The kaleidoscope of philosophical references we find in this fruitful stage offers a reliable image of the genealogy of the question of being of human life and, at the same time, of the methodological requirements needed to develop it with efficiency.

In this sense, Heidegger’s attempt to conceive the primordial reality of human life implies two fundamental decisions.⁴ On the one hand, a thematic decision that brings him to a systematic analysis of the ontological structures of human life. Precisely the atheoretical and prereflexive life, which plays a central role in the lectures of 1919 The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview, provides the point of departure for the question of being of life. The publication of the Freiburg early lectures has confirmed the fact that Heidegger’s philosophical program forges in this first years of intensive academic activity. On the other hand, we can find an eminently methodological decision. If the basic philosophical task consists raising the question of how to access in a genuine, direct, and immediate manner to the original phenomenon of life, it is necessary to develop a method to be capable of grasping the sense of life and its experiences. That explains the importance given by Heidegger to the methodological question; in fact, the way how we analyze life determines the idea itself of Philosophy. In this context Heidegger’s hermeneutical phenomenology should understand as a serious attempt to articulate conceptually the understanding that life posses of itself.

Heidegger organizes and systematizes his thought for the first time in the mentioned lectures The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview. This implies to take critical distance towards his scholastic past and his neokantian education, but simultaneously to explore his influential reading of Dilthey, spread out his rediscover of Aristotle, and make more precise his relation to Husserl’s phenomenology. Heidegger early path of thinking moves then in two directions: a critical appropriation of the past through a

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³ Heidegger, M. (2000): «Vita», in: Reden und andere Zeugnisse eines Lebensweges (GA 16), Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main, p. 44 (translated by the author). This philosophical program, initiated round 1919/20 in the frame of his critical discussions with hermeneutics, vitalism, neokantism and scholastics, crystallizes later in the Natorp Bericht (1922) and the lectures of 1923 Hermeneutik. Ontologie der Faktizität (1923).

destruction of the history of ontology, and a parallel hermeneutical transformation of phenomenology. His phenomenological interpretations of medieval mysticism, Paul’s primitive Christianity, Augustine’s factual experience of life, and Aristotle’s practical philosophy show a clear tendency to track the traces of factual life in its immediacy in the frame of a concomitant confrontation with Husserl’s reflexive phenomenology.

In Heidegger’s first academic works, despite being partially under the neokantian orbit of Rickert, we can detect a gradual displacement from the epistemological subject to the significant contexts of human life. For example, his dissertation *The doctrine of judgement in psychologism* (1913) offers an interesting analysis of impersonal judgements like «It rains». The understanding of such judgements is only possible if we know the pragmatic context of emission, that is, if we are previously familiarized with the horizon of significance. In the course of his habilitation *The doctrine of categories and significance in Duns Scotus* (1915) he insists repeatedly in human capacity to use practical and effectively universal categories. In other words, categories are not purely empty entities; on the contrary, they are rooted in the lifeworld of individuals. In opinion of Heidegger, Scotus shows an enormous sensibility towards real life and its different forms of manifestation. The theoretical attitude only represents one mode of knowledge among others. Human reality, as far as it pertains to a determined historical world, avoids every kind of pure logical description. This incipient perspective change opens the way to a phenomenology understood in terms of primordial science of life (*Urwissenschaft des Lebens*). Heidegger starts to develop such a phenomenology in his first Freiburg lectures *The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview* (1919) and *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (1919/20).

The breakthrough of this sphere of life is a main characteristic of Heidegger’s early lectures and acquires more and more ontological colouring during the twenties. In *Phenomenology of religious life* (1920/21) it is easy to appreciate how Heidegger dredges up with tenacity the modes of being, that is, the ontological structures of factual life. His interpretations of the *parousia* in Paul’s epistles, of Augustine’s *cura*, of Luther’s cross theology, or of Schleiermacher’s rehabilitation of religious experience prefigure widely the vocabulary, the fundamental structures and tendencies of Dasein sketched out later in *Being and time*, such as the One, the chattering, the falling, the care, the conscience, or the kairological experience of time. In all these interpretations we find the same argument: the impossibility to conceive the nature of life in an objective and transparent way, because life responds rather to a constant process of historical fulfilment. Factual life has an essentially dynamic character and its modes of behaviour show a rich variety of practical modes of relation with the world.

Precisely Heideggerian assimilation and radicalization of Aristotle’s practical philosophy give us a decisive documentary evidence to reconstruct the steps of the elabora-

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tion of his phenomenological ontology of factical life. The lectures *Plato: The Sophist* (1924/25), together with *Phenomenological Investigations of Aristotle* (1921/22) and the famous *Natorp Bericht* (1922), offer an excellent panoramic view of his ontological appropriation of basic texts of *Metaphysics*, *Physics*, and above all *Nichomachean Ethics*. The last Aristotelian text insists in the fact that things are not neutral and given in the solitary realm of soul, but rather in the familiar treatment with our everyday world.7 The authentic task of Philosophy does not consist in achieving an abstract knowledge of the objects, but in articulating formally the practical relations that life establishes with its environmental world (*Umwelt*), shared world (*Mitwelt*), and self-world (*Selbstwelt*). In line with the Aristotelian concept of praxis, the direct experience of the world is the source of all knowledge. Consequently the ontology of human life has to start from the daily treatment we establish with things, people and ourselves. A phenomenological reading of *Nichomachean Ethics* shows that Philosophy has its roots in human activity.

