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## **Historicity in Edmund Husserl and Alfred Schutz: Development of Meaning and Modes of Relevance**

**Roberto J. Walton**

Universidad de Buenos Aires  
grwalton@fibertel.com.ar

**Abstract:** This paper attempts to examine history in the framework of Edmund Husserl's transcendental phenomenology and Alfred Schutz's constitutive phenomenology of the natural attitude. Significant similarities regarding the analysis of the lifeworld, its historical character, and the levels of this development will be shown in order to highlight the importance of the complementation that can be found in Schutz's descriptions. Whereas Husserl's furnishes significant ideas dealing with, so to speak, a longitudinal or horizontal plane of history that involves the successive moments of establishment, sedimentation, and teleological reestablishment of meaning, Schutz's main contributions concern themselves with, as it were, a transversal or vertical plane that entails the simultaneous systems of thematic, interpretative, and motivational relevance. The intersection of both structures leads to an enrichment of the analysis of history insofar as the types of relevance help to clarify and develop further the moments described by Husserl. Examples taken from the history of philosophy will offer an illustration. Finally, reference is made to the interdependence of moments and relevances in view of the problem of the continuity of history.

**Keywords:** establishment of meaning, thematic relevance, sedimentation of meaning, interpretative relevance, teleology, motivational relevance.

### *1. Historicity*

According to Husserl, the lifeworld is an intersubjective and historical world in which a primal establishment (*Urstiftung*) of meaning undergoes sedimentation, and can be reactivated by means of a reestablishment (*Nachstiftung*) (28) that entails the possibility of a transformation as well as an increase in meaning. Both the primal establishment and the reestablishment are directed to a final establishment (*Endstiftung*), which is nothing else but a second establishment that repeats itself over and over again because every final form is the beginning form of a new development. Only from the standpoint of the final establishment can we become conscious of the teleological development and of what was contained therein from the beginning, and the outcome reached can only be understood in the light of the primal establishment. These moments make up "the universal a priori of history."<sup>1</sup> Supporting this view, Schutz writes:

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<sup>1</sup> Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 371. See 71 ff., 339 ff. Husserl describes the relationship between primal establishment and reestablishment in the following way: "[...] I am 'a product of

“Thus there results for *every* philosopher, not just for the phenomenologist and for Husserl, the dual problem of the originary and final foundation of the tradition in which he lives and in which he partakes receivingly and givingly. Basically, this problem is not at all limited to the philosopher; it is a most common one. [...] it is the problem of effecting a pre-given world that has its own whither and whence, and whose style is pre-designed by the givenness of this world.”<sup>2</sup>

If we now turn to Schutz’s characterization of the lifeworld as an intersubjective and historical world, we see that emphasis is given to the distinction between the surrounding world (*Umwelt*) of fellow-men in direct presence, the world of the more distant contemporaries that becomes increasingly anonymous (*Mitwelt*), and the world of our predecessors (*Vorwelt*).<sup>3</sup> Schutz holds that “we are always conscious of its *historicity*, which we encounter in tradition and habituality, [...] the ‘already-given’ refers back to one’s own activity or to the activity of Others, of which it is the sediment.”<sup>4</sup> The outcome of the sedimentation is a stock of knowledge, which is mainly socially derived and is organized in a systems of types. A set of typifications provides us with a preorganized knowledge about patterns of experience and action, customs, (29) relevance structures, symbolic systems, and so forth. Thus human beings find themselves in a historical situation that is the result of all previous experiences that are structured in the habitual possessions of this stock:

“As Husserl, to whose basic investigations the present view owes so much, has convincingly shown, all forms of recognition and identification [...] are based on a *generalized* knowledge of the *type* of those objects or of the *typical* style in which they manifest themselves.”<sup>5</sup>

The typifying schemes enclose open horizons of similar experiences and actions that are repeatable and predictable by means of an idealization. Husserl refers to “the

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my time,’ I am in a broad we-community, which has its tradition, which in renewed ways is within a generative community of subjects, with near and far ancestors. And this community has ‘had an effect’ on me, I am what I am as a heritage. What is, then, truly and originally peculiar to me, and to what extent do I truly achieve a primal establishment?” (Edmund Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Texte aus dem Nachlass. Zweiter Teil: 1921 – 1928*, ed. Iso Kern, *Husserliana*, vol. 14 (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), 223).

<sup>2</sup> Alfred Schutz, “Husserl’s *Crisis of Western Sciences*,” *Collected Papers IV*, ed. Helmut Wagner and George Psathas (Dordrecht/Boston/ London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1996), 180.

<sup>3</sup> In the first section of his article “Husserl’s Importance for the Social Sciences,” which is devoted to recollections of personal contacts and is not included in the reprinting in the first volume of the *Collected Papers*, Schutz tells us that these contacts began in 1932 when he sent Husserl a copy of *Der sinnliche Aufbau der sozialen Welt*, which was published that year. He was then invited to a visit in Freiburg: “From then on up to Christmas 1937 I managed to see Husserl three or four times every year for shorter or longer periods in Freiburg, Vienna, or Prague.” See H. L. Van Breda and J. Taminiaux (Eds.), *Edmund Husserl 1859-1959, Phaenomenologica*, vol. 4 (La Haye: Martinus Nijhoff, 1959), 86-88.

<sup>4</sup> Alfred Schutz, “Phenomenology and the Social Sciences,” *Collected Papers I. The Problem of Social Reality*, ed. Maurice Natanson (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), 133.

<sup>5</sup> Alfred Schutz, “Tiresias, or Our Knowledge of Future Events,” *Collected Papers II. Studies in Social Theory*, ed. Arvid Brodersen (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), 284. See A. Schutz, “Symbol, Reality and Society,” *Collected Papers I*, 347 ff.

