

**Paul Ricœur and Alfred Schütz:
Phenomenological Responses to Edmund Husserl's
Configuration of Social Reality**

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Abstract

The human being is ontologically a relational being living with others in organized communities and institutions. By focusing on the intersubjective and collective levels of human experience, this essay considers the possibility of a critical dialogue between Paul Ricœur's and Alfred Schütz's phenomenological works toward a renewed socio-phenomenological approach to social reality. I begin with a broad framing of Husserl's second *epoché* or reduction to the sphere of ownness as performed within the egological sphere and then turn to Ricœur's and Schütz's critiques of the Husserlian conception of intersubjectivity. These reflections will lead us to discuss the inconsistency of Husserl's idea of the intersubjective acceptance of the common objective nature and his formulation of the higher-order case of the communal constitution.

Keywords: transcendental phenomenology, ownness, other, intersubjectivity, collectivity.



Introduction

The question of the nature of intersubjectivity and the problem of the structure of collectivity represent two significant concerns of phenomenology. The attention given to the constitution of intersubjectivity and the framework of collective life confers on phenomenology an undeniable social dimension. Specifically, the phenomenological analysis of the social world, as distinguished from the natural one, starts with Edmund Husserl's work. Husserl's phenomenological investigations on the intentional achievements of a plurality of subjects left a strong mark on the successive layers of socio-phenomenological discussions both in the German phenomenological movement and in French-influenced phenomenology in authors such as Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, or Emmanuel Levinas, among many others. Facing the eminent danger of solipsism, it is in the *Fifth Meditation* of his *Cartesian Meditations* that Husserl tries for the first time to formulate a rigorous and systematic solution to the problem of intersubjectivity, the presence of the other and the configuration of the common world within the transcendental account. However, attempting to progress from the ego to the other arises as a perennial difficulty in Husserl's thought. As such, Husserl's investigation of intersubjectivity and collectivity has often been criticized or even deemed problematic and inconsistent (Carr, 2004, p. 360).

I intend not to explain how Husserl develops his reflection on intersubjectivity and collectivity in his transcendental phenomenology. Instead, the purpose of this critical essay is more specific. By taking its point of departure from the inspiring reflections elaborated in the dynamic field of contemporary social phenomenology, the present contribution aims to draw out an innovative dialogue between Paul Ricœur's early phenomenology and Alfred Schütz's phenomenological analyses of the social world. More precisely, with the Husserlian phenomenology in the background, this paper seeks to take a critical stance on Husserl's theory of intersubjectivity through Paul Ricœur's and Alfred Schütz's objections to his transcendental phenomenology of human intersubjective and social relations. Through reference to Ricœur's interpretation of the most important of Husserl's writing presented in his 1967 collection of essays entitled *Husserl: An Analysis of His Phenomenology* and Schütz's masterpiece *The Phenomenology of the Social World*, this article will show a remarkable continuity and a

coherent complementarity between these two authors. First, I will begin by describing Husserl's second *epoché*. This second or transcendental reduction carried out within the egological sphere represents the point of departure for Ricœur's and Schütz's new directions in the phenomenology of social reality. Then, I will focus the attention on what can be considered the first two stages of Ricœur's and Schütz's critique of Husserl's notion of intersubjectivity: the isolation of the primordial world of the ego and the constitution of the other through pairing, apperception, and imaginative variations. Particular attention will be given to the theoretical continuity between Ricœur's and Schütz's approaches and the differences that characterize their objections to Husserl's theory. These reflections will lead to a discussion of Husserl's attempt to justify the common objective nature from the asymmetrical relationship between the ego and the other, and his idea of "personality of a higher order" referred to the nature of social entities such as institutions and social groups. Finally, I will draw some conclusions on Husserl's failure to work out a reflection on the concrete meaning of intersubjectivity and collectivity.

The Second *Epoché*. Setting the Path for a Socio-Phenomenological Analysis of Intersubjectivity

After having performed the transcendental reduction or primordial reduction (*die Primordiale Reduktion*) as an abstraction from the judgment about the natural world in order to get to the field of pure transcendental consciousness, and after having explained how the sense of objects depends on the operations of the ego's intentional consciousness (e.g., sense bestowal), in the *Fifth Meditation* of his *Cartesian Mediations* Husserl elaborates a second *epoché*, using the Greek term for abstention, for introducing the egological reduction or reduction to the sphere of ownness (*Eigenheitssphäre*). This second *epoché* is performed within the egological sphere, already discovered by the prior phenomenological reduction. Expressly, through this second reduction, the ego excludes the results of all intentional activities that refer directly or indirectly to other subjectivities, attaining one's own primordial sphere in this way. As Husserl puts it, "We disregard all constitutional effects of intentionality relating immediately or mediately to other subjectivity and delimit first of all the total nexus of that actual and potential intentionality in which the

ego constitutes within himself a peculiar ownness" (Husserl, 1960, p. 93). He explains the connection between the primordial and the second reduction as follows:

Whatever the transcendental ego constitutes in that first stratum, whatever he constitutes as nonother, as his 'peculiarly own' – that indeed belongs to him as a component of his own concrete essence [...]; it is inseparable from his concrete being. Within and through his ownness, the transcendental ego constitutes, however, the 'Objective' world, as a universe of being that is other than himself – and constitutes, as the first level, the other in the mode: alter ego (Husserl, 1960, p. 100).