In this sense, Heidegger’s ontological interpretation of the Aristotelian intellectual virtues shows a broad range of life modes of being that goes unnoticed in Husserlian project of a strict science. The productive assimilation of Aristotelian ethics thought constitutes an indispensable ingredient of Heidegger’s analysis of human existence. For example, the practical knowledge associated to the Aristotelian notion of prudence counteracts the aseptic mathematical order that the subject of modern sciences imposes to reality. However, if we make a look to Heidegger’s ontologization of dianoethics virtues as téchne, epistéme, and phrónesis we will see that he has a strictly ontological interest, not an ethic one.8 But how is it possible to grasp factical life genuinely with a conceptual framework which tends to objectify all lived experiences? This is the methodological question that the Young Heidegger has to face in his first Freiburg lectures.

2. THE METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEM OF THE ACCESS TO THE ORIGINAL SPHERE OF LIFE

The task of Heidegger’s hermeneutics of factical life consists in translating in philosophical concepts, namely the formal indications, the previous understanding that life has of itself. This understanding has not a theoretical nature. The phenomenon of life pertains to a radical different sphere: the original sphere of the pretheoretical (*Vortheoretisch*). As we mentioned before, Philosophy does not start from the fact of pure knowledge, but rather from the background of lifeworld. In other words, life is significantly articulated, it forms part of a symbolic world, and it has the capacity of self-

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understanding. In the lectures Basic Problems of Phenomenology (1919/20) Heidegger affirms with rotundity: «life is not a chaotic muddle of obscure fluctuations, a heavy principle of force, an unlimited monstrosity: it is what it is insofar it has a concrete sense»⁹. If life seems sometimes incomprehensible it is due to its excess of significations rather than its lack of sense. Precisely a hermeneutics of facticity has to perforate the sediment of interpretations accumulated during history in order to guarantee an original, primordial, genuine, authentic, and pre-theoretical access to life.

However, how is it possible to articulate the phenomenon of life in a genuine manner? How is it possible to gain a direct access to life and its immediate experiences? First of all, we have to start from the adequate point of departure. Heidegger chooses the situation in which we are always installed de facto: the everyday life. As indicated by Aristotle, everyday things and situations appear primarily in the context of our immediately practical and ordinary environmental world. The philosophical analysis of life than has to departure from the environmental world experiences (Umwelterlebnisse). Heidegger illustrates this new and suggestive mode of access to world through the dense «description» of a trivial experience like the fact of seeing a chair. What do we see when we look to the chair? «Brown surfaces cut in a right angle? Certainly not! […] I see the chair suddenly, in an orientation, in an illumination, in a background»¹⁰.

This example shows that things do not appear firstly under the classical scheme subject-object; things are only accessible and understandable as far as the «subject» is part of a symbolic universe. In other words, the immediate experiences of the environmental world do not spring from the sphere of perceived objects placed in front of me, but from the totality of tools and equipments previously understood in our world treatment. We do not see first colours, surfaces, or forms to which we add later a meaning; in reality, we understand things in a certain way thanks to our world familiarity. Heidegger argues that by focusing on perception as the private experience of an isolated subject, Philosophy has incorporated a methodological individualism that entirely distorts human experience with the world. He offers an alternative, hermeneutic account of our experience that makes it possible to understand human beings as inhabiting a symbolically structured world, in which everything they encounter is already understood as something.¹¹ This is nothing else that the hermeneutic core of Being and Time. It is the phenomenon of a linguistically articulated world that definitively breaks with the functionality of the subject-object model.

The theoretical attitude dilutes, distorts the primarily meaning of environmental world. With this attitude we abandon the immediate field of reality to jump artificially into the field of reflection and analytical determination of experience. From the theoretical point of view, the experience of the chair would be described in following terms: «it is brown: brown is a colour; colour is a true sensitive data; sensitive data is the result

¹¹ See further Lafont (2004).
of psychic or physiological processes; psychic processes are first causes and respond to a certain number of ether waves»12. The theoretical attitude involves a de-vitalisation (Ent-lebung) that Heidegger wants to avoid at all costs. Therefore it is necessary to break with the «deeply incrusted sticking to the theoretical; but, in fact, we are installed only exceptionally in a theoretical attitude»13.

We are then in front of two concepts of phenomenology that differ basically in their determination of the phenomenological intuition: Husserl understands this phenomenological intuition in terms of a «reflexive seeing» (reflexives Sehen), while Heidegger characterizes it as a «hermeneutical intuition» (hermeneutische Intuition). The example of the chair experience shows very clearly the differences between the theoretical mode of access to life and its experiences sketched out by Husserl’s reflexive Phenomenology and the pretheoretical mode developed by Heidegger’s hermeneutic Phenomenology. The fundamental difference from the point of view of the linguistically articulated intelligibility of life is the priority of understanding over perception. If this claim is right, if every seeing something is already seeing-as, the possibility of a neutral perception of merely current objects that Husserl’s conscience model assumes can be unmasked as just a myth, and doing so Heidegger motivates the radical shift from the traditional paradigm of mentalism to the hermeneutic paradigm.14 This is the core of Heidegger’s early hermeneutic transformation of phenomenology, already present in the early Freiburg lectures The Idea of Philosophy and the Problem of Worldview. From this point of view the present lectures are tremendously revealing as far as they anticipate the Heideggerian program of an ontological analysis of factical, which give us important thematic and methodological elements to reconstruct the complex genealogy of Being and Time.

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13 Ibid., p. 88 (translated by the author).


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HAJDEGEROV RANI FILOZOFSKI PROGRAM
(U kontekstu hermeneutičkog obrta fenomenologije u Kriegsnotsemester 1919)


Ključne reči: fakčički život, hermeneutička fenomenologija, reflektivna fenomenologija, izvorna nauka