

From transcendental phenomenology to phenomenological sociology

Alfred Schütz and the social sciences

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Abstract

This work aims to demonstrate that Alfred Schütz's contribution to the social sciences is understandable only within the framework of his troubled relationship with Husserl's phenomenology. We will see how Schütz tries to take charge, to face and resolve a good part of the critical issues present in Husserl's work, and, above all, to make a turning point in the field of investigation of phenomenology which will prove decisive for the human sciences as it will focus his attention on the question of intersubjectivity, considered no longer as a problem concerning only the phenomenological sphere but as a fundamental category of human existence. Therefore, we will try to show how Schütz's path assumes a considerable critical value as it contributes to raising the expectations of sociology and strengthening the confidence of this discipline which tends to go beyond the narrow boundaries outlined by Husserl and go in a direction diametrically opposite to "The Crisis of European sciences" outlined by the father of phenomenology since Schütz provides stable and adequate bases for the social sciences that allow analyzing the fundamental structures that support the social World, and, in this way, at the same time, he manages to safeguard the basic nucleus of the phenomenological discipline, since, stripped of metaphysical lure and devoid of verbal and oracular enchantments, it is traced back to the Husserlian idea of rigorous science. From this point of view, Schütz's merit lies primarily in having made a critical revision of phenomenology by initiating a broad debate on the role of the social sciences and providing the first ideas for the foundation of a phenomenologically oriented sociology.

Keywords: Schütz, Husserl, phenomenology, sociology, intersubjectivity.



In the shadow of phenomenology

Among the scholars who contributed to the development of Husserl's phenomenology beyond the mere philosophical sphere, opening it to contamination with other disciplines, a particular place is occupied by Alfred Schütz (1889-1959)[1]. Born in Vienna, he studied economics and law, graduated with Hans Kelsen, met Husserl several times, and participated in the Vienna phenomenological circle meetings. Before the Nazi invasion, he left Austria. He lived in Paris until 1939 before moving permanently to the United States, where, from 1943 to 1959, he taught at the Graduate Faculty of the New School for Social Research in New York. Schütz was essentially a theorist of the social sciences and the founder of phenomenological sociology, that is, an approach to sociology in which elements of Weber's thought and Husserl's thought come together in an original synthesis, such as the aspect relative to the epistemological assumptions of the social sciences and the question of intersubjectivity, that is, the complex of structures and relations that exist between human subjects. Schütz tries to face and solve a good part of the criticalities present in Husserl's work and, above all, he implements a shift in the field of investigation of phenomenology that will prove decisive for the human sciences since he has always conceived his work as a contribution to the clarification of the fundamental concepts of the social sciences through the study of the forms of intersubjective constitution of reality.

By discovering the constitutive meaning of intersubjectivity, which Schütz no longer considers as a phenomenological question but as a fundamental category of human existence, the object par excellence of phenomenology becomes the social phenomenon. Husserl himself had seen in Schütz's work an attempt to find the origin of the categories of social sciences in the fundamental facts of the life of consciousness. In a March 3, 1932 letter, Husserl declared himself anxious to meet with a «serious» phenomenologist.[2]. His work acquires a significant critical value and, above all, contributes to raising the hopes of phenomenology in that it leads it to go beyond the narrow boundaries outlined by Husserl and, at the same time, to push it in a direction opposed to the “The Crisis of European Sciences” outlined by the father of phenomenology, because it seeks to provide a solid and practical foundation for the social sciences, that allows him to highlight the constructs and plots within which the social World

