

What is Schutzian Phenomenology?

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Abstract: My aim is to depict Schutzian phenomenology as a whole. In order to do so, I will start by presenting Schutz's ideas on the phenomenological, egological, and eidetic reductions as mere technical devices. Then I will show how they are interconnected with phenomenological psychology. After that, I will argue that phenomenological psychology leads to worldly phenomenology and I will explore its consequences for transcendental philosophy and the empirical sciences. I will conclude with some reflections on naturalized phenomenology and how it finds absolute certainty in the life-world, not in the transcendental realm.

Keywords: phenomenology, Schutz, phenomenological psychology, natural attitude, life-world

Schutz claimed to be a phenomenologist. Most of his readers grant his claim although it has been contested by some who argue that his realism¹, his idealism,² or his mundane stance³ are counter to the phenomenological

¹ Ronald R. Cox, *Schutz's Theory of Relevance: A Phenomenological Critique*, (The Hague / Boston / London, Martinus Nijhoff, 1978), 136. Cox, as well as Hindess (see note 2), display a typical orthodox way of interpreting the differences that Schutz had from Husserl, seeing them not as contributions but as mistakes.

² Barry Hindess, "The 'phenomenological' sociology of Alfred Schutz," *Economy and Society*, 1(1), 1-27 (1972) published online: 28 Jul 2006, 9. In his misguided paper, Hindess claims that Schutz's foundation of sociology is not phenomenological and that "Husserl's concepts cannot enter the space that Schutz provides for them." (*Op. cit.*, p. 8) He also states that "Schutz produces a more or less complex psychologistic perversion of transcendental phenomenology which gives an appearance of 'radicality' to Schutz's idealist individualism." (*Op. cit.*, 15) Unfortunately, María del Carmen López Sáenz retrieves some of Hindess' arguments ("La sociofenomenología de A. Schütz: entre el constructivismo y el realismo", *Papers*, 47, 1995, 70).

³ François-David Sebbah, "Collected Papers 1," in *Alter. Revue de Phénoménologie*, Ner. 1, 1993, 459.

attitude. How to respond to this argument? The answer does not lie in the possibility of establishing how good a phenomenologist Schutz is from an orthodox (e.g. husserlean) point of view,⁴ but in realizing how and in what a personal manner he undertook the phenomenological work. In this regard, reality and mundanity can be understood in a phenomenological manner and, as a matter of fact, Schutz did understand it that way. Accordingly, my claim is that Schutz *is* a phenomenologist, although in his own way, meaning that his realism and mundane perspective do not set him apart from phenomenology, but get him into it in a personal enlightening way.

In the following, I will portray Schutzian phenomenology in its full extent by systematically exposing its various dimensions. I will heavily rely on Schutz's writings although not on one of them in particular. My aim is to portray an overview of his idea of phenomenology. While Schutz spoke of what I will review, he never spoke of it all together. His phenomenological position was established along the years in scattered texts: some more programmatic than others, some in which he spoke for himself, and some in which he commented on Husserl. So even if Schutz has written a considerable amount on the subject, we don't have a final unique text on his position. What I propose, then, is to outline an overview of Schutzian phenomenology. That is, I seek to systematize Schutz's conception of phenomenology, considering that it provides the most solid foundation for a program of social phenomenology.

Phenomenology as "a mere technical device"

Schutz has a technical conception of phenomenology. Even though he doesn't mention it, his stance might be interpreted as counter to Heidegger's since Schutz advocates for a technical interpretation of phenomenology,⁵ aiming to step away from all mystical ideas toward a rigorous methodological conception according to which phenomenology provides resources to deal with evidence based on mundane procedures in the full sense of the term.

In this context, Schutz's claim is that phenomenology does not require any mystical gift but only a scientific and philosophical attitude because, "to the phenomenologist, evidence is not a hidden quality inherent in a specific

⁴ As Cox and Hindess do (see notes 1 and 2).

⁵ As it is well known, Heidegger called to "free ourselves from the technical interpretation of thinking" and to abandon the idea that philosophy has to "justify" its existence by "elevating itself to the rank of a science." (Martin Heidegger, "Letter on 'Humanism.'" in *Pathmarks*, (Cambridge University Press, New York, 1998), 240) "The rigor of thinking, in contrast to that of the sciences, does not consist merely in an artificial, that is, technical-theoretical exactness of concepts. It lies in the fact that saying remains purely in the element of the truth of being and lets the simplicity of its manifold dimensions rule." (*Op. cit.*, 241) It is my opinion that Schutz's idea of phenomenology as regards its method and relation to the sciences is in clear opposition to Heidegger's.

kind of experience, but the possibility of referring derived experiences to an originary one.”⁶

One of the most important devices considered by Schutz is the phenomenological reduction, which, according to him, is a mere technique: “no more than a radicalized renewal of the Cartesian method” consisting in refraining “intentionally and systematically from all judgments related directly or indirectly to the existence of the outer world [...] in order to go beyond the natural attitude of man living within the world.”⁷

This technique consists in an “artificial change from man’s attitude in his daily life toward the world and his belief in it to the attitude of the philosopher, who by this very problem is bound to reject any presupposition that does not stand the test of his critical doubt.”⁸ This switch in attitude makes possible “an investigation within the purified sphere of conscious life, upon which all our beliefs are founded.”⁹

The sphere of conscious life is explored by Schutz in a way that some scholars interpret as an egological reduction. Although he never claimed to be doing so, he actually operates within the egologically reduced sphere, practicing what I will later call “a limited transcendentalism.”