*fundamental form 'and so forth,'* the form of reiterational 'infinity'; [...] it has its subjective correlate in 'one can always again'." And he adds that this form is nothing other than an idealization, "since de facto no one can always again."<sup>6</sup> Schutz tells us that idealization presupposes that what has been valid up to now will continue to be valid, and its subjective correlate presupposes that what has been possible so far will also be possible in the future. Both idealizations presuppose constancy in the structure of the world and its modes of alteration, and constancy in my capacity of acting in the world.<sup>7</sup>

According to Schutz, the natural attitude in the everyday lifeworld is characterized by two fundamental axioms: 1) the indisputable existence of fellow human beings; and 2) the possibility on principle for them to experience the objects of the lifeworld in the similar way as I do. The second axiom admits differences due to the varied spatial, biographical, and sociocultural articulation of the world, but, as concerns practical purposes, these differences can be overcome by two constructions: 1) the idealization of the interchangeability of the standpoints, according to which changing places with one another makes a substantially similar experience of the world possible; and 2) the idealization of the congruency of the systems of relevance, according to which the difference between these systems has no importance for the practical purposes of myself and the Others. Both idealizations make up the general thesis of the reciprocity of perspectives.<sup>8</sup>

Schutz raises the question whether or not the thesis of the reciprocity of standpoints holds for the knowledge of the historical world. His answer is that the thesis is valid for the immediate surrounding world, but undergoes limitations when applied to the mediate surrounding world, and has no validity as regards the previous world of our predecessors because the stock of knowledge (30) that shaped the context of their thoughts and actions is basically different from our own: "The general thesis of the reciprocity of perspectives [...] is not, strictly speaking, applicable to the previous world."<sup>9</sup> It should be recalled that Husserl states that empathy into Aristotle's thoughts is possible without having an effect on him, "but his previous thoughts have an effect now on me, what was created by him previously is identical with what I reproduce and now has an effect on me in a subsequent motivation."<sup>10</sup> Analogously, Schutz claims that, in contrast to the interaction between contemporaries, it is not possible to act on predecessors, but their actions can be interpreted by us, so that we come under their influence. He adds that my experience of predecessors shows differences with my experience of contemporaries. In the first place, an experience of predecessors as free human beings is impossible because their actions have been accomplished and have no open future. Secondly, the typification with which we attempt to grasp previous lifeworlds differs from the interpretational schemes with which our predecessors understood their experiences. Only a vague equivalence can be established,

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<sup>6</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, trans. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1969), 188.

<sup>7</sup> See Alfred Schutz, "Some Structures of the Life-World," *Collected Papers III. Studies in Phenomenological Philosophy*, ed. I. Schutz (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), 116.

<sup>8</sup> See Alfred Schütz and Thomas Luckmann, *Strukturen der Lebenswelt*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1979), 87-90; A. Schutz, "Common Sense and Scientific Interpretation of Human Action," *Collected Papers I*, 11 ff.

<sup>9</sup> A. Schütz und T. Luckmann, *Strukturen der Lebenswelt*, I, 121. (When a German version is referred to, translations belong to the author of the article.)

<sup>10</sup> E. Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Zweiter Teil*, 200.

and the degree of contingency is incommensurably greater than the one that characterizes the application of types to contemporaries. Finally, knowledge of our predecessors is obtained with the help of documents and monuments which are expressions of their conscious lives, and, being indirect, can only show some degree of pseudosimultaneity with them.

In spite of all these shortcomings, Schutz considers that the experience of our predecessors is a human experience. As he puts it: “I can interpret it in the context of my knowledge of the structure of human experience as meaningful experience *in general*.”<sup>11</sup> Husserl had already asserted that, in the case of a very alien lifeworld, it is possible to understand the most elementary modes of behavior, i.e., those in which the subject acts on the material bodies. We understand the movements of lifting, moving, carrying or pushing performed by other living bodies. On this basis it is also possible, having in mind the most general human purposes aimed at the satisfaction of needs, to advance in the understanding of alien actions.

With the purpose of showing other significant connections between both views of history, we must now turn our attention to the problem of relevance. Schutz critically claims that, in the writings published during his life, Husserl did not become aware that typification is accomplished following particular structures of relevance. Nevertheless, in writings published posthumously, this (31) topic does appear with the observation that, as the consequence of education within a tradition, “to each relativizing personality or situation [...] there belongs a sphere of relevance and irrelevance.”<sup>12</sup> Husserl also holds that within human groups, because spheres of things become relevant for them, “a particular realm of the surrounding world detaches itself against the background of the world as such, which extends itself, with its contrary realm of the irrelevant, beyond what is included in all our relevances.”<sup>13</sup> This theme is implicit in statements on the legitimacy of the “relativity of truth,” e.g., the market-truth of the trader in the market, who, when dealing with his products, neglects as irrelevant differences in the estimation of their weight.<sup>14</sup> Husserl also has laid emphasis on interests, as contrasted with momentary and isolated acts because they bring forth a horizon of further acts and establish a connection between them: “An interest in the pregnant sense—the lasting interest, the lasting unitary horizon of interests.”<sup>15</sup> Under a broader concept of interest, Husserl includes “every act of turning toward of the ego, whether transitory or continuous every act of the ego’s being-with (*inter-esse*).”<sup>16</sup> In this respect, Schutz contends that

“the term ‘interest’ is simply the heading for a series of complicated problems, which for the sake of convenience shall be called the problem of *relevance*. We turn our

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<sup>11</sup> A. Schutz, “The Dimensions of the Social World,” *Collected Papers II*, 60.

<sup>12</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie. Ergänzungsband aus den Nachlass 1934-1937*, ed. Reinhold N. Smid, *Husserliana*, vol. 29 (Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1993), 385.