unfolds and in this way, Schütz manages to save the core of the phenomenological discipline, because it, free of verbal enchantments and free from metaphysical and oracular temptations, is brought back to its essential simplicity of rigorous science. Schütz has always conceived his work as a contribution to elucidating fundamental concepts of the social sciences by studying the intersubjective forms of construction of reality. In this regard, Thomas Luckmann, who edited and organized, based on the material left by Schütz, the text on which the philosopher was working in the last phase of his life, *Die Strukturen der Lebenswelt*, has defined Schütz's work as «the continuation and the first remarkable realization of the program advanced by Husserl in his *Krisis* in the field almost entirely unknown to Husserl of the problem of social sciences.»[3]. The importance of Schütz's theoretical work lies precisely in its originality concerning Husserl's thought because it opens the way and proceeds along a path, that of social sciences, which Husserl had escaped, or to which he had only remotely hinted at, partly because of his inadequate knowledge of this subject, because of his inability to solve the problems related to the question of solipsism and intersubjectivity. The new solution proposed by Schütz will consider intersubjectivity as not a problem concerning only the strictly phenomenological sphere but as a fundamental category of human existence. Then, thanks to Alfred Schütz's cartographic work, which redraws the layout and map of social sciences, they can expand their investigation territory and overcome their own narrow boundaries, ending up investigating and analyzing the World of all human experiences in their entirety. This work aims to reconstruct the theoretical path of Alfred Schütz and his comparison with Husserl to highlight how the Viennese philosopher contributed to extending the phenomenological method from the philosophical to the social sciences, opening the way to phenomenological sociology.

Schütz's encounter with phenomenology

Alfred Schütz has been confronted with Husserl's thoughts since the 1930s. The encounter with phenomenology marks the beginning of a path of analysis and revision of the central concepts in Husserl's philosophy and, above all, the question of transcendental intersubjectivity. The analysis of this theme occupies Schütz's reflection for a period that lasts approximately twenty-five years, and

the problematic confrontation with Husserl's positions, at times, leads to polemical tones towards the father of phenomenology. In his first work, *Der sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt* (Schütz, 1932), Schütz examines the questions relating to the problem of understanding the other analyzed by Husserl in formal and transcendental logic. In this work, Husserl brought the question of the alter Ego back into the context of the transcendental Ego and considered that the alter Ego had a fundamental role in giving the Ego a concrete meaning to the World (Husserl, 1974,9). Schütz is fully aware of the importance of Husserlian analysis both as regards the epistemological field and for possible and future development of the social sciences. However, he believes that Husserl, while providing exciting insights, could not solve the problem of intersubjectivity. According to him, the focus of the question must be shifted: intersubjectivity and, with it, the recognition of otherness must be analyzed not in the transcendental sphere but in that of the Social World of the naive and natural vision of the World, that is, within the sphere of the individual who lives in the natural attitude. Therefore, it is necessary to put aside Husserl's transcendental analysis and tackle the question of intersubjectivity employing phenomenological psychology, that is, a psychology of pure intersubjectivity, a phenomenology constitutive of the natural attitude.

However, at this stage of his thought, Schütz does not take critical positions nor express negative judgments towards the Husserlian conception of transcendental intersubjectivity. It will only start from the early 1940s or the American period when doubts take on consistency. Schütz develops his criticism (Muzzetto, 1997, p. 29) against Husserl. However, it should be noted that in 1932, in a letter addressed to Felix Kaufmann, after meeting with Husserl, he had stated that he had «serious doubts» about things that «seemed to him, before, completely established» (Wagner, 1978, p. 47). The critical tension towards phenomenology also animates one of the first essays published in the United States, *Phenomenology and Social Sciences*. In this work, Schütz recognizes the importance of Husserl's thought for the social sciences and the foundation of « a constitutive phenomenology of the natural attitude» (Schütz, 1962a, p. 138). After a brief analysis of the question relating to the status and future of phenomenological philosophy, the essential aim of which is «to be a philosophy of man in his life-world and to be able to explain the

meaning of this life-world in a rigorously scientific manner» (Schütz, 1962a, p. 120).