For Husserl, the second *epoché* represents a methodological step, a product of abstraction, and not a concrete possibility. More simply, the reduction is considered a thought experiment. According to Ricœur, differently from Descartes' cogito, which is conceived as "the first link in a chain of truth" (Ricœur, 1967, p. 141) even though Husserl's ego still plays the role of origin and antecedent foundation, "is not a truth to be followed by other truths in an order of reasons. The cogito plays, rather, the role of 'origin' (*Ursprung*) of 'antecedent foundation', instead of that of the initial theorem" (Ricœur, 1967, p. 141). In conclusion, the sense of an animated organism as uniquely singled out remains in the reduction to the sphere of ownness.

Concerning this reduction, the paradoxical problem is to constitute the other from and within the ego's consciousness and to understand it at the same time as another, as a subject that is not merely a psychophysical object but a human being that has experienced both of the natural and social world as the ego itself. Therefore, after the performance of the second *epoché* and the delineation of the sphere of ownness, Husserl proceeds to describe how the constitution of the other takes place, transforming the objection of solipsism in an argument, i.e., in a challenge that finds the foundations in the consideration of what is peculiarly my own (*das mir Eigene*). First, the ego is presented as a monadic structure that looks out onto the world from its own perspective, projecting specific meanings that depend upon how the world is constituted in and from its own intuition. As Husserl stresses: "consequent upon this abstractive elimination of all that is alien to me, a sort of world remains with me, a nature reduced to what belongs to me – a psychophysical ego with

body, soul, and personal ego integrated into this nature, thanks to its body" (Husserl, 1960, p. 129). It is through the experience of its body that the ego perceives and founds its own "world." The ego's living body is always given an immediate presentation; it is the primal instituting organ to which the ego ascribes sensations and controls them actively from within. Second, the world is reduced to an array of phenomena that the transcendental ego claims as its 'own,' including the existence of other subjective monadic egos. The phenomenological sense of 'alter' is gained through the reflexive experience of the ego as the source and foundation of all meanings within itself. The other is found based on the logical pairing of the ego's body itself. Through the pairing, the other arises as a physical object. In this first moment, the others are as physics-objects. However, the sense of the other is missed if it is reduced to a physical body without intentions and conscious directions.

Thus, Husserl argues that besides objects in the world, there are other intentional subjects, i.e., beings who intentionally encounter the world. Although we cannot have originary experience of the other's psychic life, Husserl explains that the awareness of the other mind is appresented as a conscious stream containing acts of the same sort as the ego's conscious stream. Since the other is not immediately accessible to the ego as the ego is to itself, the mediate mode of appearance that makes the experience of the other possible is called appresentation. Husserl defines appresentation as a kind of "making co-present" (*Mit-gegenwärtig-machines*), as an intentional process in which we supply what is not immediately present to experience but which is intentionally related to it (Husserl, 1960, p. 109). The other is apperceived and appresented as a psychophysical unity, confirmed by the concordance of expressions, gestures, and behavior. As Husserl puts it, "the body of the other announces itself in the succession of experience as truly being an animate body in the unique way its changing but ever concordant behavior" (Husserl, 1960, p. 144). The other is a living, intentional being that resembles the ego.

The connection between what we might call the "own" and the "alien" causes many difficulties. We saw that for Husserl; the ego is the unquestionable reality while the other is reduced to its being-a-meaning for the ego and not as a transcendence over and against it. More precisely, the ego apprehends the other as other-than-the-ego-itself and never a transcendent-real-other. As such, the model of thing-

constitution (Dingkonstitution), as the attempt to constitute the other as a presumed unity of meaning within the flux of appearance, cannot solve the question of the other specific otherness. It is starting from this paradoxical point of treatment of the presence of the other as a problem of transcendental phenomenology in Husserl's work that Ricœur and Schütz reciprocally move in the direction of renewed phenomenological analyses of intersubjectivity and the social world. Much has already been written on Ricœur's and Schütz's respective readings of Husserl. However, I believe that, unfortunately, scholarly studies have not yet seen the fruitfulness of exploring together their interpretations and adaptations of Husserl's analysis of the intersubjective constitution of the community of monads (*Monadengemeinschaft*) and sociality (*Sozialität*).

From my point of view, there is a greater homogeneity among these two distinguished thinkers. Specifically, it seems that Schütz's emphasis on transcendental phenomenology displays a remarkable continuity and complementarity with Ricœur's work. I see in both Ricœur's and Schütz's speculations the attempt to cross-interpretative sociology of the social world, namely what Max Weber calls *Verstehende Soziologie*, and Husserl's phenomenology, trying in this way to develop elements for a renewed phenomenological descriptive sociology (see Cefai, 1998). Following their lines of thought, phenomenological resources can be used within social sciences. Ricœur and Schütz reflect upon the genesis of intersubjectivity and the status of collective entities starting from a critical reflection on Husserl's phenomenological perspective. Agreeing with Ricœur and pushing his argument further, I believe that Husserl's *Fifth Meditation* presents the outline for an a priori network of interpretative sociology of the social configuration, which needs to be revisited, criticized, and fulfilled by empirical reflection (See Ricœur, 1991, 240).