<sup>13</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Die Lebenswelt. Auslegungen der vorgegebenen Welt und ihrer Konstitution. Texte aus dem Nachlass (1916-1937)*, ed. Rochus Sowa, *Husserliana*, vol. 39 (Dordrecht: Springer, 2008), 386.

<sup>14</sup> See E. Husserl, *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, 198 ff., 278.

<sup>15</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Späte texte über die Zeitkonstitution (1929-1934). Die C-Manuskripte*, ed. Dieter Lohmar, *Husserliana-Materialien*, vol. 8 (Dordrecht: Springer, 2006), 315. See 75, 254, 325.

<sup>16</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Experience and Judgment. Investigations in a Genealogy of Logic*, ed. Ludwig Landgrebe, trans. James S. Churchill and Karl Ameriks (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 86.

interest to those experiences which for one reason or another seem to be relevant to the sum total of our situation as experienced by us in any given present.”<sup>17</sup>

In Schutz’s view, we are confronted here with a subject matter of fundamental significance: “The problem of relevance is perhaps the most important and at the same time the most difficult problem that has to be solved in the description of the lifeworld.”<sup>18</sup> And he adds: “The concept of relevance is the central concept of sociology and of the cultural sciences.”<sup>19</sup> In what follows, I attempt to show a relationship between Husserl’s analysis of history and Schutz’s theory of relevance. The descriptions of establishment (and reestablishment) of meaning, sedimentation of meaning, and teleology as a distinctive trait of historical development are matched by parallel trends in the modes of relevance.

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## 2. *Establishment of meaning and thematic relevance*

In order to consider the relationship between establishment (or reestablishment) of meaning and thematic relevance, we must take into account two Husserlian analyses. One concerns the emergence of the theme against a background because consciousness is articulated around a core that separates itself from a surrounding horizon. Husserl describes how different objects can stand out in the field of our experience and attract the regard of the ego, but also how the apprehension of an initial theme can turn into an explication of its internal determinations, so that “the object reveals itself in its properties as that which it was anticipated to be, except that what was anticipated now attains original givenness.”<sup>20</sup> The possibility of a development of the theme as contradistinguished to a change of themes is important for the thematization of history.

The second main point to notice concerns precisely the determination of a theme detached from the historical horizon. Husserl points out that the thematization of a historical tradition does not entail its adoption,<sup>21</sup> and therefore distinguishes two types of “repeatability” (*Wiederholbarkeit*). On the one hand, there is “the possibility of *figurative* reactivation by one who understands [...] in merely historical fashion.”<sup>22</sup> Here meaning is captured by means of a historical reconstruction without been adopted. On the other hand, there is “the possibility of reactivation *in the proper sense*.”<sup>23</sup> In this case meaning is taken over, with the experience of a motivation due to its influence, through a co-performance of what is transmitted in such a way that a previous empty intention is fulfilled through our adoption.<sup>24</sup> When the understanding-in-following (*Nachverstehen*) is a reproduction (*Nacherzeugen*), alien intentions are transformed into our own intentions. In turn, this coincidence in a proper reactivation can be accomplished either by letting oneself be taken passively in a simple co-performance, or by freely following the motivation after reflecting

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<sup>17</sup> A. Schutz, “Language, Language Disturbances, and the Texture of Consciousness,” *Collected Papers I*, 283.

<sup>18</sup> A. Schütz und T. Luckmann, *Strukturen der Lebenswelt*, I, 225.

<sup>19</sup> A. Schutz, “Outline of a Theory of Relevance,” *Collected Papers IV*, 3.

<sup>20</sup> E. Husserl, *Experience and Judgment*, 105.

<sup>21</sup> See E. Husserl, *Die Lebenswelt. Auslegungen der vorgegebenen Welt und ihrer Konstitution*, 373.

<sup>22</sup> E. Husserl, *Experience and Judgment*, 267.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 266

<sup>24</sup> See E. Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Zweiter Teil*, 222.

on whether nothing speaks against it in the horizon of our experience.<sup>25</sup> In the second case we reactivate the tradition by thematizing it and taking a radical consciousness of its presuppositions. This situation is similar to the thematization that takes place at the origin of the tradition. When reestablishment contains an innovation, it can be considered a relative primal establishment or a new establishment (*Neustiftung*) of meaning in which what was already established receives a new configuration through an enrichment of meaning. In (33) other words, in the course of history, the primal establishment is determined in a more precise manner, and can also be altered by means of a new beginning that implies a modified establishment or reconfiguration of its meaning.<sup>26</sup>

Schutz has this kind of thematization in mind when he refers to modified or radically new situations that have to be defined and cannot be referred back to the types contained in our stock of knowledge. In the anticipated surrounding world, something that is not typically familiar is experienced, and, therefore, attracts our attention and, when we turn toward it, attains thematic relevance (*thematische Relevanz*). Schutz remarks that themes not only impose themselves, but that we can also freely divide the field of our experience in a thematic core and a horizontal background. In this active bestowing of prominence two possibilities emerge. As we have noted in Husserl, either our attention may go on from one thematic object, which is set aside, to another object without there being a bond between them, or the originary theme may be maintained and extended when an element in its horizon is incorporated to it as an essential element. This horizon “consists in thematic relevances that belong implicitly to the theme and were laid out originarily in past experiences or co-given in the actual experience,” so that in their explication we can see a development in which, as Schutz adds, “the principal theme is further displayed in different subthematizations.”<sup>27</sup> Although Schutz does not mention history in this analysis, his approach to the development of a theme agrees with Husserl’s account of the reconfiguration of a tradition.