Schütz's attention focuses on the question of intersubjectivity and on the examination of some critical issues that emerge in the Fifth Meditation. In this meditation, Husserl brought intersubjectivity back into the context of «pairing» (*Paarung*), that associative process in which two different elements form a couple and are recognized as similar. This concept, which Husserl uses to investigate the enigmatic structure of the stranger and otherness concerning the living body of the other, is clarified in paragraph 51 of the Fifth Meditation. In this paragraph, Husserl tries to indicate the characteristic of the analogical understanding according to which a body is received within my primordial sphere as my own organic body, which is always also a physical body. He states that the Ego and the alter Ego are always and necessarily given in an original coupling. This coupling is an original form of that passive synthesis which, as opposed to the passive synthesis of identification, is designated as an association (Husserl, 1950, § 51). Schütz has serious doubts he deduces on the Husserlian conception of pairing. The main problem concerns the other psychological subjects reached by the Ego through this associative process. They, in fact, «are not merely related using associative pairing to my psychophysical being in their capacity as being bodily opposite me.» The others are in a relationship with the Ego through «an objective equalization» or «a mutual interrelatedness of my existence and that of all Others.» Indeed,

As the body of the Other is appresented by me as an Other, my body is experienced by the Other as his Other, and so forth. The same thing obtains for all subjects, that is, for this open community of monads which Husserl has designated as transcendental intersubjectivity (Schütz, 1962a, p. 126).

In this work, on the one hand, a first recognition of the problems resulting from the Husserlian conception of intersubjectivity emerges and, on the other hand, Schütz's partial detachment from Husserlian phenomenology based on the awareness that a «critique of the Husserlian establishment of the transcendental, subjectivity, against which, in my opinion, certain important objections can be raised, must wait for another publication» (Schütz, 1962a, 124, footnote).

Over the years, Schütz returns to confront Husserl several times, and his attention shifts more and more towards a critical analysis of the Fifth Cartesian Meditation. In the 1942 essay, *Scheler's theory of intersubjectivity and the general thesis of the alter Ego*, Schütz dwells once again on this meditation and the question of solipsism.

Husserl, for example, clearly sees the imminent danger of solipsism as the consequence of transcendental reduction. He tries courageously to “light up this dark corner, feared only by children in philosophy because the specter of solipsism haunts it” and offers a solution to the alter ego problem in the fifth of his *Méditations Cartésiennes* (Schütz, 1962b, p. 165).

For Schütz, solipsism occurs immediately after the execution of the transcendental reduction. In this case, the subject who carries out the reduction isolates his particular sphere within the transcendental dimension and removes all the activities related to the subjectivity of the Others. This occurs through a procedure based on abstraction from all the meanings that refer to the Others and subtraction of the character of intersubjectivity from the surrounding Nature. Thus, Nature is a world no longer common to everyone but a private dimension. Within this dimension, through the passive synthesis, some objects emerge that are interpreted as similar to my own body and therefore understood as other people's bodies. In this way, the Other is constituted within my monad as an Ego that is not my Ego but a second, an alter ego. Schütz's objection hinges on the fact that in the process of transcendental reduction, the subject, by eliminating any reference to other egos from his consciousness, becomes a windowless monad, as Husserl emphasized in the Fifth Meditation. The conclusion reached by Husserl in this meditation is that of a universe of monads, a cosmos populated by separate entities, isolated and without the possibility of communicating and understanding each other. Schütz recognizes that, in this way, it is not clear whether intersubjectivity is a question concerning the dimension of the transcendental sphere or whether it belongs to that of the World of life (Schütz, 1962b, p. 166).

The comparison with Scheler and the general thesis of the Alter Ego

To overcome the problems that emerged with the question of solipsism faced by Husserl, Schütz proposes to put aside the transcendental problems and direct his attention towards Scheler's thought. In the essay *Scheler's Theory of Intersubjectivity and the General Thesis of the Alter Ego*, Schütz exposes «Scheler's own theory of understanding the Other.» This theory, called by Scheler «Wahrnehmungstheorie des fremden Ich,» is based on the fact that

As man remains entangled in his bodily feelings, he cannot find an approach to the Other's life. Nobody can seize the Other's bodily feelings. Only as a Person can he access the other Persons' streams of thought. However, the Person is not the I. The Person and his acts can never be objectified. It is the I which always is objectifiable. Moreover, as no intentional reflections upon the Person and his acts are possible, the other Person's acts can be seized only 'by co-performing, pre-performing, and re-performing them (Schütz, 1962b, p. 164).