Ricœur discerns the problem of transcendental intersubjectivity by asking "how the primacy of the ego, sole originary principle of transcendental phenomenology, can be maintained throughout this progression toward the Other, toward the world of Others, and the Others as a world" (Ricœur, 1967, p. 116). Similarly, in his essay "The Problem of Transcendental Intersubjectivity in Husserl," Schütz argues: "How can the objectivity of the world as a world for everyone, and the existence of Others be established within this egological

cosmos? How can I derive the intersubjectivity of the world from the intentionalities of my own conscious life?" (Schütz, 1975, 57).

Husserl indeed has a renewed interest in social science and their object, namely the everyday social world, a context of interactions, calling it a "we-world" or "with-world" (Moran, 2016). He is deeply interested in the intentional being-with-each-other (*Ineinandersein*), i.e., in the intersubjective joining together of subjects that is constitutive of the collective social life (Moran, 2013). However, contrary to the sociological and anthropological perspectives, in which community is analyzed as something already existing, Husserl's examination develops from the ego to the common world. Therefore, Ricœur says that "what is important in Husserl is not what he says about community but how his analysis advances step by step toward community" (Ricœur, 1967, p. 135), i.e., how the analysis progresses from solipsism to community. However, Husserl rejects the attempt of philosophers of science, such as Rudolf Carnap, Carl Hempel, and Ernst Nagel, to apply the methodology of natural sciences to social reality. He insists that the naturalistic attitude wrongly conceives the natural world, particularly the world of things (*Dingwelt*) studied by physics, as in some sense prior and independent of the human cultural world (see Husserl, 1989). Husserl recognizes that this conclusion is one of the ongoing consequences of modern science, in which the abstract concept of nature has priority over the cultural world. Schütz rightly points out:

It seems that Edmund Husserl and the phenomenological school have demonstrated more clearly than any other philosophy of which I know that even our logic is rooted in this world of everyday life, which he calls the *Lebenswelt*, and that 'nature' in the sense of natural sciences is nothing else but a layer of this common life-world of all of us, a product of a systematic process of abstraction, generalization, and idealization in which man with his subjectivity is not included (Schütz, 1997, p. 133).

As Ricœur will write in his later work *Memory, History, and Forgetting*, Husserl "attempts to pass from the solitary ego to another susceptible of becoming, in turn, an us" (Ricœur, 2004, p. 117). The emergence of intersubjectivity as a theme in Husserl's writings from *Ideas I* to the *Cartesian Meditations* brings deep theoretical problems, such as the issue of ownness and otherness and the other mind

question. Schütz concludes that “these difficulties make it doubtful that Husserl’s attempt to develop a transcendental theory of the objective world was successful, and, what is more, they make it doubtful that such an attempt can succeed at all within the transcendental sphere” (Schütz, 1975, p. 55).

Objections to The First Two Stages of Husserl’s Transcendental Theory of Intersubjectivity

Ricœur’s and Schütz’s phenomenological analyses of Husserl refer mainly to the *Fifth Cartesian Meditation*. The analysis of this text offers at once the most thorough examination of the phenomenological foundation of transcendental intersubjectivity and makes rise to its most serious difficulties. Schütz observes that “in the *Cartesian Meditations* especially in the *Fifth Meditation*, Husserl has given us a profound analysis of the general significance of these questions and has also given us the essential starting point from which they must be solved” (Schütz, 1967, p. 97). Ricœur and Schütz mark out four stages in Husserl’s analysis, and in each of them, they find insurmountable problems in developing the conception of transcendental intersubjectivity. These levels are articulated in the dynamic movement from self-experience (*Selbsterfahrung*), to the experience of others (*Fremderfahrung*), from being with one-another (*ineinander*) in the configuration of the objective common world (*objective Welt*), to the constitution of higher intersubjective communities or still called “personalities of higher-order” (*Gemeinschaft*). Let us now consider Ricœur and Schütz’s critical assessment and objections of the first two stages of Husserl’s transcendental inquiry into the origin of intersubjectivity: (1) the isolation of the primordial world of the ego’s peculiar ownness through the *epoché*; (2) the constitution of the other via pairing, apperception, and imaginative variations. These levels contain ideas that will carry over to the higher-order case of communal constitution.