An example of the unfolding of a main theme in subthemes can be found in the history of philosophy as a privileged model that shows how a historical tradition works. According to Husserl, as the vocation (*Beruf*) of mankind, reason is called (*berufen*) both to a knowledge of the whole world and to a disclosure of practical norms with universal validity. The organ of reason, when it becomes radically conscious of its possibilities, is philosophy conceived as a universal science. This kind of thematization of all beings and norms was first established with the appearance of Greece philosophy. With Descartes, a reestablishment introduces the demand for apodicticity and brings forth two epochs. The first period is that of the Modern Age, in which this requirement undergoes a series of setbacks that do not allow the development of the transcendental motive included therein. The second epoch is the period of transcendental phenomenology, which is “the renewed beginning as the reappropriation of the Cartesian discovery, the fundamental demand of apodicticity.”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> See E. Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie. Ergänzungsband*, 373.

<sup>26</sup> See *ibid.*, 411, 416, 418.

<sup>27</sup> A. Schütz und T. Luckmann, *Strukturen der Lebenswelt*, I, 237.

<sup>28</sup> E. Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, 290.

### 3. Sedimentation of meaning and interpretative relevance

According to Husserl, the condition of possibility for an experience of cultural objects, and for a motivation by them, lies in a “horizon of acquaintedness” conceived as “a familiar horizon of possible explication”<sup>29</sup> that mediates between experiences and their effects. Husserl refers to a “horizon of the understanding subject” (*Horizont des Verstehenden*)<sup>30</sup> that emerges “according to our personal upbringing and development or according to our membership in this or that nation, this or that cultural community.”<sup>31</sup> Thus an understanding-in-following (*Nachverstehen*) is attained resorting to an analogy with the cultural objects and behaviors that belong to our surrounding world. It follows that our typicality plays the role of an “access-typicality” (*Zugangstypik*)<sup>32</sup> that allows us to register in nontypical objects certain similarities with typical objects. These always provide a minimal “core of acquaintedness” (*Kern der Bekanntheit*)<sup>33</sup> that renders possible, even when we deal with very strange objects, a transference of meaning and validity to them. Husserl contends that we can understand the product of a Chinese artist as a painting, but the specific meaning of the artwork, which is correlative to the artistic purpose, cannot be captured by us. This poses the problem of “the extent and the degree in which I can *adopt* the validities of their experiences (those of the alien subjects) in the understanding-in-following, and so advance to a synthesis of their homeworld and my own.”<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, due to the high level of generality in which our typicality starts to take effect, analogies can predelineate possible paths for a cultural experience, which, through cancelations and corrections, can advance to a further determination or to different modes of determination. One must try slowly and gradually to render the first extremely general understanding more precise. In this process, a high degree of intentional modifications of one’s own experience is effected in order to achieve an increasingly more successful historical empathy. Husserl refers to “a kind of ‘empathy’, by which we project ourselves into the alien cultural community and its culture.”<sup>35</sup>

According to Schutz, the theme raises the problem of the interpretation of its meaning, and with this purpose we resort to our stock of knowledge. Not all the elements contained have a bearing on the matter at hand, but those that contribute to a solution gain an interpretative relevance (*Auslegungsrelevanz*). There is a coincidence between what is actually thematic and elements (35) given in the mode of horizontality within the stock of knowledge. This amounts to a synthesis of recognition and the subsumption of the theme that has to be defined under the elements of the stock of knowledge. The relationship between the theme and these elements oscillates between an automatic coincidence and the situation in which a process of interpretation has to be enacted until the new problem linked

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<sup>29</sup> E. Husserl, *Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die transzendente Phänomenologie. Ergänzungsband*, 314.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 286.

<sup>31</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations. An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960), 136.

<sup>32</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Texte aus dem Nachlass. Dritter Teil: 1929 – 1935*, ed. Iso Kern, *Husserliana*, vol. 15 (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), 221.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 430.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 233 f.

<sup>35</sup> E. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 135. See E. Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Dritter Teil*, 233 n.

to the theme can be solved. Thematic relevances determine the level and the limits of what has to be investigated in the horizon of the theme in order to solve the problem by means of the possible interpretative relevance of elements pertaining to the stock of knowledge. It may be necessary to know more about these elements by obtaining new elements or transferring the old elements with new degrees of clarity.

Schutz writes: “The typical forms of the problems and the typical possibilities of their solutions are not only assigned as traditional contents to our understanding, they are pre-interpretations of our own possibilities and tasks.”<sup>36</sup> As an example of interpretative relevance we can mention Kant’s adoption of the scholastic concept of transcendental. He takes up the term, but transforms the transcendental notions, i.e., the attributes that transcend all categories and can be applied to all beings as beings, into conditions for the knowledge of all things that appear, i.e., in predicates of objectivity. Kant makes this point explicitly in a reference to the transcendental philosophy of the ancients: “These supposedly transcendental predicates of *things* are, in fact, nothing but logical requirements and criteria of all *knowledge* of things in general, [...]”<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, the Modern theory of ideas, or representational theory of knowledge, also has interpretational relevance for Kant. Philosophy had fallen in a situation in which the relationship between things in the outer world and our ideas or representations of them could not be adequately explained and so remained unknown, and Kant transforms this problem into that of a knowable relationship between the representations themselves insofar as they are subject to the conditions provided by the forms of intuition and the categories.