Schütz takes up Scheler's distinction: the I-we experience belongs to the dimension of thought, while the Person manifests itself only through the acts in which he lives and experiences himself. The primary purpose of Scheler's theory of the perception of the alter Ego is to emphasize that intersubjectivity is based on an interactionist rather than a theoretical dimension and that the Ego always has a social nature (Di Chiro, 2020, p. 200). Indeed, according to Schütz, for

According to Scheler, the belief in the existence of alter egos is not based on acts of theoretical cognition. A person-like being, capable of all kinds of emotional acts such as love, hate, will, etc., but incapable of theoretical acts - i.e., objectifying cognitions - would not at all lack any evidence of the existence of Others. The "essentially social feelings" alone are sufficient to establish the scheme of reference of society *as* an ever-present element of his consciousness (Schütz, 1962b, p. 158).

Thanks to Scheler, Schütz comes to recognize that in the beginning, man lives in the experiences of others rather than in his individual sphere, and this, therefore, implies a priority and precedence of the sphere of We concerning the sphere of the I. This discovery of the

primacy of sociality will allow Schütz to overcome Husserlian transcendentalism and formulate his general thesis on the existence of the alter Ego (Cusinato, 2015, p. 5).

In this regard, he identifies and distinguishes two different attitudes: one which consists in living in our acts, turned towards the objects of our acts, and the other which consists of a reflexive attitude, through which we move towards our acts by understanding them through other acts. They both have a time structure. As for the first attitude, we live in our present and are directed towards the immediate future that we anticipate with our expectations. These expectations, called protensions by Husserl, belong to our present action and nevertheless refer to our immediate future (Schütz, 1962b, p. 172)). The present with which these protensions have to do is defined by Schütz, taking up James and then Mead as «a specious present,» or even a «vivid present,» specifying that living in this dimension means living in our acts (Schütz, 1962b, p. 158)[4]. In this way, we cannot approach the sphere of our Self, of our course of thought, without a reflexive act of return. However, Schütz continues, through the reflexive act, we never grasp the specious present, but only and exclusively the past.«The whole present, therefore, and also the vivid present of our Self, is inaccessible for the reflective attitude»(Schütz, 1962b, p. 173). We can only grasp the course of our thinking and our last experience. «In other words, self-consciousness can only be experienced *modo praeterito*, in the past tense» (Schütz, 1962b, p. 173).

The situation is different, however, as regards the second attitude. Among the objects we experience in the vivid present are the acts and thoughts of others. Schütz considers the case of our participation in a conference: if we listen to a lecturer, we seem to participate directly and without mediation in his speech. As we listen,

our attitude in doing so differs from that we adopt in turning to our own stream of thought by reflection. We catch the Other's thought in its vivid presence and not *modo praeterito*; we catch it as a "Now" and not as a "Just Now." The Other's speech and our listening are experienced as a vivid simultaneity (Schütz, 1962b, p. 173).

I can understand and grasp the Other's course of thought, that is, the subjectivity of the alter Ego in its vivid present. In contrast, I can grasp my own Self only in the modality of reflection on its past. That

is why we can define the concept of alter Ego. In Schütz's words, «the alter ego is that subjective stream of thought which can be experienced in its vivid present» (Schütz, 1962b, p. 174). To highlight this, we must not artificially stop the Other's course of thought: «It is simultaneous with our own stream of consciousness, we share together the same vivid present - in a word: we grow old together» (Schütz, 1962b, p. 174). The general thesis of the existence of the alter Ego is based on the fact that I understand that the Other is, like me, capable of thinking and acting, that his course of thought is connected with mine, that his life of conscience has the same temporal structure as mine, the same experiences of reflections and protensions, and that all the phenomena of memory and attention are connected with their changes and that the Other «has the genuine experience of growing old with me as I know that I do with him» (Schütz, 1962b, p. 174). Schütz recognizes that the general thesis of the alter Ego is fundamental for the social sciences, since all our possible knowledge of the Social World, even in its most anonymous and remote phenomena and in the most diverse types of social communities, «is based upon the possibility of experiencing an alter ego in vivid presence» (Schütz, 1962b, p. 175). This thesis on the existence of the alter Ego will allow Schütz the definitive detachment from Husserl and the overcoming of the question of solipsism on which the reflection of the father of phenomenology had stalled.