a) The Ego’s Ownness

Ricœur and Schütz argue that the first stage in Husserl’s theory of intersubjectivity is distinguishing the sphere of the ego’s proper ownness, including the cohesive stratum of its own world experience, from the sphere of other subjectivities. More precisely, as I have

explained above, the constitution of the intersubjective world begins with what Husserl calls the second *epoché* after the transcendental *epoché* which is the abstraction (*Enthaltung*), the bracketing (*Einklammerung*), and the putting out of play (*ausser spiel zu setzen*), from the totality of the world. The second *epoché* is the reduction of transcendental experience to the ego's sphere of peculiar ownness. Examining how this second *epoché* is performed, Schütz points out that this is an abstraction "first of all from what gives men and animals their specific sense as, so to speak, ego-like living beings" (Schütz, 1975, p. 58), but also from others as living beings and from all cultural predicates and objects. As Schütz, Ricœur argues, "According to common sense, the other egos are not reducible to the representation one has of them. They are not even represented objects, unities of sense, which one can verify in a concordant course of experience. Others are other than I" (Ricœur, 1967, p. 116). Briefly put the *Dingskonstitution* account, the attempt to constitute the other as a presumed unity of meaning within the flux of appearance cannot solve the question of the other specific otherness as living beings. It is necessary to break what Ricœur calls the "dictatorship of *Vorstellung*" (Ricœur, 1954, p. 381) and the ruins of representation to fully recognize the other's existence. The other is other than a thing, other than a mere analogy of an ego; it is a non-totalizable surplus of adumbrations whose presence cannot be brought to light by an epistemological derivation and dependency on the ego. Ricœur and Schütz criticize how Husserl justifies the manifestation of the sphere of the other. As Schütz observes,

several texts, including passages in *Formale und Transzendente Logik*, point to a 'pre-constituted substratum' (*Unterstufe*) of what is not 'properly' of the ego. What kind is that substratum, and must not a radical clarification of the constitution of what is not 'properly' of the ego beginning with an analysis of that substratum? (Schütz, 1975, 59)

Schütz refers to Eugen Fink's 1970 essay «The Phenomenological Philosophy of Edmund Husserl and Contemporary Criticism» in which Fink develops the distinction between three forms of ego that belong to the transcendental reflection and which are implied in the phenomenological reduction: (a) the mundane ego, the ego accepted along with its mundane life and preoccupied with the world; (b) the transcendental ego "to whom the world is pre-given in universal

apperception and by whom the world is taken for granted” (Schütz, 1975, p. 60); (c) the detached observer, the onlooker (*Zuschauer*), who performs the *epoché*. Schütz objects to Husserl to improperly switch the referent ego from one ego to another. Although Ricœur is not as direct as Schütz in the objection to Husserl's inaccurate reference to the notion of ego, he recalls Fink's work while examining the difficulties of interpreting Husserl's *Ideas I* (See Ricœur, 1967, 24). However, whereas Schütz attacks Husserl's indifferent use of the concept of ego, Ricœur focuses on Husserl's notion of intentionality as the property of the ego to the world. Specifically, Ricœur stresses that there are three concepts of intentionality: “that of psychology, which is synonymous with receptivity; that of *Ideas I*, which is dominated by the noema-noesis correlation and of which it is difficult to say whether it is receptive or creative; and that of true constitution, which is productive creative” (Ricœur, 1967, p. 27). In short, Ricœur and Schütz make explicit the implicit meaning of Husserl's presuppositions, avoiding confusion in the usage of terms. However, Schütz also goes a step beyond Ricœur's critical reading of Husserl in thinking that the concept of what is not correct of the ego and the correlated notion of "everyone" has a considerably fluctuating usage in Husserl's work. As he points out, "who are the 'Others' in the sense of 'ego-subjects' and what is their noematic-ontic manner of givenness which would serve as a transcendental clue for a constitutional theory of the experience of Others?" (Schütz, 1975, 59) It seems that the usage of the term “everyone” in Husserl's account does not clarify who the others are. Yet, Schütz does not see how the differentiation between the “consciousness of what is not ‘properly’ of the ego” and the “consciousness of the subjectivity of others insofar as it determines and co-determines sense” (Schütz, 1975, 59) can be maintained. Specifically, he thinks that this distinction cannot be effectively preserved since, as he objects, “are not many and perhaps all of our experiences of what is not ‘properly’ of the ego instituted in the natural world – which is retained as intentional correlate in the egological sphere – as ‘products’ of other subjectivities, or are they not at least interpreted by us as being instituted in this way?” (Schütz, 1975, 60)

b) The Transcendental Genesis of Intersubjectivity

The second stage in Husserl's account of intersubjectivity consists of the constitution of the other from and within the primordial sphere of

the ego. Following Husserl's distinction between body and flesh, the other appears first as a body through pairing, then as a living-body other than mine through appresentation, and as a body "there" entering into an association of sense with my body "here" via imaginative variations. These stages present many difficulties, articulating "the transcendental genesis that determines the a-priori conditions of all real relationships towards others" (See Michel, 2006, 247).

The first level consists of the analogical movement from my body apperceived in the world to the body of the other. This particular form of intentional or apperceptive transfer is what Husserl calls "pairing" (*Paarung*). Since only the ego is original, the other is constituted by pairing. It is through an inferential movement of resemblance, i.e., through the analogizing transfer of sense from me to the other as an alter ego, that the other's body is related to mine. Specifically, as a form of passive genesis, pairing accounts for others in a process that is a pre-reflective and ante-predicative experience. According to Ricœur, the analogizing movement gives only the logical sense of the other; it is a formal similarity: "pairing' is a relation which lacks the fullness of a living experience. The paired configuration offers only the supposition, an empty anticipation of the other presence, which requires further confirmation. Pairing designates that the ego's body and that of the other are similar in gestures, postures, and so on. Like Ricœur, Schütz thinks that within the ego's primordially reduced sphere, the other cannot be constituted as "a full monad within my monad" (Schütz, 1975, p. 67) but at most as another psychophysical ego as appresented. In other terms, I think that Schütz with "full monad" means the transcendental ego of the other, its flesh, its own mind.

