

## ALFRED SCHÜTZ AND EDMUND HUSSERL: THE GROUNDING OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

IGOR HANZEL

The aim of this paper is to analyze A. Schütz's attempt to ground the social sciences in Husserl's work as it developed in the years 1957-1959. I start with the analysis of Schütz's departure from Husserl's project of a transcendental phenomenology. I then provide a critique of Schütz's views while simultaneously showing their importance for the foundation of the social sciences.

### Schütz's departure from Husserl

Schütz's attitude to Husserl's oeuvre developed from a complete endorsement in the years before 1939, through critical remarks made on certain aspects of Husserl's works, stated primarily in personal correspondence in the forties and fifties, to a profound break with Husserl's project of a transcendental philosophy in the years 1957-1959. In *Sinnhafte Aufbau* he made the following comment about the issue of the relationship between transcendental subjectivity and transcendental intersubjectivity:

In the *Cartesian Meditations*, especially in Meditation V, Husserl has given us a profound analysis of the general significance of those questions and has also given us the essential starting point from which they must be solved" (1967, §19, 97).<sup>1</sup>

During the years 1939-1940, Schütz states in an endorsing manner that phenomenology's aim is "the demonstration and explanation of the activities of consciousness of the transcendental subjectivity within which [the] life-world is constituted" (1939, 136), and in a similarly endorsing manner he presents in this paper the importance of Husserl's phenomenology for the social sciences. But in this work of January 1939 Schütz, when dealing with Husserl's attempt to unify the thesis that the life-world is the constitutive product of performances of the transcendental ego with the (anti)thesis that

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<sup>1</sup> It is worth noting here that Eugen Fink claimed in the same manner that the explication of the transcendental intersubjectivity from transcendental ego "is in Husserl's phenomenology [an] already managed problem" (1934, 175-176).

alter ego co-constitutes this life-world, was already beginning to express doubts about Husserl's success in overcoming the solipsism involved in the first thesis (1939, 137). In 1942, in a paper on Max Scheler, he repeats this view and adds (1942, 167)

[...] it must be earnestly asked whether the transcendental Ego in Husserl's concept is not essentially what Latin grammarians call a "singular tantum," that is, a term incapable of being put into the plural. Even more, it is in no way established whether the existence of Others is a problem of the transcendental sphere at all, i.e., whether the problem of intersubjectivity does exist between transcendental egos [...]; or whether intersubjectivity and therefore sociality does not rather belong exclusively to the mundane sphere of our life-world.

A year later, in a letter to E. Vögelin, he states: "I cannot pose as a defender of transcendental phenomenology because I fear it collapsed at decisive places. For instance, it did not escape transcendental solipsism [...]" (1943, 178). In 1945 he adds to this critical view that "the idea of a transcendental community of monads [i.e., of alter egos viewed in terms of the transcendental sphere] requires additional metaphysical assumptions which cannot be warranted by a philosophy whose idea it is to be a rigorous science" (1945a, 191). And in a related paper he states that it "is, however, a serious question whether intersubjectivity is a problem of the transcendental sphere at all; or whether sociality does not rather belong to the mundane sphere of our life-world" (1945c, 257). In a private correspondence with H. Spiegelberg of August 1945 the following reply emerged: "I come more and more to the conviction that the Social has its origin in the natural sphere but not in the transcendental sphere" (Wagner 1983, 304). In the years to come his doubts about Husserl's ability in solving the problem of transcendental intersubjectivity on the basis of the concept of the transcendental subject would gradually become a certainty. In a paper on Sartre one can read that (1948, 195)

it is one of the most difficult problems of phenomenology—perhaps an insoluble one—to reconcile the notion of *the* transcendental ego as the source of the constitution of the world with the idea of a plurality of coexistent transcendental subjects.

In another letter to E. Vögelin of November 1952 he states: "As you know, I wholly agree with you when you say that there is no solution for the problem [of transcendental intersubjectivity] as posed by Husserl [...] I agree with you that the problem arises only with the Cartesian monadic isolation of consciousness" (1952, 223-224).

The topics Schütz was dealing with in the years 1957-1959 were centred around the following ones: A) *the relation of type and eidos*; B) the afore mentioned problem of *the origins and grounding of (transcendental and/or mundane) intersubjectivity*; and B) *the critique of Husserl's idealism*.

#### A) *Type and eidos*

In the framework of Husserl's phenomenology the method of eidetic reduction should enable us to access the eidos of a phenomenon and thus also its sense as it is constituted in the performances of the consciousness, while at the same time the eidos

of the phenomenon should be different from the latter's empirical, accidental life-worldly determinations which are the objects of typification in the natural stance. Schütz gives as an example of such an eidetic reduction the variation of properties of a cube as follows (1945b, 114):

Let us assume that on the desk before me, illuminated by the lamp, stands a red wooden cube, of one-inch dimensions. In the natural attitude I perceive this thing as unquestionably real, having the qualities and characteristics I have mentioned. In the phenomenologically reduced sphere the phenomenon cube—the cube as it appears to me—keeps the same qualities as the intentional object of my perceiving act. But suppose I am interested in finding what are the qualities common to all cubes [...] I have before me only this single concrete object perceived. I am free, however, to transform this perceived object in my fancy, by successively varying its features—its colour, its size, the material of which it is made, its perspective, its illumination, its surroundings and background and so on. Thus I may imagine an infinite number of varied cubes. But these variations do not touch on a set of characteristics common to all imaginable cubes, such as rectangularity, limitations to six squares, corporeality. This set of characteristics, unchanged among all the imagined transformations of the concrete thing perceived—the kernel, so to speak of all possible imaginable cubes—I shall call the essential characteristics of the cube or, using a Greek term, the *eidos* of the cube. No cube can be thought of that would not have these essential features.