The farewell from Husserl and the resolution of the question of intersubjectivity

Schütz returns several times to the Husserlian conception of transcendental intersubjectivity. However, after the essay on Scheler, he decides to talk about this issue only through correspondence with friends and colleagues (Sanna, 2007, p. 67) as he had always shown a certain reluctance to publicly express his disagreement with Husserl's work (Muzzetto, 1997, p. 32). In the correspondence, intersubjectivity seems to merge, once again, with that relating to solipsism. In fact, in a letter to Eric Voegelin, Schütz affirms that Husserl's transcendental phenomenology does not succeed in getting out of transcendental solipsism and that Husserl, starting from the intent to describe the constitution of the World of experience, ends up proposing the creation of the World by an Ego transformed into God (Wagner, 1978,

pp. 311-316). Schütz, therefore, after the essay on Scheler, appears increasingly convinced to address the question of the origin of intersubjectivity no longer in the transcendental sphere but in that of the World of everyday life. The critical comparison with Husserl is also present in two other essays: *Sartre's Theory of Alter Ego* and *Edmund Husserl's Ideas, Volume II*.

In the first essay, Schütz focuses on Sartre's criticisms of Husserl. Sartre, despite the recognition of the innovative aspect of the theory of intentionality and the contribution that the theory of the alter Ego makes to the constitution of the empirical World, believes that Husserl has not managed to avoid solipsism as his phenomenology of intersubjectivity it limits itself to understand the otherness of others only through the cognitive modality without taking into account the ontological and existential one: «The Other does not have to be grasped as an object of our cogitations, but in his existence “for us” as affecting our actual concrete being.» (Schütz, 1962c, p. 188). Furthermore, for Schütz, «Sartre is right in stating that in terms of Husserl's philosophy, the problem of the Other could be explained only as a relationship between transcendental subjects» (Schütz, 1962c, pp. 194-195). From the examination of Sartre's positions, for Schütz, a question emerges that

Is the most challenging problem of phenomenology - perhaps an insoluble one - to reconcile the transcendental Ego as the source of the constitution of the World with the idea of a plurality of coexistent transcendental subjects (Schütz, 1962c, p. 195).

and above all, the awareness that the problem of alter Ego constitutes the crucial point of any transcendental philosophy.

As for the second essay, Schütz focuses, here, too, on the problems that remained unsolved in Husserl's philosophy. The work opens with a question relating to Husserl's failure to publish the second volume of *Ideas*. Schütz, in this regard, declares Husserl himself, in 1934, had confided to him that «he left the second volume of the *Ideas* unpublished because he had not at that time found a satisfactory solution for the problem of intersubjectivity, which he believed to have achieved in the fifth Cartesian Meditation» (Schütz, 1970a, p. 17). He further acknowledges that almost all the basic concepts of transcendental phenomenology have undergone a radical change during the period in question, that this change is due to the attempt to

refute solipsism, and above all, that Husserl's battle against solipsism represents «a significant phase of a work in progress, the more significant as the topics treated therein are of decisive importance for the foundation of the social sciences. It is a transitional phase in the development of phenomenology» (Schütz, 1970a, p. 18). The observations on Husserl's work are crucial and occupy a place of extraordinary importance in Schützian architecture as they will form the basis for a subsequent reflection that will be exposed in an essay from 1957, *The Problem of Transcendental Intersubjectivity in Husserl*, which constitutes the sum of his confrontation with Husserl and which establishes his detachment from transcendental phenomenology. Schütz, in this work, takes stock of his confrontation with the fundamental questions of phenomenology, starting from the assumption that the problems of intersubjectivity are fundamental for the whole system of transcendental phenomenology.[5], but, above all, it is interesting to know if the results of the phenomenological constitutional analysis apply to all social sciences (Schütz, 1970b, p. 55).