Second, the other exists as a being in flesh and blood, as a subject with a lived experience like the ego. Husserl claims that bodily expressions of the other are a non-originary presentation of another ego, and these indicative signs continuously exhibit "a unitary transcending experience" of otherness (Husserl, 1960, p. 114). Husserl introduces appresentation as the perceptual decipherment of the concordances of the behavior of the other's life. On the one hand, Ricœur points out that that appresentation is a "genuine discovery" since it opens up the possibility of apprehending the other's body as flesh (See Vendra, 2020, 160). Nevertheless, as Ricœur will rightly diagnose later in *Oneself as Another*, Husserl's account downplays the role of difference. Indeed, appresentation is unable to

Create otherness, which is always presupposed; it confers upon it a specific meaning, namely the admission that the other is not condemned to remain a stranger but can become my counterpart [...] the resemblance based in the pairing of flesh with flesh works to reduce a distance [...] that is what is signified by the adverb 'like': like me, the other thinks, desires, enjoys, suffers (Ricœur, 1992, p. 335).

Going one step further than Ricœur, Schütz argues: "How do I know, when reduced to the primordial sphere of what is 'properly' of my ego, whether – and to what extent – the behavior of the body experienced as the living body of the Other is, indeed congruent?" (Schütz, 1975, 65). Therefore, focusing on the problem of the behavioral coherence of the other, Schütz stresses that

Either the 'second epoche' has not been carried out radically enough – perhaps it cannot be radically carried out at all – and our attempt to reach the pure sphere of what is 'properly' of the ego has miscarried, or I can indeed – within this pure sphere – apprehend the other emerging body analogically as the living body of a living being or perhaps even as the living body of a fellowman but am unable within the primordial sphere to grasp the verification of this appresentation as such (Schütz, 1975, p. 65).

Finally, in the third moment of Husserl's transcendental genesis of the other, that of imaginative variations, the ego imagines to be where the other is through the fiction or potential experience "if I were there." In doing so, the ego makes the other co-present by imagining what it might be like for the other to experience its world. As Ricœur explains, "Instead of fulfilling this analogical intending by perception of behaviors, I fulfill it by free creations of the imagination, and thus I give the associative transfer from me to the Other not only the vivacity of the image but also independence concerning my present perspective" (Ricœur, 1967, p. 129). In this perspective, Schütz claims that "it is not sufficient to consider the 'other' as a modification of myself in the mode of 'there,' without clarifying the nature of this modification, which again leads to the problem of normality, and hence to the problem of pre-constituted substrata" (Schütz, 1975, p. 66). Nevertheless, according to Schütz, the idea of congruence of behavior presupposes that the behavior of others can be typified by standards of normality that have already been established. These

standards depend on the production and the contexts excluded by Husserl's second *epoché*.

The Constitution of Objective Nature and Community as Personality of Higher-Order

After attempting to explain how the ego can experience the other as an independent center of consciousness, in his *Fifth Meditation*, Husserl analyzes how the experienced world as an objective present reality for everyone can be constituted. The ego experiences the world as including other individuals but also as involving a community of individuals in which it can experience itself as a member in various of these intersubjective realities. As such, Husserl writes: "a priori, my ego, given to me apodictically – the only thing I can posit in absolute apodicticity as existing – can be a world-experiencing ego only by being in communion with others like himself: a member of a community of monads show themselves consistently to be existent" (Husserl, 1960, p. 139). Therefore, the appresentative intuition through which the other as another monad becomes constituted appresentatively from and within the ego's own sphere proceeds to ever more diverse inter monadic communities resulting in the intersubjective constitution of a common nature.

We should now elaborate upon the third and the fourth stages of Ricœur's and Schütz's critical reading of Husserl's theory of intersubjectivity. More precisely, we will focus on their critique of Husserl's analysis of the communal dimension of intersubjectivity, i.e., of the "we-subjectivity" (Husserl, 1970, p. 109). More precisely, Ricœur and Schütz criticize Husserl's analysis of (1) the configuration of the objective and intersubjective nature and (2) the constitution of higher forms of community. In the *Fifth Cartesian Meditation* and *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, Husserl clearly describes the distinction between these two community levels. Schütz summarizes these two steps of Husserl's analysis as follows:

The human community – you and I and the Other and everyone as man among other men – who experience each other and whom I experience as such; the transcendental correlate of this, the community of monads of transcendental intersubjectivity, which is likewise constituted in me, the mediating ego,

exclusively from the sources of my own intentionality; further, the social communities arising from 'I-Thou' acts to which there correspond in the objective world social communities considered as objectivities of the mind among them the 'personalities of the higher order'; finally, the cultural world (Schütz, 1975, p. 73).