Another example is Hegel’s view on the Modern theory of ideas, which is tied to the separation between soul and body: “If soul and body are absolutely opposed to one another [...], then there is no possibility of any community between them. This community was, however, recognized by ancient metaphysics as an undeniable fact.”<sup>38</sup> Hegel acknowledges the interpretative relevance of the Aristotelian theory which points to a relationship between sensuous forms and intelligible forms, i.e., a community between things and the intellect, because a form as the intelligible moment of substance is transferred (36) into and impresses itself in the intellect, and then is expressed by means of a conceptual reproduction. In a similar manner, in the Hegelian interpretation, the subject and the object are not confronted to each other in a situation of co-presence, but rather are related as phases in a process in which the later phase—the subject—is implied in the previous phase—the object—, and the previous phase—the object—is sublated in the later phase—the subject—. Thus the nexus between nature and mind is not, as in the theory of ideas, the co-presence of separate elements, but rather, as in the Aristotelian theory, the relationship between phases in the same development.<sup>39</sup>

#### 4. Historical teleology and motivational relevance

As we have seen, Husserl clarifies history “by inquiring back into the primal establishment of the goals that bind together the chain of future generations, insofar as

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<sup>36</sup> A. Schutz, “Husserl’s *Crisis of Western Sciences*,” *Collected Papers IV*, 180.

<sup>37</sup> Immanuel Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: Macmillan, 1964), 118 (§ 12).

<sup>38</sup> Hegel’s *Philosophy of Mind*, trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), 33 (§ 389).

<sup>39</sup> See Errol E. Harris, *Nature, Mind and Modern Science* (London/New York: George Allen & Unwin/Humanities Press, 1968), 246-256.



these goals live on in sedimented forms yet can be awakened again and again [...].”<sup>40</sup> We have already examined primal establishment along with reestablishment and mediating sedimentation, and pointed out their counterpart in Schutz’s theory of relevance. Now we must turn to historical teleology and consider the goals introduced by primal establishment and called forth from sedimentation in subsequent reestablishments.

Schutz remarks that, along with the relationship between theme and horizon in the field of consciousness, it is necessary to consider the motives that have led to this structuration. The stock of knowledge enables us to show what can happen under certain conditions, but not to explain the purpose of doing something. Only a definite interest for a plan or purpose can make this clear, because it decides what elements in the stock of knowledge will be chosen to define a situation and face it. The outcome of this selection is that these elements have motivational relevance (*Motivationsrelevanz*). Hence, the selective function of interest organizes the world of my potential or actual reach in strata of more or less motivational relevance highlighting as primarily significant those objects that are now, or will be in the future, possible goals or means for their realization.

Motivation is for Husserl the basic law of spiritual life. On the one hand, there is the motivation of reason when the acts of a free or autonomous ego are linked one to another in a legitimate manner. This kind of motivation, which is oriented to the future, is exemplified by the motivation of the conclusion by the premises in the theoretical sphere and by the motivation of the means by the goal in the practical sphere. On the other hand, Husserl speaks (37) of motivations by association, which, on the basis of similarities, link experiences without an active participation of the ego. They manifest themselves by means of habitualities and instinctive tendencies, which refer to the past and can be hidden in the depth of the ego. Husserl remarks that both types of motivation “certainly intertwine one with another, the ‘causality’ in the undergrounds of association and apperception, and the ‘causality’ of reason, the passive and the active or free motivation.”<sup>41</sup> He also stresses the role of motives or interests in establishing links between the past and the future: “[...] the active ego in the present now embraces with his present interest a particular past and future horizon as the *horizon of interests*.”<sup>42</sup> It must be kept in mind that, for Schutz, the word “interest” is nothing else but a heading for problems of motivational relevance.

In his article on *Ideas II*, Schutz examines the contrast between rational and associative motivations, but does not refer to his own differentiation between “in-order-to motives” and “because motives.”<sup>43</sup> A parallel can be drawn between both views particularly because the differentiation of motives in both cases includes the relationship of one with the future and of the other with the past. For Schutz, an in-order-to motive is the state of affairs that one intends to bring about. It motivates both a decision of the will to attain the pre-conceived goal and the subsequent action that will realize it in the outer world. Its projection in fantasy is not mere fancying because the future action must be possible in

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<sup>40</sup> E. Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, 71.

<sup>41</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Zweites Buch. Phänomenologische Untersuchungen zur Konstitution*, ed. Marly Biemel (*Husserliana*, vol. 4 (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1952), 224.

<sup>42</sup> E. Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Dritter Teil*, 397.

<sup>43</sup> See A. Schutz, “Edmund Husserl’s *Ideas*, Volume II,” *Collected Papers III*, 30 ff.; and Alfred Schütz, *Der sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt. Eine Einleitung in die verstehende Soziologie*, ed. Martin Endreß und Joachim Renn, *Alfred Schutz Werkausgabe*, vol. 2 (Konstanz: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2004), 195-209.

view of the limits imposed by reality and our stock of knowledge. Schutz contends that its execution requires “that according to my present knowledge the projected action, *at least as to its type*, would have been feasible, its means and ends, *at least as to their types*, would have been available if the action had occurred in the past.”<sup>44</sup> Whereas the in-order-to motive involves the meaning of the action for the actor and has a bearing on the future, the because motive concerns the attitude of the actor to his action, and is disclosed in a retrospective glance because it refers to previous experiences that lead us to behave in a certain way. There are different ways of attaining a goal, but the followed one depends on the biographical situation or sedimented life history of the acting subject. Schutz characterizes both motives in this manner: “The first is the chain of motivations determined by the project of an action in the future, the second is the biographical ‘attitude’ determined by sedimented motives.”<sup>45</sup>

(38) An example of motivational relevance is provided by the goals (in-order-to motives) and activating forces (because motives) inherent in the previous stages in the development of a tradition.

As regards the in-order-to motives, Husserl writes: “I must in every action have within view thematically and practically the ‘path’ (*Weg*), the mid-goals (*Mittelziele*), and the final goal (*Endziel*).”<sup>46</sup> His examination of the historical tradition reveals a chain of motivations in the linking together of three in-order-to motives. First, the final goal consists in the attainment of truths and norms that are unconditionally valid because they are not relative to situations, traditions, or persons. Secondly, in order to achieve this final goal, a reorientation of human existence toward infinite tasks is necessary as a means or mid-goal. Finally, in order to effect the reorientation, the pure and strict theoretical interest in an autonomous philosophy must also be preserved as a mid-goal because traditional motives may assert themselves and keep us away from the infinite tasks. Thus, in Husserl’s terms, rational motivations manifest themselves because, according to Schutz’s portrait of motivational relevance, there is a final in-order-to motive that encloses the mediation of other subordinated motives of the same type.