For Schütz, the question of intersubjectivity was already addressed by Husserl in the first volume of the *Ideas* on the occasion of the analysis of natural attitude. In this case, however, Husserl limited himself to assuming that the other egological subjects I meet in my surrounding World have the same awareness of the World and that they and I can communicate and understand each other. Schütz, however, points out that the theme of intersubjectivity is only hinted at and not developed in the first volume of the *Ideas* since Husserl intended to reserve these investigations for the second volume. In his *Nachwort zu meinen "Ideen,"* Husserl knew that the first volume of the *Ideas* had several gaps concerning the problem of transcendental intersubjectivity and the question of solipsism. His analysis, therefore, focuses on Cartesian Meditations, underlining how the difficulties related to the problem of solipsism and intersubjectivity present in this work contribute to questioning the fact that Husserl's attempt to develop a transcendental theory of the experience of Others was successful.

Specifically, Schütz, after a brief analysis of the first meditations, dwells on the Fifth Meditation and the second epoché, which must be performed within the egological sphere, which is, in turn, the result of a previous phenomenological reduction. This second epoché, which tends to divide everything that belongs to the Ego from everything

that is not, involves a series of problems that are not easy to solve. First, it becomes difficult to identify what belongs to the Ego. Secondly, the concept of what belongs to the Ego, from which abstraction must be made, changes considerably. Furthermore, referring to Eugen Fink's essay, *Die Phänomenologische Philosophie Edmund Husserl in der gegenwärtigen Kritik* (Fink, 1933, 368). Schütz emphasizes the need to make a distinction between the «three types of ego involved in phenomenological reduction»: 1) the mundane Ego; 2) the transcendental Ego; 3) the detached observer who performs the epoché (Schütz, 1970b, p. 60).

Another topic discussed concerns the constitution of the Ego of the Other within the primordial sphere and the mechanism that leads to conferring the sense of the living body to another body. By observing reflexively our experience of subjective otherness, we see that the other is in front of us in flesh and blood, but this does not mean that he presents himself to us with his experiences since if it were directly accessible, it would not be other than a moment of my own life of conscience. Therefore, we experience the other, but we experience him precisely as another ego, a consciousness we have no immediate access to, unlike ours. To avoid that, the other is experienced only as an undue extension of my consciousness and, therefore, not as something else but only as a part of me; the experience of the other must be based on what Husserl calls a specific indirect intentionality. According to Husserl, this mediated character of intentionality, by which I experience a consciousness other than mine, therefore without being able to reduce it to my stream of consciousness, is given by the fact that the alter Ego manifests itself, enters my life of experience, announcing in it another life of conscience that remains to me, yet alien and inaccessible. For Schütz, this mechanism is based on a process that implies an analogy and which is defined by Husserl as «analogical apperception, or “appresentation” and is «a particular form of mediated intentionality» (Schütz, 1970b, p. 62). This consideration raises further questions concerning the theme of corporeality and the difficulty of establishing a concept of «congruence» that can allow us to grasp the behavior of others and to establish «standards of normality» regarding this behavior, in how much there are different forms of normality that have to do, for example, with the behavior of a man and a woman and that can vary according to age and health and this implies that what «is congruent