a) The Objective Nature

Ricœur rightly observes that in Husserl, the attempt to constitute the other asymmetrically from the ego's own sphere is extended to "the constitution of a nature held in common and then of a cultural world where characteristic objects – books, institutions, monuments – are correlative to genuine communities of persons" (Ricœur, 1967, p. 130). For Husserl, all communities, i.e., intending and willing and working, must be constituted upon the asymmetrical relation between the ego and the other. Nevertheless, Ricœur stresses that there is a "conflict between the two requirements within Husserl's work of constitution. The one demands respect for novel signification, which the progress of analysis uncovers; the other requires derivation of the being-status of communities from the being-status of the ego" (Ricœur, 1967, p. 131). Following Ricœur's reading, from a socio-practical point of view, the analogical grasping of the other does not account for the reciprocity among egos, which the subsequent analysis of the community requires. How, then, does Husserl explain this movement of derivation from the constitution of the other to the objective nature? First, Husserl builds his argument around the notions of perspective and perception. The constitution of a common objective nature is the basic level of community. The world of nature becomes an intersubjective common world when the ego recognizes that there are other subjects that perceive the world from their perspectives. Ricœur remarks that contrary to Leibniz's idea of perspective in which God integrates all perspectives into a higher point of view, in Husserl, human beings can discover the same world and the same object not within one originary perspective, but rather from their different points of view, i.e., always from the side and never from an over-viewing operation. Alternatively, to put it differently, Husserl claims that my perspective is the originary one and all other different perspectives upon the same object and world can be appresented. In this way, Ricœur stresses that Husserl speaks of a "world perceived by an

Other" of a functional community of one perception within the attempt to conjugate monadic idealism and monadological realism (Ricœur, 1967, p. 133).

The ego's perspective and that of the other are two strata, one which is lived in the original and the other which is appresented as belonging to the other human being. Hence, two strata of one object exist, but not two worlds. Nevertheless, in his essay "Hegel and Husserl on Intersubjectivity," Ricœur points out that "social existence rests on the constitution of a common nature. I must be able to consider nature constituted by me and that constituted by others as being numerically one. The world is not multiplied by the number of times it is perceived" (Ricœur, 1991, p. 240). Thus, I constitute what I experience as belonging to the same world that the others from their own perspective. In short, I am a co-constitutor of the world of experiencable physical objects intersubjectively with others. The world's identity, as the same world differently perceived by me and others, is explained by Husserl with the model of the synthesis of identification, namely the gathering together, that occurs in my intentional consciousness. This means that the ego and the others are not merely co-perceivers but a commonly constituting group. Let me offer a concrete example. In my garden, I see that object over there as a rabbit. From my perspective, I can perceive its color and shape, and given my past experiences, I constitute it as a rabbit.

Nevertheless, the point is this: since the others are like me, co-constitutors of the object, I make their experiences of it and their communication about it part of my experience and communication of that object. That said, the horizon of my experience of an object overlaps and intertwines with those of the others, and perspectives slip into one another. Hence, in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, Husserl argues that

In general, the world exists not only for isolated men but for the community of men, and this is because even what is straightforwardly perceptual is communalized. In this communalization, too, there constantly occurs an alteration of validity through reciprocal correction. In reciprocal understanding, my experiences and experiential acquisitions enter into contact with those of others, similar to the contact between individual series of experiences within my (one's own) experiential life; and here again, intersubjective harmony of validity occurs, establishing

what is "normal" and thus an intersubjective unity also comes about (Husserl, 1970, pp. 163-164).

The constitution of the common world of objective nature is the product of an act inscribed to a "we" in common perception. On this transcendental communalization of monads (*Vergemeinschaftung der Monaden*), on how intentional subjects constitute and make up their experiential world. Husserl argues:

In living together, we have the world pre-given in this "together," as the world valid as existing for us. To which we, together, belong, the world as a world for all [...] Constantly functioning in wakeful life, we also function together, in the manifold ways of considering together, objects pre-given to us in common, thinking together, valuing, planning, acting together. Here we find [...] we-subjectivity (Husserl, 1970, p. 109).

As he puts it in his 1928 *Amsterdam Lectures*, according to Husserl, "transcendental intersubjectivity is the absolute and only self-sufficient foundation. Out of it are created the meaning and validity of everything objective, the totality of objectively real existent entities, and every ideal world" (Husserl, 1997, p. 249). Husserl attempts not only to explain the establishment of the world's objectivity, i.e., the reference to more than my subjectivity alone but also to a common temporality. As Ronald MacIntyre explains, "I experience the thing in my purview, including my body and the other's, as having not only the profile that appears to me from my current perspective but also, *simultaneously*, a profile that presents itself to him from his perspective but not to me from mine" (MacIntyre, 2012, p. 71). Ricœur clarifies that Husserl wants to show that

If time is to be the form of co-existence for several monads, an account must be given that it cannot be multiple. In the end, there is but one time, as there is one world. The private time of each monad is ordered in relation to a common objective time of which it is a 'mode of appearing' (Ricœur, 1967, p. 135).