Husserl initially derived the idea of understanding the *eidos* by ideation (variation) when dealing with mathematical objects like cubes, and later also applied it to "non-observable" objects outside mathematics given in categoreal intuition (*Anschaung*). But then we are confronted with the problem that the meanings of these phenomena are inherently historical, e.g., as is the case with the meanings of cultural phenomena.<sup>2</sup> If one also takes into account the results of developmental psychology (Lurija 1993) which show that even the meanings of geometrical figures like a circle, square, triangle, etc., have a life-world character because they are essentially related to really existing, historically located human beings who not only produce these meanings but—once they are produced—acquire them in the process of their own socialization, then one obtains several negative consequences for Husserl's phenomenology, some of which Schütz became aware of in the years 1957-1959. In his paper (1959)<sup>3</sup> he puts the following question (1959, 115):

Is it possible, by means of free variation in phantasy, to grasp the *eidos* of a concrete species or genus, unless these variations are limited by the frame of the type in terms of which we have experienced, in the natural attitude, the object from which the process of ideation starts as a familiar one, as such and such an object within the life-world? Can these free variations in phantasy reveal anything else but the limits established by such typification?

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<sup>2</sup> Th. Eberle mentions in (1984) as examples cultural phenomena like state, love, house.

<sup>3</sup> Schütz draws partially upon E. Fink's paper (1957) here.

And he adds "If these questions have to be answered in the negative, then there is indeed merely a difference of a degree between type and eidos," while his final diagnosis is that "[i]deation can reveal nothing that was not preconstituted by the type" (1959, 115).

This means that contrary to Husserl's claim that he, as a *mundane socialized human being*, can reach the level of transcendental subjectivity while leaving the life-world, from which he initially started, *completely behind him*, the opposite is true, namely, that (1958a, 171)

the possible knowledge of the realm of essences depends [...] upon the contingent facts of the environmental situation of the subject [...] at no time of its historical existence can any individual or group have a total knowledge of the realm of essences [...] each perspective in which this realm is disclosed to each subject at any moment of its history is unique and irreplaceable [...]

The life-world is thus the framework and basis of all human reflections including (e.g., Husserl's) philosophical reflections on the life-world; thus "beyond it cannot be gone back in the sense of the analyses of the constitution" (Lippitz 1978, 421). Husserl's attempt to go beyond it can be characterized and evaluated as follows (Lippitz 1978, 420).<sup>4</sup>

The reflecting ego undertakes, according to Husserl, the attempt to go back – in the discovering, imaginative visualizing reflection – from the results of the performances (i.e. from the accomplished performances) to the performing ego itself. But in order to perceive the performative character of the performing, absolutely constituting ego at all, one needs not only a perspective targeting an accomplished performance and thus turned backwards, but turned also to the performances which go on at the present time, and to the future performances appearing already in the present. The absolutely constituting ego cannot thus be discovered only in what already happened. Its essential feature is non-closable temporality and non-completeness. Accomplishment cannot thus be negated in reflection but antedates it principally as a factual event. Husserl's attempt, thus, to connect the functioning ego with the point of tranquility of an absolute being is a substance-ontological mistake, a result of an unacknowledged specific perceptivity of the reflexive analyzes.

The issue of type and eidos can and has to be approached from the point of view of language as well. The best starting point appears to be Husserl's attempt to deal with the concept of prepredicative experience which as shown above, played an important role in Schütz's theory of relations in the surrounding social world. Prepredicative experience is, according to Husserl, the basis of predicative judgments and is by its very nature *not prestructured by language*, but still it should be possible to *describe* its structures as such a prelinguistic entity. But at this point there arises the question of whether this is possible at all. R. Harrison in his paper (1975) gives a convincing negative answer because (1975, 97)

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<sup>4</sup> On the substance-ontological fallacy see, e.g., L. Landgrebe's paper (1961).

these structures can only be displayed after the experience has been judged and described, [so] it does not seem possible to distinguish between those parts of the structure which are the structure of independent experience and those parts of the structure which are the structure of thought or language. As we study experience, that is, for example for the purpose of phenomenological description and analysis, we are always dealing with an experience which is judged or described. The experience and the description always go together and cannot be separated. In these circumstances it does not seem possible to distinguish between the structure of experience and the structure of the description [...] It does not seem possible, therefore, to arrive with any conviction at a description of the structure of experience totally independent of the structure of language.