With respect to the because motive of the philosophical tradition, a retrospective glance toward the primal establishment reveals that it lies in wonder (*θαυμάζειν*), which, lacking any practical interest, gives rise to the aspiration to pure theory. When immediate needs are satisfied, curiosity arises as a playful attitude and leads us to wonder at the world. Thus the reason why philosophy emerges is a biographically determined situation of individuals toward the surrounding world. This view is illustrated in the following passage:

“Naturally, the outbreak of the theoretical attitude, like everything that develops historically, has its factual motivation in the concrete framework of historical occurrence. [...] what is more important for us is to understand the path of motivation, the path of the bestowal and creation of meaning which leads from the mere reorientation, from the mere *θαυμάζειν*, to *theōria* [...].”<sup>47</sup>

<sup>44</sup> A. Schutz, “Choosing among Projects of Action,” *Collected Papers I*, 73.

<sup>45</sup> A. Schütz und T. Luckmann, *Strukturen der Lebenswelt*, I, 254.

<sup>46</sup> E. Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Zweiter Teil*, 172.

<sup>47</sup> E. Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, 285. See 276.

The motivation enclosed in a tradition is not only a driving force turned toward the final goal entailed by the primal establishment, but also a recovery power that leads us back to the originary goal when the general trend turns away from it. For Husserl this amounts to a crisis, and a retrospective inquiry is necessary in order to throw light on the beginning of the tradition and render a genuine reestablishment possible. Even if tensions and conflicts between the origin and subsequent developments appear, a tradition “always maintains in (39) concealment motives that can be efficacious for turning back.”<sup>48</sup> What is then required is “the disclosure of this primal tradition, the clarification of the style of a past establishment that continues through our life.”<sup>49</sup> Schutz also refers to this problem bringing forward a particular kind of motivational relevance that allows the reassumption of a tradition after a period of time in which it has been dismissed completely. It is a higher order relevance that overcomes interruptions: “We could here even introduce a fourth relevance-category, which could best be called *actualization-relevance* (*Aktualisierungsrelevanz*).”<sup>50</sup>

##### 5. *Circularity and continuity in history*

The remainder of this article will be devoted to the possibility of a transcendental analysis of history. The discussion will fall into two parts. The first will show how a circularity can be disclosed both in the Husserlian moments of historical development and in the Schutzian systems of relevance. The second part will examine how this circularity leads to an analysis of the continuity of history, and will lean heavily on some of Schutz’s notions in order to show that this continuous succession can be understood as that of a transcendental community of contemporaries, predecessors, and successors.

Husserl holds that understanding the beginning and the present-day structure of a tradition are linked together: “Thus we have no other choice than to proceed forward and backward in a zigzag pattern; the one must help the other in an interplay.”<sup>51</sup> And Schutz speaks of a “circular relation” (*kreisförmige Beziehung*) claiming that each system of relevance can be the starting point for the alteration of the others: “The three spheres of relevance are, therefore, only three aspects of a unique complex of phenomena.”<sup>52</sup> As an example of this circularity I will focus on the history of intentionality.

Schutz highlights an intertwining of motivational and thematic relevances, i.e., of teleology and establishment or reestablishment of meaning. He argues that “it is the prevalent system of motivational relevances, my awakened interest, that leads to the constitution of the new thematic relevance [...]”<sup>53</sup> We may say that the problem of intentionality comes to have thematic relevance for Husserl against the background of the motivational relevance of Franz Brentano and Kasimir Twardowski’s theories. For Brentano, acts are intentional (40) or directed to an object that is immanent to

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<sup>48</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922-1937). Mit ergänzenden Texten*, ed. Thomas Nenon y Hans Rainer Sepp, *Husserliana*, vol 27 (Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989), 90.

<sup>49</sup> E. Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Zweiter Teil*, 231.

<sup>50</sup> Alfred Schütz, *Relevanz und Handeln 1. Zur Phänomenologie des Alltagswissens*, ed. Elisabeth List (Konstanz: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2004), 166.

<sup>51</sup> E. Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, 58.

<sup>52</sup> A. Schutz, *Relevanz und Handeln 1*, 127 f. The relation between systems of relevance is represented by means of two circles that are displayed in contrasting directions.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

consciousness, shows itself in a passive manner, and functions as a sign allowing us to infer things beyond the reach of intentionality. In a way that is more in the line of scholastic philosophy, Twardowski claims that we have access to real things through the mediation of intentional objects which are a sort of image in our mind. The intentional object is that by means of which the real thing itself is intended, and not what is intended as conceived by Brentano. The two theories motivate the thematic relevance of an adequate characterization of intentionality. Conversely, Schutz adds that “the new created thematic relevance can be the origin and the starting point of a series of new motivational relevances.”<sup>54</sup> For example, the thematic relevance that places intentionality in the center of attention brings forth a new motivational relevance oriented to apply the outcome of its thematization to the various acts of consciousness by stressing sameness and differences between perception, recollection, fantasy, and so forth.