Ricœur rightly continues that in Husserl's account, "things do stand with objective time as with objective nature: the internal consciousness of time of the primordial monad is the origin (1) of the time appresented in the Other, and (2) of the common objective time, the time of the world" (Ricœur, 1967, p. 135). Husserl grounds the

possibility of the social bond on the intentional community, whose correlation is the objective nature. Otherwise, what is crucially important here is that for Husserl, "the communication of the experience of natural things is presupposed by the communication of the experience of cultural objects" (Ricœur, 1991, p. 240). Rather than rejecting Husserl's assumptions, I think that what Ricœur offers in this insight is more a critical explanation of Husserl's focus on the constitution of the objective world.

Schütz raises three objections to Husserl's perspective. First, Husserl's argument derives an objective nature from the experience of the other as a body "there" from the ego's perspective, which appears simultaneously as the exact central body, as "here" from the other's own position. Husserl stresses that the other's bodily organism as an animated body is "constitutionally the intrinsically first objective man" (Husserl, 1960, p. 124). Even though Husserl admits that the other's body as animated and psychophysical reality is appresented in the primordial sphere of the ego, he balks at the appresentation of the "sphere of actualities and potentialities of another's stream of subjective processes and embraces all the possibilities of 'you can' and 'you could'" (Schütz, 1975, p. 68). Thus, Schütz critically asks: "How do I arrive at an experience of 'you can' and 'you could'?" (Schütz, 1975, p. 68) In other terms, how can I transfer the sense 'I can' to the sense 'you can' if I am 'here' and you are 'there'? Schütz points out that this transference of sense is inconceivable "since my being-here and your being-there involve necessarily 'I can from here, but you cannot from there'" (Schütz, 1975, p. 68). Moreover, this extension of sense cannot be traced back to a preconceived "everyone can" "since the normality of 'everyone can' supposedly originates in the institution of intersubjectivity between me and the Other" (Schütz, 1975, p. 68).

Schütz's second objection refers to temporality: how can the other's temporality be discovered in Husserl's account? How does temporality, then, become objective? Temporality is essential for the concretization of the other's entire monad. Schütz rightly sees that Husserl has not given a detailed explanation. However, he affirms that "there would be primally instituted a co-existence of my I and the other I, of my whole concrete ego and his, my intentional life and his, my realities and his – in short, a common time-form" (Schütz, 1975, p. 68). More simply, for Husserl, a first form of community, namely a shared reality and a common time-form, arises from the simultaneous

institution of my existence and that of the other, of my temporality and that of the other. But, as Schütz remarks, even though for Husserl

Each primordial temporality was thereby to acquire the significance of how objective temporality would appear to a single subject. Still, that would tell us nothing about how the temporality of the Other, essential to the constitution of the other complete monad, might be disclosed (Schütz, 1975, p. 69).

Schütz thinks that for the constitution of the common and objective world, it is not enough to say that the natural object in the ego's primordial sphere gains the addition of the appresented stratum, the natural object as it appears to the other. Specifically, to account for a common and objective nature, Husserl should account for the systematic unity of identity of the natural object given to the other in its primary originarity. Schütz critically argues: "does not, therefore, the instituting of a common and objective nature presuppose a "we-relationship," and is it not founded upon the possibility of communication?" (Schütz, 1975, p. 69). Discussing Husserl's *Ideas II*, Schütz takes the opposite position, pointing out that "it is not difficult to show that reciprocal understanding and communication already presuppose [...] a common surrounding world" (Schütz, 1975, p. 72). Thus, objectivity and intersubjectivity, we-relationship, and communication cannot be something derived but original.

b) Higher-Order Personality

The institution of a common nature and a common temporal form is only at the first community level. We must move to the last stage of Husserl's account of intersubjectivity, which consists of deriving "higher levels of inter-monadic community" or community of persons, such as the State and other enduring institutions, corresponding to specific cultural objects. Husserl conceives these forms of community as "higher-order" phenomena or collective persons, referring to the idea that communities are personal wholes founded on the acts of individual egos. As he puts it, "If one studies the person in his unity, which manifests itself in his acts and affections, then one studies how he affects other persons and likewise how he spiritually undergoes effects from them, and one studies how personalities of a higher order are constituted" (Husserl, 1989, p. 357). More precisely, I think there is a threefold development in Husserl's analysis: a community of

monads of transcendental intersubjectivity constituted from the ego's intentionality; further, the social communities in which there are the world social communities or objectivities of the mind, including the personalities of the higher order; third, we find the cultural world. Even though in his earlier manuscripts, Husserl occasionally refers to the Hegelian notions of "objective spirit" (*objektiver Geist*) and "collective spirit" (*Gemeingeist*), Ricœur critically highlights that Husserl's theory of community differs from that of Hegel's in one crucial respect. As Ricœur stresses, "The decisive advantage of Husserl over Hegel appears to me to lie in his uncompromising refusal to hypostatize collective entities and in his tenacious will to reduce them in every instance to a network of interactions" (Ricœur, 19991, 244).