according to one order of “normality” is not congruent according to another.» Schütz's conclusion is, therefore, that the «second epoché could never yield the constitution of the Other as a monad within my monad, but at most, it yields appresentation of another psychophysical ego beginning from the substratum of my psychophysical ego» (Schütz, 1970b, pp. 66-67). Schütz's attention then shifts to the theme relating to what Husserl had defined a "surrounding communicative world," that is a world based on relations of mutual consent and reciprocity between people and on a unitary interdependence with the shared environment. According to Husserl, in this World, sociality is made up of specific communicative acts in which the Ego addresses Others, aware that these Others will understand it and, for their part, will address the Ego. Also, in this case, Schütz dwells on the criticalities of this theory, emphasizing that both the idea of communication and mutual understanding presuppose a community of knowledge, even a common surrounding world (and social relations), and not the other way around. Therefore, the common surrounding World and the social relationship cannot derive from the idea of communication since communication already presupposes intersubjectivity; that is, the fact that the subjects who speak and interact through language and speech acts are already in a situation of mutual harmony. Finally, Schütz dwells again on the *Fifth Cartesian meditation*, reporting a partial list of the fundamental problems concerning transcendental intersubjectivity. The first criticality concerns the problem of the relationship with the Other and the modalities according to which it could come to constitute the basis of every community and, therefore, on how the single monad can enter into a transcendental relationship with the Other. The second difficulty concerns the possibility of speaking of a multiplicity of transcendental egos, as it is unclear whether the transcendental Ego is conceivable only in the singular or can also be declined as the plural (Schütz, 1970b, p. 77). Finally, the last difficulty concerns the question of the Ego that accomplishes the epoché and ends up becoming isolated. The critical issues analyzed allow Schütz to affirm that.

As a result of these considerations, Husserl's attempt to account for the constitution of transcendental intersubjectivity in terms of operations of the consciousness of the transcendental Ego has not succeeded. Intersubjectivity is not a problem of the constitution that can be solved within the transcendental sphere

but is a datum (*Gegebenheit*) of the life-world. It is the fundamental ontological category of human existence in the World and, therefore, of all philosophical anthropology. As long as man is born of woman, intersubjectivity and the we-relationship will be the foundation for all other categories of human existence (Schütz, 1970b, p. 82).

These observations, which have an ultimate character and embrace the entire course of Husserl's thought, sanction the definitive detachment from the father of phenomenology and his conception of intersubjectivity. Regarding his confrontation with Husserl, in a letter to Gurwitsch from 1957, Schütz states that in the essay of 1957, he shows the impossibility of every single step of the fifth meditation and his detachment from the analysis of the transcendental constitution (Schütz - Gurwitsch, 1989, 263). However, This does not mean that Schütz criticizes Husserl's phenomenology in its entirety, but it should be specified only the concept of intersubjectivity proposed by Husserl (Schütz - Gurwitsch, 1989, 255).

Towards a Phenomenology of the Social World

Regarding Schütz's detachment from Husserl and transcendental phenomenology, it is appropriate to recall the observations of Anthony Giddens, who points out how Schütz, despite having put aside the specific Husserlian epistemological program, preserves the umbilical cord with the subjectivity of the Ego, and that he does not even attempt to be critical of the residual problem of intersubjectivity. According to Giddens, Schütz's works remain very rigidly linked to the phenomenological program initially developed by Husserl. Although they detach themselves from transcendental phenomenology, this happens arbitrarily rather than through reasoned arguments (Giddens, 1976, pp. 36-38). Although ungenerous, Giddens' reflections are interesting because they raise two interrelated questions.

The first question is based on the fact that phenomenology, placing subjectivity, the intentionality of consciousness, as a starting point, cannot examine the social World as an objective world. This implies that Husserl's difficulties are the same as those in Schütz's work, with the difference that the latter assumes intersubjectivity as a sociological and not a philosophical problem. The second question concerns

whether Schütz is perfectly aware of the unresolved problems and questions left open by Husserl's phenomenology. According to Muzzetto, several critics of Schütz's thought unduly prolong some problematic issues of transcendental phenomenology to the phenomenology of the natural attitude. Giddens himself also incurs this error based on the contamination between the two spheres of phenomenology. This error derives essentially from the difficulty of identifying a precise distinction between the two levels in Husserl's work, that is, in the recognized legitimacy of the passage of knowledge acquired in the transcendental sphere to the worldly sphere and in the incompleteness of the work of Schütz. To this, we must also add the series of changes and modifications that Schütz's position has developed during its evolution concerning transcendental phenomenology. In this regard, to understand Schütz's relationship with phenomenology, it is appropriate to consider two orders of concomitant reasons (Muzzetto, 1997, p. 25).