So, even if *what* we describe (e.g., experience) by a language and *the language* used in the description are different, it still holds that there *does not exist a description independent of the language used in the description*.<sup>5</sup> Contrary to Husserl's claim that he can describe the prepredicative experience as not yet structured by language, the opposite is true: once he uses a language for description he cannot decide which parts of the description he obtains have their origin in the prepredicative realm and which in the predicative (i.e., language) realm;

"Husserl in spite of himself must work inside language" (Harrison 1975, 101). Stated otherwise: in the framework of language we can distinguish between what language is *about* and *language itself*, but once we are in the framework of language then we have to rely on the structure of this language in describing those entities, whatever they may be. *In the description of a thought-entity, whose real (transcendent) counterpart we suppose exists outside language used in the description, we cannot step out of our language.*<sup>6</sup>

Once Wittgenstein's claim "the limits of my language are the limits of my world" holds, then (Harrison 1975, 104-105, 107)

[w]e cannot build more structure into the experience than exists in the language with which we have to describe the experience [...] The world we describe, including our experience, is the world our language allows us to describe, and one therefore which lies inside the boundary of language.

These reflections on Husserl's views on the prepredicative experience and its *description* in a language presupposed that language fulfills here a *referential* function. But from the point of view of the philosophy of *social sciences*, language can be viewed not only in its referential function, as a medium of *description* (of, e.g., experience), but

<sup>5</sup> E. Fink noted this problem in respect to Husserl's phenomenology in his paper (1933) as the problem of how a mundane philosopher can reconstruct and describe the reduced sphere; Schütz's commentary on Fink see in (1945a).

<sup>6</sup> Here, D. Lohmar is of the opposite view (1995, 257): "[...] our language [...] is] specialized for the utterance (Kundgabe) of categorial intentions. We have therefore to apply a skillful trick for the description of the prepredicative acquiring of sense. Initially, we have to state the connection in a "categorial language" and then with an addition, formulated specially and urgently for this purpose, take this "surplus" back. This "surplus" is suggested only by the just mentioned specialization of language and cannot be proven in the substance-matter itself."

also as a medium structuring and guiding human action (e.g., the *very* experience). Wittgenstein's claim "the limits of my language are the limits of my world" would then mean that the *social world, as the result of my and other human beings' actions, is predetermined by the language's meanings which as a background structure and guide our actions*. How does Schütz approach the phenomenon of language in respect to this *non-referential and social function*? Even if he, as shown above and as we will see below, approached Husserl's attempt to construct a phenomenology of the reduced sphere ever more critically, there exists, over the decades, a remarkable continuity in his views on the social function of language. When dealing with the issue of priority "social relations vs. communication/reciprocal understanding," he states (1957a, 72)

[...] reciprocal understanding and communication presuppose a community of knowledge [...] (and social relationships), and not the reverse. The [...] social relation, therefore, cannot be derived from the idea of communication.

#### B) *Mundane and/or transcendental intersubjectivity*

Husserl made several attempts to deal with the issue of the constitution of intersubjectivity on the basis of the concept of the transcendental ego. In the late fifties, Schütz, as shown above, became increasingly skeptical, first, about Husserl's way of grounding intersubjectivity via the concept of the transcendental subject, and, second, about the *very attempt* at such a grounding. His criticism of Husserl's attempts<sup>7</sup> found its final expression in his fundamental paper (1957a), where his conclusions can be summarized as follows:<sup>8</sup>

1. Husserl's attempts to prove that transcendental intersubjectivity is the result of the constitutional acts of the transcendental ego failed and the problem of intersubjectivity cannot be solved in the reduced sphere.
2. The attempt to solve the problem of intersubjectivity in the reduced sphere has its origin in the futile attempt of "socializing" the originally solitary transcendental ego.
3. The problem of intersubjectivity has to be separated from Husserl's transcendental phenomenology.
4. Intersubjectivity is a life-world phenomenon, a feature of the natural stance.

Given the results stated in a) and b) above, one can deal with two issues related both to Schütz and Husserl. Schütz supposed already in the *Sinnhafte Aufbau* of 1932 that all results obtained by Husserl in the reduced sphere can be transferred to and used in the description of the mundane sphere for the grounding and foundation of the social sciences, but he was never able to explain *why such a transfer is possible at all*. Given our analysis above it is readily seen that such a transfer is possible because Husserl's analyzes are still submerged into the life-world of mundane beings. Husserl—even in that part of his philosophy which, he claimed, is moving in the reduced sphere—as

<sup>7</sup> For an analysis of Husserl's approach to the concept of intersubjectivity see, e.g., (Held 1972), (Hutchenson 1982), (Iribarne 1994), (Kozlowski 1991), (Rompp 1992), (Stoelger 1994), and (Zeltner 1959).

<sup>8</sup> For a detailed analysis of Schütz's arguments see (Wagner 1984).

*a mundane human being* could never leave the life-world; this is the real reason why Husserl's analyzes, once correctly understood, can be used at all for the foundation of the social sciences.