There is also an interlacing of thematic and interpretative relevances, i.e., of establishment and sedimentation of meaning. In his thematization of intentionality, Husserl turns for support to the interpretative relevance of the theories of Brentano and Twardowski. Brentano’s point of view is interpretatively relevant because Husserl, in contrast to it, assigns an active function to intentionality considering that the same given material can be apprehended in different ways. In addition, the inference of an external reality on the basis of the intentional object is converted into the distinctive character of sign as a particular mode of intentionality. And Twardowski’s view on the reference of an intentional act to a real thing through a mediating content, also has interpretative relevance, because it is changed into the theory according to which the noematic correlate, which is the real thing itself, has as a content the determinations by which an object is intended. Likewise, through the noematic nucleus the object is intended and supports these determinations.<sup>55</sup>

Finally, Schutz shows an intertwining of interpretative and motivational relevances, i.e., of sedimentation of meaning and historical teleology. Brentano and Twardowski’s theories function as a motive for an adequate account of the relationship between consciousness and the world. By virtue of their drawbacks, these interpretations motivate a search in the stock of knowledge for other interpretations that might contribute to solve the problem. Therefore, a motivational relevance originated in a negative manner by an inadequate interpretative relevance brings forth, by contrast, new interpretative relevances. The stock of knowledge includes Kant’s transcendental theory that ascribes a constitutive role to consciousness, and an adaptation of this function, along (41) with a dismissal of the theory of the thing in itself, enables Husserl to consider intentionality as the reference to an object that does not separate itself from the real world in the manner of Brentano, nor is a medium of access to reality in the manner of Twardowski, but rather is identified with the world itself.

This analysis can be expanded by moving backward and forward in the history of philosophy. In view of their own thematization, Brentano and Twardowski had taken notice of the interpretative relevance of the Medieval theory of intentional being as a mode of immanence according to which things can exist in the soul in contrast to their natural being

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> See Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. First Book*, trans. F. Kersten (The Hague/Boston/Lancaster: Martinus Nijhoff, 1983), 244 f., 309.

in the external world. Intentional being renders possible both a presence of real things in the soul and a transformation of the soul in things. This intentional immanence was considered by Brentano as that of an intentional but not real object to which our acts can reach, and by Twardowski as a sheer medium of access to a real thing. In the progressive direction, the interpretative relevance of views on dialectic and of the Gestalt theory—sedimented in the stock of knowledge—enable Maurice Merleau-Ponty to speak of an intentionality in the interior of Being, so that what is intended amounts to a coherent deformation that sets up a theme against a background, and Aron Gurwitsch to set aside the substrate of determinations in the noema in behalf of a gestaltic structure.

It has been illuminating to compare a horizontal or longitudinal plane of moments in the historical development with a vertical or transversal plane of systems of relevance. Once confronted, both approaches have shown a remarkable parallelism and circularity in which no moment or system can be set aside from the others by considering it regardless of the process from which it resulted. Setting them apart only enables us to concentrate on a specific aspect of the overall historical development. Thus the subject of continuity in the course of historical events is imposed upon us. Schutz holds that, since the dawn of mankind, a continuous We-relation endures in which individuals and experiences change. This view of history should be considered, independently from the metaphysical conceptions with which it has been associated, as “the necessary condition for the unity not only of our experience of the world of predecessors but of social reality in general” and as “the condition for the conception of history as a process meaningful to its subjects.”<sup>56</sup>

This view of history is examined by Schutz as a phenomenon of the natural attitude because intersubjectivity is considered as a datum of the lifeworld that demands an ontology instead of a transcendental constitutional analysis. From the standpoint of his constitutive phenomenology of the natural attitude, the analyses of intersubjectivity and history cannot all be encompassed by transcendental phenomenology. On the problem of finding a path from transcendental subjectivity to transcendental intersubjectivity, or of explaining (42) mundane intersubjectivity on the basis of transcendental subjectivity, he writes: “[...] I am satisfied with the natural world view. [...] The natural world is through and through *social*, and our knowledge of the world is also *social*, precisely in the natural view.”<sup>57</sup> Schutz argues that Husserl has artificially cancelled intersubjectivity as a phenomenon in the world through a “negative determination”<sup>58</sup> of the transcendental sphere of ownness in terms of what does not pertain to the ego. As a movement that advances from the sphere that is not properly of the ego to the sphere properly of the ego, this reduction requires an identification of the former intersubjective domain in order to abstract from it. This is the reason why the attempt to solve the problem of the constitution of transcendental intersubjectivity within the reduced egological sphere would result in failure. For the Fifth Cartesian Meditation shows how the Other is constituted as a psycho-physical unity, but does not explain the constitution of an alien transcendental subjectivity.

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<sup>56</sup> A. Schutz, “The Dimensions of the Social World,” *Collected Papers II*, 61 f.

<sup>57</sup> Alfred Schutz und Aron Gurwitsch, *Briefwechsel 1939-1959* (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1985), 280. Schutz is convinced that “Husserl’s phenomenology cannot solve the problem of intersubjectivity and particularly of transcendental intersubjectivity, and fails here” (ibid., 358).

<sup>58</sup> A. Schutz, “The Problem of Transcendental Intersubjectivity in Husserl,” *Collected Papers III*, 58.

Schutz states that the Fifth Meditation is his main source: “The present study does not go beyond the published material.”<sup>59</sup> Husserl’s *Nachlass*, however, has now made clear three fundamental points. First, in advance of empathy, an instinctive intersubjective intentionality goes through transcendental intersubjectivity connecting all the egos.<sup>60</sup> Second, a positive delimitation of the transcendental sphere of ownness is possible by means of the presentation of objects and of those appresentations that can be transformed into perceptions because they only depend on my experiences and movements. This outlines a definite domain for our experience without referring to the experiences of Others.<sup>61</sup> Finally, as we shall see in what follows, it is possible in the sphere of empathy to achieve an immanent overcoming of egology with the transformation of the egological reduction into an intersubjective reduction.<sup>62</sup> On the other hand, even if Schutz considers that “intersubjectivity is not a problem of constitution that can be solved within the transcendental sphere, [...]”<sup>63</sup> his analyses of relevance set the stage for dealing with this problem.