On the one hand, it should be pointed out that while Schütz places the problems relating to the question of the foundations of the social sciences at the center of his work and believes that methodological, epistemological, and theoretical issues are related to them, Husserl, on the other hand, focuses exclusively on phenomenology as a rigorous science, leaving the problems relating to the social dimension only sketchy.

On the other hand, it is necessary to emphasize that Husserl's thinking, especially on the question of intersubjectivity, was constantly changing, and Schütz, considering each new elaboration and revision by Husserl of his thought as a partial and momentary systematization, always limited to sectoral criticisms, trusting in the fact that the difficulties that emerged in Husserl's work could still find a solution. From this point of view, Giddens' observations, in addition to being completely unfounded, fail to fully grasp the connection that links Schütz's thought to Husserl's phenomenology. We, therefore, believe that it is appropriate to state that Schütz continues to follow the transcendental path outlined by Husserl, opening the way to a new dimension of phenomenology. In this way, he develops the Husserlian psychology of pure intersubjectivity, considering it fundamental for the foundation of the social sciences. In fact, in the essay *Some Leading Concepts of Phenomenology* Schütz states that the importance of phenomenology for the social sciences is not to be

sought in the possibility of its use for the analysis of concrete problems but in its ability to respond to relevant methodological problems of these sciences and to clearly define their essential notions, since the social sciences take their fundamental problems for granted, just like common sense. However, he points out that.

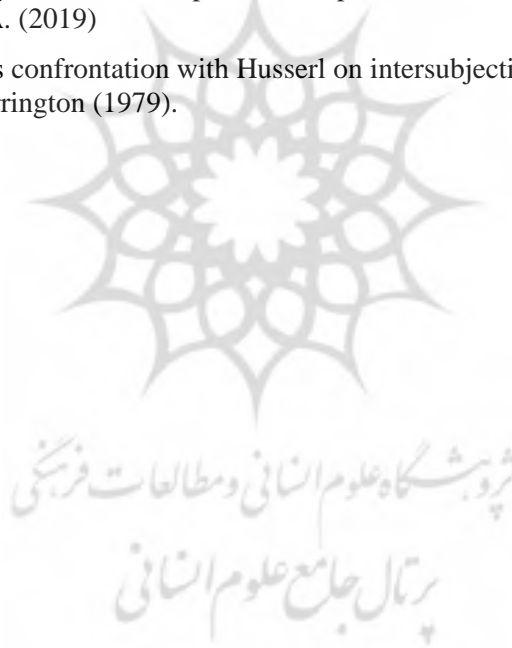
The methods of the social sciences cannot answer these questions. They require a philosophical analysis. Furthermore, phenomenology [...] has not only opened an avenue of approach for such an analysis but has also started the analysis itself (Schütz, 1962d, p. 117).

In this way, Schütz confirms his debt to Husserl and, while analyzing the questions and problems inherent in the phenomenology of the natural attitude and precisely delimiting the boundaries of phenomenological philosophy, he continues, despite the difficulties that emerged from Husserl's thought, to recall the unity of the original project of the father of phenomenology, a project in which the social sciences could not fail to be interested (Muzzetto, 1997, p. 58).



End Notes

1. For a general introduction to Schütz's thought, see Izzo, A. (1979); Wagner, H.R. (1978); Protti, M. (1995); Muzzetto, L. (2006); Di Chiro, A. (2018); Rogers, M. (2000); Dreher, J. (2011); Endreß, M. (1999).
2. Van Breda, H.L. (1962, X, footnote): «I am anxious to meet such a serious and thorough phenomenologist, one of the few who have penetrated to the core of the meaning of my life's work, access to which is unfortunately so difficult, and who promises to continue it as representative of the genuine *Philosophia perennis* which alone can be the future of philosophy. »
3. In the introduction to the German translation of *Die Strukturen der Lebenswelt*. See Luckmann, T. (1971, 21).
4. For an analysis of the concept of «vivid present» in Schütz's thought, see Di Chiro, A. (2019)
5. On Schutz's confrontation with Husserl on intersubjectivity, see Wagner (1984); Carrington (1979).



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