Husserl's aim, as shown above, to construct an ontology of the life-world should have been accomplished via a reconstruction of the universal structures of every possible human experience. This aim was accepted by Schütz and at the same time related to the issue of the foundation of social sciences. So, for example, when dealing with the social world and its structure he states that the latter is "the result of an historical process and is therefore different for each culture and society. Certain features, however, are common to all social worlds because they are rooted in the human condition," (1955, 229) and where, the examination of this "human condition in general, of the place of man in the cosmos" (1955, 230) is the proper subject-matter of *anthropology*. In a similar manner he states the following about the solution to the questions related to the problem of intersubjectivity: "Questions of this order [...] cannot be resolved by solutions which are valid only for the attitude and experiences of a well-educated adult living in the Occidental civilization of our time. They have to be valid independently of those accidental factors" (1942, 156-157). But this means that the reconstruction of the universal *a priori* structures of the life-world *cannot restrict itself to the reconstruction of concrete categoreal forms of knowledge* about the outer (natural and/or social) world because they are always under the spell of being simply historically specific and not universal forms of the appropriation and transformation of the outer world.<sup>9</sup> What this *a priori* could be will be shown in the last part of this paper.

### C) Schütz's critique of Husserl's idealism and its consequences

Husserl's idealism, if it is idealism at all, is a highly contested issue. A good starting point is the *Foreword* to his *Ideas* where he characterizes phenomenological idealism as follows (1930, 152-153):

- [1] Our phenomenological idealism does not deny the positive existence of the real world (and primarily of Nature), as if meant, that the world which underlies, although unnoticed, the natural thinking and that of the positive sciences was an illusion.
- [2] Its sole task and accomplishment is to clarify the sense of this world, precisely that sense in which everyone accepts it, and with undeniable right, as really existing.
- [3] That the world exists, that it is given as an existing universe in an experience which is continuous and always fits together in universal consonance—that is quite indubitable.
- [4] It is entirely something else to understand this indubitability which is carried by this life and positive science, and to clarify justification.
- [5] In this respect it is a philosophical fundamental [...] that the continuous progression of experience in this form of universal agreement is a mere presumption, even if legitimately valid, and that accordingly the non-existence of the world, always remains thinkable.

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<sup>9</sup> R. Welter claims (1987, 93) that Husserl became trapped in the framework of European science and philosophy once he viewed space, time and causation as the general *a priori* structures of the life-world.

[6] The result of the phenomenological clarification of the sense of the mode of the mode of being of the real world, and of a conceivable real world in general is that only the transcendental subjectivity has the existential sense of absolute being, that only it is “non-relative” (that is, relative only to itself), while the real world exists to be sure, however it has an essential relativity to transcendental subjectivity, since it can have its sense as existing only as the sense-construct of transcendental subjectivity.

R. M. Holmes explicates these claims as follows (1975, 104-106):

[1\*] Phenomenology does not doubt the existence of the real world, but—he adds—phenomenology via the transcendental turn suspends the *belief* in the existence as part of the natural stance in the sense that every belief is now viewed as something *intended* and as an intended it can and has to be explicated. And of course, if something is *intended as existing* it does not mean that it has to be really existing.

[2\*] Phenomenology's aim is to explicate the meaning of the “fact” that everyone takes the world as existing, i.e., it investigates into the world as *meant*.

[3\*] That the world is recognized as really existing is the result of various individual experiences that are continuous and coherent with each other.

[4\*] Phenomenology's aim is *not* to provide justifications of the metaphysical belief into the existence of the existence of the world; its aim is to clarify the sense of the world *intended as existing*. It is *metaphysically neutral* because by the transcendental turn it has suspended the natural stance's belief into the existence of the external world.

[5\*] Even if our coherent experiences show that the real world exists, we can *think* of it as non-existing. What Husserl is interested in are just the objects as intentional objects but which are *not identified with those objects that have an external (metaphysical) existence*.

[6\*] In phenomenology all objects, and thus the existence of the world is viewed as related to and *relative to* consciousness, namely the transcendental consciousness or subjectivity. But Husserl is *not a metaphysical idealist* because this view is taken after the transcendental turn was taken, and then the only interest of phenomenology is to deal with the claims about the existence of the world as *claims* and nothing else.<sup>10</sup>

An opposing view to that of R. M. Holmes is taken by several philosophers. Most prominent here is E. Fink who characterizes Husserl's self-proclaimed idealism as “the ‘idealistic’ thought [which] includes within it a primacy of meaning (*Sinn*) over being (*Sein*) meaning, or theoretical validity [...] is prior to reality and prior to the real object of knowledge [...]”, (1933, 91) and characterizes the transcendental subject as a *subject that antedates the real world (weltvorgängiges Subjekt)*. In such an interpretation Husserl is viewed as a metaphysical idealist who is accepted (and criticized), e.g., by R. Ingarden (1950; 1959; 1975)<sup>11</sup> who draws upon views from the *Ideas*, where Husserl states that reality (1982, §50, 113)

is not in itself something absolute [...]; rather, in the absolute sense, it is nothing at all; it has no “absolute sense” whatever; it has the essentiality of something which, of necessity,

<sup>10</sup> R. Bernet comes to a similar conclusion in his paper (1990).