The high-order communities of persons present the same difficulty we saw in the previous stage of Husserl's account of intersubjectivity: the problem to bridge the gap between the own and the alien. Specifically, Ricœur observes that in Husserl's perspective, "to the familiar world of my culture is opposed the alien worlds of other cultures [...] Thus, these higher-level persons present the same kind of problem as the presented by persons properly so-called, for it is always by starting from the own that the alien is understood" (Ricœur, 1967, p. 138). If we coherently follow Husserl's perspective, we cannot find a way to compare our culture to that of others since the relation to all other cultures is described as opposition between original and derivative, here and there, as insurmountable opposing dialectic. At this point, we shall focus on what I think might be considered Schütz's most substantial objection to Husserl's account of transcendental intersubjectivity, touching the core of the problem of the higher levels of inter-monadic community. Schütz observes that Husserl, in the *Fifth Cartesian Meditation*, states that an open monadic community, described as transcendental intersubjectivity, corresponds to an open multiplicity of beings, namely to a multiplicity of subjects of possible mutual community, in transcendental concretion (See Husserl, 1960, 130). According to Schütz, community rests on the possibility of communication and the we-relationship. That said, in what way can the monadic community correspond to the community of men? Schütz writes, "I, the one who performs the *epoché*, the transcendental ego, have constituted the Other in the previously described manner; and, similarly, you, another transcendental ego, have constituted me. Nevertheless, how can my

full monad, in its concretization, enter into a transcendental relationship with yours?" (Schütz, 1975, 76).

The fact is that there is no guarantee that the community that the ego constitutes from and within himself coincides with the community that the other constitutes. Schütz thinks that transcendental intersubjectivity, as constituted by Husserl, is not yet an intersubjectivity since the transcendental intersubjectivity is constituted purely from the sources of the ego's intentionality. To put it more directly, I believe we can state that what Husserl constitutes is a projected-subjectivity and not an inter-subjectivity and that, consequently, no transcendental community, no "we" can be established from the *second epoché*. This implies that Husserl's transcendental community would be nothing more than a community for me, for you, a cosmos of a monad without communication among a plurality of transcendental subjects. Therefore, Husserl fails to resolve intersubjectivity in trying to derive the common world on the assumption of a philosophy of consciousness, grounding his account of intersubjectivity on the epistemological model of identitarian asymmetry between ego and alter ego. In short, Ricœur and Schütz lead us to conclude that no transcendental constitutional analysis can disclose the essential relationship of intersubjectivity. I think, then, that we can define Husserl's idea of community with Jacques Derrida's words as a "community without community," an "anchoritic community" (Derrida, 1997, p. 42). I want to call it a "we" without "us," which is a paradoxical and abstract ideal.

Conclusions

In this article, I have investigated the possibility of a fruitful dialogue between Ricœur's and Schütz's phenomenological perspectives on Husserl's transcendental treatment of the problem of intersubjectivity. In doing so, I have proposed a critical debate between Ricœur's and Schütz readings of Husserl's fundamental steps of the transcendental configuration of social reality: the reduction the sphere of ownness or the primordial world of the ego, the theory of experience of the other through pairing, apperception, and the imaginative variation, the instituting of a common an objective nature, and the idea of communities as subjective or personal totalities of a higher-order. We can note the following points by way of conclusion.

My interest was primarily focused on Husserl's second *epoché* or the transcendental delineation of the sphere of ownness considered as the point of departure of Ricœur's and Schütz's critical approaches to transcendental phenomenology. It is from the reduction to the ego's own peculiar ownness that the presence of the other arises as a problem of transcendental phenomenology. I think Ricœur's and Schütz's readings of the conception of transcendental ego and the reduction to the sphere of ownness lead us to conclude that Husserl's solution shows a paradoxical experience of the other as an impossible-possibility, another who cannot finally appear as such. For Husserl, the other cannot be given as it is in itself or directly but only indirectly through the presentation of the ego's perspectives and projections. As Richard Kearney claims, Husserl's account "avoids solipsism (success) but reduces the understanding of the other to apperception (limitation)" (Kearney, 2011, p. 7). The other arises beyond and before any intentional horizon.

The analysis of the paradox of ownness-otherness has been further developed in the discussion of the common objective nature and the theory of personality of a higher order, such as institutions and social groups seen as functioning analogously to the individual "I." In Husserl's perspective, the founding of a community is "based on a virtually second-degree form of constitution, with the subject again providing the measure of projected behavior" (Joy, 2011, 229). The ego cogito is the primordial subject who defines the other as an alter-ego derived from his or her own analogical apperception. Given this unilateral dialectic moving from the primordial ego to the other, Ricœur and Schütz see in Husserl's work a lack of reciprocity, which is an essential condition for communalization and social unification.

For Ricœur and Schütz, intersubjectivity is not "a problem of constitution which can be solved within the transcendental sphere" (Schütz, 1975, p. 82) but rather a datum of the life-world. It is interesting for the project of development of any social theory to stress that the analysis of transcendental intersubjectivity "is not only important for deciding whether or not the problems of intersubjectivity [...] can be solved. It is also relevant for whether the results of phenomenological constitutional analysis apply to all social sciences" (Schütz, 1975, p. 55). In conclusion, our everyday life-world is fundamentally a social and intersubjective world, a world of common experience that cannot be examined from a transcendental

approach but rather from what I would call a mundane-descriptive phenomenology. This form of phenomenology aims to describe the universal formal structures of the life-world, while the task of the empirical social sciences is to research the historical and cultural variety of concrete contents. The situatedness of human beings requires a detour through the empirical social sciences.

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