Let us consider the situation in which the issue of the scope of the transcendental dimension comes to have thematic relevance. It is the problem of whether this dimension is completely encompassed by egological subjectivity (43) as the necessary locus of its irruption, or an explication of the horizons of egological experience leads us beyond this starting point. As regards motivational relevance, this thematization is brought forward by the existence of meanings that lack a transcendental origin because they do not emerge from me. This amounts to a paradox because it has not been shown that there are other transcendental subjects that may have constituted them. If all meanings and validities depended on my own operations, there would be no reason to screen off alien meanings in order to attain the transcendental sphere of ownness in the Fifth Cartesian Meditation. But these meanings refer to Others that are nothing else but correlations of my constitution and therefore are psycho-physical egos in the world. Thus the motivational relevance is connected with the existence of meanings that are not originated in my transcendental performances.

Interpretative relevance is to be found in two notions that belong to the stock of knowledge of phenomenology. One is the notion of double reduction by virtue of which we know that our past ego as a psycho-physical ego along with the world to which it belongs, can be reduced in remembering, by means of a first transcendental reduction, to my presently remembering transcendental ego. We also know that, reflecting more deeply on recollection, that this world and the psycho-physical ego therein, can be again reduced, in a second transcendental reduction, to my past transcendental ego as the ego that had a constitutive experience of that world. In other words, a double transcendental reduction

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<sup>59</sup> A. Schutz, “The Problem of Transcendental Intersubjectivity in Husserl,” *Collected Papers III*, 78. Schutz develops his analysis “without taking into consideration writings of Husserl so far unpublished”. A. Schutz, “Edmund Husserl’s *Ideas*, Volume II,” *Collected Papers III*, 36. See A. Schutz, “Sartre’s Theory of the Alter Ego,” *Collected Papers I*, 195.

<sup>60</sup> See E. Husserl, *Späte texte über die Zeitkonstitution (1929-1934). Die C-Manuskripte*, 169 f., 260, 437.

<sup>61</sup> See E. Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Dritter Teil*, 125. See Schutz’s discussion with Eugen Fink, “The Problem of Transcendental Intersubjectivity in Husserl,” *Collected Papers III*, 87.

<sup>62</sup> See Eugen Fink, *VI. Cartesianische Meditation. Teil 2: Ergänzungsband*, ed. Guy van Kerckhoven, *Husserliana-Dokumente*, vol. 2/2 (Dordrecht/Boston/London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1988), 244-255.

<sup>63</sup> A. Schutz, “The Problem of Transcendental Intersubjectivity in Husserl,” *Collected Papers III*, 82.

refers back, on the one hand, to the ego that remembers in the present, and, on the other hand, to the past ego that shows itself first in recollection as a mundane ego, and then reveals itself as a stage of my previous transcendental life.<sup>64</sup> Something similar occurs in empathy, which is a different mode of presentification that does not operate in my stream of consciousness as remembering does, but transcends it toward another stream. First, the alien psycho-physical ego can be referred back in a first reduction, together with the world in which this other subject appears as an object, to my empathizing transcendental ego. And then, in a second reduction, it can be referred back to a second subjectivity that in this case is not mine, but nevertheless is transcendental just as my past ego discovered in remembering is. This means that I can accomplish not only a reduction of the Other to my transcendental stream of consciousness, but also a further “reduction in the Other,” i.e., a reduction to the alter ego’s transcendental stream of consciousness. This procedure is independent of whether the Other accomplishes the transcendental reduction or not, because as Eugen Fink puts it, “in the course of the intentional explication of the experience of someone else the reduction in the Other is necessarily effected, and precisely in a transcendental-immanent manner.”<sup>65</sup>

(44) The second Schutzian notion that obtains interpretative relevance for our problem is the thesis of reciprocal perspectives. Schutz overcomes the diversity of perspectives by building common objects that transcend the particular character of my own experience and the experience of the Other. Thus the world presupposed by me is also the world presupposed by the Other. Correlatively, it can be argued that we also arise above the diversity of perspectives by presupposing a type of common subjectivity in which the operations of the Other converge with my own transcendental performances. We have seen that the thesis can always be maintained with regard to the structure of meaningful experience in general. This would add up to typifying a transcendental subject with which I am only involved with certain layers of my subjectivity that differ from my psycho-physical ego. My constructing—constituting—the Other as transcendental ego can be accomplished according to its behavior, functions, attitudes, motives, and so forth, in a way that supersedes my unique biographical situation.<sup>66</sup> In other words, my transcendental standpoint is interchangeable with the transcendental standpoint of Others. It follows from this that the unfolding of the egological reduction into an intersubjective reduction can be understood as an extension of the thesis of reciprocal perspectives to the transcendental sphere. With this transcendental idealization of the reciprocity, the thesis gains interpretative relevance when the issue of the scope of the transcendental dimension becomes thematically relevant.

The outcome of the application of the three systems of relevance to the problem of the scope of the transcendental dimension, and hence to the issue of the transcendental constitution of intersubjectivity and history, may be summarized in Husserl’s formulation: “To the human natural history there corresponds a transcendental history.”<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> See Edmund Husserl, *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Syntheses. Lectures on Transcendental Logic*, trans. Anthony J. Steinbock (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), 596 f.

<sup>65</sup> E. Fink, *VI. Cartesianische Meditation. Teil 2*, 249.

<sup>66</sup> This characterization follows Schutz’s description of common-sense constructs. See A. Schutz, “Common and Scientific Interpretation of Human Action,” *Collected Papers I*, 17 ff.

<sup>67</sup> E. Husserl, *Späte texte über die Zeitkonstitution (1929-1934). Die C-Manuskripte*, 170.

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