<sup>11</sup> Husserl is also characterized as a metaphysical idealist in (Kochler 1993) and (Morriston 1976).

is *only* intentional, *only* an object of consciousness, something presented (*vorstelliges*) in the manner peculiar to consciousness, something apparent as "apparent".

In the *Cartesian Meditations*<sup>12</sup> one can find similar views: "The attempt to conceive the universe of true being as something lying outside the universe of possible consciousness, possible knowledge, possible evidence, two being related to one another merely externally by a rigid law, is nonsensical?" (1960, §41, 84).

Whatever Husserl's views on the realism/idealism issue actually were or in whatever manner one tries to interpret his views, once Husserl places (correctly in our view) an inherent connection between the consciousness and its thought-objects, while at the same time (wrongly in our view) bypassing—to put it mildly—the issue of the existence of the real counterpart of the thought-object, Husserl's phenomenology has several implications which have *devastating consequences for the very attempts to ground the social sciences*; they are as follows:<sup>13</sup>

- (i) *The mundane, inner-worldly character of subjectivity, as compared to the world-constituting character, is its secondary modus.*
- (ii) *Once the subject is the center of world-constitution, then it is a transcendental subject, but then its dependence on the external world, e.g., on other subjects and social structures, escapes analyzes; according to Husserl "no real being, no being which is presented and legitimated in consciousness by appearances, is necessary to the being of consciousness itself [...] Immanent being is therefore indubitably absolute being in the sense that by essential necessity immanent being nulla 're' indiget ad existendum" (1982, §49, 110).*
- (iii) *Once (transcendental) subjectivity, cut off from the external world, takes central stage, then sociality and communication become secondary issues.*

It is precisely in the issue of the realistic/idealistic interpretation of Husserl's oeuvre that yet another aspect of Schütz's work comes into play. In a letter to A. Gurwitsch of August 1939 he considers the (1989, 7-8)

[d]ifficulty every subjectivistic (to say nothing of transcendently oriented) philosophy has in coming to terms with the fact of the objective world which it has "put in brackets" or "annihilated." This world, our *life-world*, is after all there, with that sense which is proper to it, a sense which is given over to me for interpretation. With that hubris which phenomenology shares with all transcendental systems I act as if I, the *ego transcendental*, myself produced this sense, if not the world itself. But in all this I don't produce anything at all other than sense and new sense, and with all my productive intentionalities I don't move one single grain of sand and with all my kinaesthesias I don't change one single thing in the world of things [...] It is high time that action, namely corporeal *dháoléi* in the external world, be made the theme of philosophy.

In his paper (1957a) he describes the reasons why Husserl's phenomenology was not able to deal with the issue of bodily action in the outer world as follows (1957a, 83):

<sup>12</sup> On the *Cartesian Meditations*' "glide" towards metaphysical idealism see (Ricoeur 1967, 89).

<sup>13</sup> I draw here partially upon (Schmid 2000).

They arise from a transformation of sense which the concept of constitution has undergone in the course of the development of phenomenology. At the beginning of phenomenology, constitution meant clarification of the sense-structure of conscious life, inquiry into sediments in respect of their history, tracing back all *cogitata* to intentional operations of the on-going conscious life [...] But unobtrusively, and almost unaware [...] the idea of constitution has changed from a clarification of sense-structure, from an explication of the sense of being, into the foundation of the structure of being; it has changed from explication into creation.

Phenomenology, as a consequence of this, made an attempt to do something it is principally not capable of, namely, "establishing an ontology on the basis of the process of subjective life" (1957a, 83-84). Schütz makes, compared to Husserl, a thoroughly *realistic turnpoint* once he claims that "the ontological structure of the universe is imposed upon me and constitutes the frame of my possible spontaneous activities [...]" (1958b, 288). In the correspondence with A. Gurwitsch from June 1953 this turnpoint takes the following form. While A. Gurwitsch claims (1989, 210):

I would change Hobbes's maxim, that we understand nothing that we haven't ourselves created, to the effect that we can't accept anything we cannot penetrate and survey in its structure and in the inner composition of its sense,

Schütz's answer is as follows (1989, 210-211):

That we understand nothing we haven't ourselves created is something I gladly admit. The ontological foundation of all understanding and self-understanding is itself in principle not available to understanding. But it is describable. If you vary Hobbes's *statement* to the effect that we cannot accept anything that we cannot penetrate and survey in its structure and in the inner composition of its sense, I answer that it doesn't lie within our "ability" to accept or not accept that which is *imposed* on us. And what is imposed on us? Our place as human beings in the cosmos. I mean no more than that this is simply ontologically there, in its incomprehensibility and that it is only this primal foundation—as a life-world—that makes all understanding possible.

And a year later he expresses the realistic turnpoint in yet another way, namely, "I have solidified the suspicion I have had for many years that the theory of intentionality can never lead to the constitution of the objective world [...] Not being or mere appearance, but being or sense is the dilemma here" (Schütz, Gurwitsch 1989, 293-294).

From the point of view of this paper it is necessary to mention one consequence of Schütz's realistic turnpoint. Once Schütz claims that our life-world contains an inherently objective, non-meaningful dimension not constituted by intentional acts, and where the former is the basis/ground (*Boden*) of the latter (Schütz, Gurwitsch 1989, 293), then in respect to the *mundane process of interhuman communication* it has to hold that the outer world is the presupposition enabling the very existence of this communication. From this he draws the conclusion that "[...] the vehicles of [...] communication—significant gestures, signs, symbols, language—have necessarily to belong to the common environment in order to make communication possible and,

therefore, cannot constitute it," (1953a, 38) and "reciprocal understanding and communication already presuppose [...] a common surrounding world [...] and not the reverse. The common surrounding world [...] therefore cannot be derived from the idea of communication" (1957a, 72). These arguments provide yet an additional reason, to that given above, as to why Schütz does not deal with the issue of communication as coorginal with intentionality and that of bodily affecting the outer world.

## Beyond Schütz

We can now give a final evaluation of the importance of Schütz's oeuvre for the foundation of the social sciences.

The positive aspect of his works can be seen, *first*, in the fact that he views the life-world as founded in intersubjectivity (Schütz, Gurwitsch 1989, 141) and at the same states (Schütz, Gurwitsch 1989, 235).

Traditional phenomenology, including Husserl, is naïve in the sense that it analyzes perception as the central paradigm without taking into account the fact that perception is after all a phenomenon of the life-world and thus implicitly presupposes the appresentative structures that lead to the construction of the life-world [...] Intentionality is actually possible only within the life-world.

This means that intentionality is an intersubjective feature and cannot be assigned to a solitary (presocialized) transcendental subject; *without a theory of intersubjectivity there can be neither a theory of intentionality nor an ontology of the life-world* (Schütz, Gurwitsch 1989, 246-247).

*Second*, in addition to the intersubjective cum intentional dimension of the life-world, Schütz brings in yet another dimension of it, namely, its *material-objective* dimension, which he clearly differentiates from the former, (Schütz, Gurwitsch 1989, 166) and views as one aspect of this dimension of the life-world the issue of *corporality* (*Leiblichkeit*) which he understands as *coorginal* with intersubjectivity (1957b, 89).

A recent attempt to deal with the issue of corporality (*Leiblichkeit*) in the framework of phenomenology worth mentioning is Zaner's paper (2003). On the surface it appears to be an attempt to deal with the issue of corporal disabilities as exemplified in the well-known fate of Jean-Dominique Bauby who suffered a massive brain-stroke which left him completely paralyzed except his left eyelid, by means of which he was able to set up communication with other persons and, finally, let the surrounding world know his personal fate as published in his memoir (1997). Zaner, one of Schütz's students, relates Bauby's fate to the fate of Joe Bonham, the tragic figure in D. Trumbo's fiction *Johnny Got his Gun*, a kind of an imagined memoir of a soldier who spends his life bed stricken because he was completely physically crippled during WWI. Only after some time does he realize, like Jean-Do, that he can use part of his body, namely, his head, lifting/ lowering it in accordance with Morse Code, and then, finally, one of the nurses in charge of him notices this and writes on his chest "HAPPY CHRISTMAS!"

Zaner puts the following questions (2003, 193-203):

[Q<sub>1</sub>] How is it that no one ever paused to wonder whether Joe Bonham's damaged body still embodied him, a living individual? Why did it never occur to any of the people who took care of him to wonder whether he had feelings, wishes, indeed a name, a history, or a family?

[Q<sub>2</sub>] How could the nurse in charge of him know that his head-taps were any different from neural reflexes having nothing to do with words or even a purpose?

[Q<sub>3</sub>] If we are not already aware of this use of the eyelid or the wrinkling skin, how can we recognize that Bauby or Bonham is alert and actually trying to tell us something?

[Q<sub>4</sub>] A major reason that we know that Bauby and Bonham could talk and in fact talked is that each author let the readers know the internal thoughts of each person. Readers are allowed to know what was not known to, or was at best problematic for many who would encounter either man. Readers are let in on the secret. How is this possible?

[Q<sub>5</sub>] Even if what the nurse did in the case of Joe Bonham was a kind of trial run, how could she have realized what she had to do—draw letters on his chest? Or, how could Joe come to the realization that she understood him?

Let us try to give answers to these questions:

[A<sub>1</sub>] Language used in intersubjective communication inherently involves a *code* as a *non-intentional* (material) entity. This entity is, via a certain chain, connected to our *corpus (Leib)*. And in standard practice, as a kind of routine, it is the functioning senses of hearing and speaking which form the presupposed background of our communication practices. But in the case of Bauby and Bonham this background does not exist, so to enter into communication with them requires us to step out of the routine usage of hearing and speaking.

[A<sub>2</sub>] The nurse could have known that Bonham's taps were attempts to set up communication by i) bringing in from her social past, if not the complete knowledge of the Morse Code then, at least the knowledge of the existence of such a code; and ii) by attempting to enter into communication with the “entity” tied to the bed; *only in the (attempted) process of mutual communication can we mutually and reciprocally (try to) assure ourselves of the fact of our being human beings*.

[A<sub>3</sub>] We have to (try to) enter into communication, and this means i) breaking the code, i.e., identifying the movements of Bonham's head or Bauby's left eyelid as encoding meaning and, ii) entering into communication through an exchange of meaning.

[A<sub>4</sub>] We know what is happening to Bauby and Bonham simply because we *read* about it, i.e., we enter into (a mediated form of) communication with them.

[A<sub>5</sub>] The nurse by bringing from her social past i) her knowledge of the Latin alphabet and the English language, ii) the knowledge that in front of her is an English-speaking person, and iii) the ability to identify the body in front of her as a *corpus (Leib)* is able to write on the chest of this *corpus* “HAPPY CHRISTMAS!” and Joe Bonham, as a literate, English-speaking person is able to read this message.

What prevents Zaner from giving exactly *these* answers is the fact that he explicitly draws upon Schütz's view that intersubjectivity is more fundamental and not cooriginal with communication; (Zaner 2003, 196-197):<sup>14</sup>

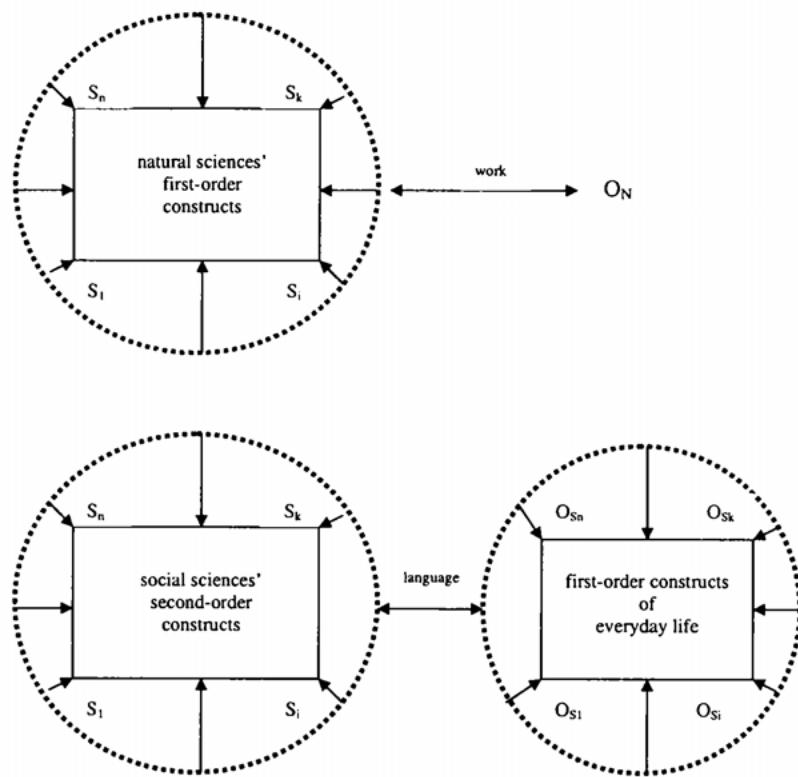
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<sup>14</sup> On Zaner's views on the issue of intersubjectivity see also his paper (2002).

Alfred long ago pointed out that while communication is among the most critical relationships of human life, it is nevertheless not the most fundamental, for underlying it is what he termed the *Du-einstellung*, by which he sought to designate the elemental relatedness each of us experiences to another person—already initiated, I would add, while still within the womb.

Here we, finally, arrive at the negative, or rather *unaccomplished* aspect of Schütz's works, namely, that while he viewed (*intersubjective*) *intentionality* and *objectivity/materiality* (*involving corporality (Leiblichkeit)*) as two *cooriginal determinations of the life-world*, he did not view—as shown above—*communication as cooriginal with them but only, compared to them, as secondary*.

Why is it important to deal with the issue of language communication in respect to the foundation of the social sciences? The answer can be obtained once we mutually compare, via the following scheme,<sup>15</sup> the relation of the natural and social sciences to their respective objects.



<sup>15</sup> We draw here upon A. Sayer's (1992).

Here  $S_1, \dots, S_n$  stand for the cooperating theoretical scientists; the dotted lines around the constructs of sciences and around the first-order constructs of every-day life stand for the language shared by these scientists and for the language shared by the actors in the social world, while the arrows stand for the structuration of these constructs by the meanings of these languages. In the case of the relation of the natural sciences to their objects the medium of interaction is that of a specific type of effecting, namely *work*, understood as the exchange of "stuff" with nature for the purpose of manipulating and changing the natural object,  $O_N$ , which is of course always accomplished by *cooperating (non-solitary) human beings within the background of the linguistically prestructured intentional entities they mutually share*. In the case of the relation of the social sciences to their objects the medium of interaction is that which enables the connection between the language used by the social scientists and the language used by the actors in the world of everyday life, i.e., the medium is, again, *a language*, i.e., meanings expressed in a certain code. Stated otherwise: the natural sciences differ from the social sciences in the way they affect their respective objects: *work* vs. *interaction by language*.

From the schemes above it is readily seen that in the case of the methodological reflections on the relation of natural sciences to their object  $O_N$ , it is sufficient to view language, given on the side of cognizing natural scientists, as fulfilling, in respect of their object of inquiry  $O_N$ , a *purely referential function*, while the issue of intersubjectivity and the latter's constitution can be viewed as (somehow) *solved*. But this issue becomes much more pressing and urgent when one performs methodological reflections in terms of the relation of the social sciences to their object  $O_S$ . Here on the very *object-side* language performs the function of a medium between the production and reproduction of intersubjectivity, of consent/dissent and is thus the medium for the coordination of the action of human beings in the social world. This function of language becomes more understandable when one draws upon Husserl's notion of validity which he introduces in respect to meaning-structures constituted in intentional acts. He states, e.g., (1954, Beilage XX, zu §39, 468):

In the natural stance I have the world always in ontic validity in which I am as a human being and inseparably from that is an environment—open to other human beings—in ontic validity [...] The world is given to *me* as what it is given to *all*. To interpret it according to its "How" and its modes of imagination is to interpret in that what it is as a world for all, as it is in the connection of the modes of imagination of all [...] human beings [...] *The ontological form of the world is that of the world for all [human beings]*.

If meaning-structures embody certain claims (e.g., that certain entities display such and such properties) and at the same time these claims can be valid (e.g., true), then these meaning-structures can become *socially efficacious because human beings sharing these meaning-structures with their respective claims, viewed by them as valid, are predisposed to act in the social world in certain specific ways*. The social world within which human beings act and which they constitute in their actions is a world in which language-meanings enable them to act and is, thus, prestructured by these meanings. *A reconstruction of the universal structures of language will, therefore, be at*

*the same time a reconstruction of the universal symbolic life-world structures which have their origin in these structures of language.* But one has to bear in mind that the symbolic structures of the life-world *do not exhaust all life-world structures.*

The necessity of dealing with the issue of language understood as fulfilling not only purely referential functions can also be understood when one returns to the issue of the *a priori* characteristics of the life-world we mentioned above. In the case of the relation of the natural sciences to their objects the reconstruction of such *a priori* structures would enable the (Kantian) question of how the *cognition* of nature is possible at all to be answered. But the reconstruction of the function and structures of language on the *object-side* in the case of the relation of social sciences to their objects would enable a problem to be solved at a deeper level, namely, *how is society possible at all, what is its a priori?*

As stated above, we view *intentionality*, understood as the ego's cooriginal awareness of itself, of alter egos and of the surrounding non-social world, and the *meaning-dimension of language* as the life-world's *a priori*. It is in respect to the former that the importance of yet another aspect of Schütz's works for the foundation of the social sciences becomes apparent. Once we view phenomenology as an attempt to reconstruct everything, once it becomes a phenomenon, i.e., as it *appears to the consciousness*,<sup>16</sup> in that foundation one can draw upon the result of phenomenology because it provides us with the starting point for the reconstruction of the intentional, meaningful dimension of social action, and where via the latter the social world is constituted. Of course, in order to utilize this aspect of phenomenology for the purpose of the foundation of the social sciences it has to be *linguistically reinterpreted*; "if there is going to be phenomenology at all, then it must be linguistic phenomenology" (Harrison 1975, 107).

Given Schütz's views on the pragmatic (*pragma*) and the objective (non-meaningful) dimension of the life-world structures, it is necessary to introduce yet another cooriginal as *a priori*. We label it *affecting* and understand it as a unity i) affecting the outer natural world in the process of work; and ii) the use of the corpus (*Leib*) and outer nature in the process of linguistic inter-human communication. Above we tentatively characterized work as an exchange of "stuff" with nature for the purpose of manipulating and changing natural objects. Now we can broaden this characterization as follows:

- 1) It is an exchange of "stuff" with the surrounding nature accomplished against the background of shared meanings expressed in a language, i.e., a specific *human* form of the appropriation of the surrounding material world.
- 2) It characterizes *sociality in general* (*schlechthin*), *universally*, i.e., it is *ahistorical as long creatures* (*Geschöpfe*) characterized by *language meanings and intentions existed in the past and will continue to do so in the future*. At the same time it has to be emphasized that that work is different from more historically limited, additional determinations of work, e.g., labor and surplus-labor.
- 3) The degree of the development of work determines the degree to which these creatures are capable of overcoming the constraints imposed on them by the external nature.

We thus view *affecting*, *intentionality* and (language) *meanings* as the triple life-world *a priori* by which one can characterize the species we (now) label *homo sapiens*.

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Department of Logic and Methodology of Science,  
Faculty of Philosophy,  
Comenius University  
Gondova 2  
818 01 Bratislava  
Slovakia  
E-mail: hanel999@hotmail.com