Another main phenomenological technique, which Schutz applies in the reduced sphere (egological and not egological) is the eidetic reduction, which allows the phenomenologist to perform “the task of clarification of a complete system of all intuitively knowable essences.”¹⁰ So eidetic reduction is “no more than another methodological device of investigation,” a mere “methodological device for the solutions of a special task.”¹¹

It is only because of the “misunderstandings” caused by the “unfortunate” metaphysical connotations of terms chosen by Husserl to refer to it that many readers are induced “to identify the ‘essence’ with the Platonic idea” or “the term *Wesensschau*” with some “kind of irrational intuition, like certain techniques of revelation accessible only to the mystic in ecstasy, which is used by the phenomenological esoteric in order to gaze at the eternal truths.”¹²

Once described as mere technical devices, we can take a closer look at the transcendental phenomenological, the egological, and the eidetic reductions and the widespread range of research they open for the phenomenologist.

⁶ Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers I. The Problem of Social Reality*, (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), 104.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers III. Studies in Phenomenological Philosophy*, (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), 49.

¹¹ Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers I. The Problem of Social Reality*, (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), 113-115.

¹² *Ibid.*, 114.

“*Transcendental phenomenological reduction*”

It is usually taken for granted that Schutz is an anti-transcendentalist and that this attitude is the hallmark of his view on Husserl¹³. However, Schutz never rejected *in toto* the transcendental phenomenology but only its last step, when the phenomenological ego turns towards the transcendental ego, the pure, absolute I, out of time and therefore lacking every name.¹⁴ Furthermore, Schutz was for long contemplative with these aspects of Husserl’s work which seemed to him an unnecessary complication, a sterile effort, but not a total mistake.¹⁵ Only in his later years did Schutz radicalize his attitude towards Husserl, focusing on the difficulties and deficiencies of the fifth Cartesian Meditation. But even then he still admitted some aspects of the transcendental phenomenological reduction.¹⁶ What’s more, he saw no contradictions between some of these aspects and worldly phenomenology, given that for transcendental phenomenology, “there is no doubt that the world exists and that it manifests itself in the continuity of harmonious experience as a universe...”¹⁷ Consequently, Schutz argues that this certainty must be made intelligible by proving its relativity “to the transcendental subjectivity which alone has the ontic sense of absolute being.”¹⁸ In doing so, the philosopher must undertake the “*epoché* or transcendental phenomenological reduction”:

“he must deprive the world which formerly, within the natural attitude, was simply posited as being, of just this posited being, and he must return to the living stream of his experiences of the world. In this stream, however, the world is kept exactly

¹³ See, for instance, María del Carmen López Sáenz (“La sociofenomenología de A. Schütz: entre el constructivismo y el realismo,” *Papers*, 47, 1995, 60). Hindess and Sebbah (in the papers quoted before) also highlight this aspect of Schutz’s work. Anyway, to present Schutz as an anti-transcendentalist is not a personal, original contribution but a standard approach taken by many. Probably it is because Schutz’s criticism of Husserlian transcendental phenomenology was so exacting regarding intersubjectivity, that it eclipsed all other aspects. In my paper, I intend to retrieve some of the numerous concessions that Schutz made to transcendental phenomenology, which have been systematically overlooked.

¹⁴ It could be said that Schutz follows Husserl’s lessons in *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time* (Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, 1991) only in what concerns the description of the phenomenological time, not as regards the pure ego.

¹⁵ Schutz appreciated the methodology of transcendental phenomenology as a way to endow phenomenological psychology with rationality (María del Carmen López Sáenz, “La sociofenomenología de A. Schütz: entre el constructivismo y el realismo,” *Papers*, 47, 1995, 58).

¹⁶ I deal with the issue of intersubjectivity in Schutz and his criticisms of Husserl’s fifth Cartesian Meditation in “The Tuning-in Relationship: From a Social Theory of Music Towards a Philosophical Understanding of Intersubjectivity,” in Michael Barber and Jochen Dreher (Eds.) *The Interrelation of Phenomenology, Social Sciences and the Arts* (Switzerland, Springer, 2014).

¹⁷ Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers I. The Problem of Social Reality*, (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), 115.

¹⁸ *Loc. cit.*

with the contents which actually belong to it. With the execution of the *epoché*, [...] what is grasped [...] is the pure life of consciousness in which and through which the whole objective world exists for me, by virtue of the fact that I experience it, perceive it, remember it, etc. In the *epoché*, however, I abstain from belief in the being of this world, and I direct my view exclusively to my consciousness of the world.”¹⁹

What remains once the transcendental reduction has been performed, “is nothing less than the universe of our conscious life, the stream of thought in its integrity, with all its activities and with all its cogitations and experiences.”²⁰ By executing the *epoché*, “I reduce the universe of my conscious life to my own transcendental sphere (*transzendente Eigensphäre*), to my concrete being as a monad.”²¹

Egological reduction

As just seen, the transcendental phenomenological reduction leads to the egological sphere. Even if Schutz chooses to end the reduction in the concrete ego (in the monad, not in the absolute ego, as Husserl does), he operates within the transcendentially reduced sphere. Here I will borrow Lester Embree’s idea that it is the primordial reduction (which Husserl operates within the egological reduced sphere) “that is opposed [by Schutz], but the egological reduction or something like it nevertheless seems assumed.”²² I would say that Schutz practices a kind of “limited transcendentalism,” meaning that he does not follow Husserl’s transcendental reduction all the way through, but only until it discloses the egological sphere, which Schutz conceived as *durée* (in a Bergsonian way), as a pre-reflective transcendent stream of consciousness. I will also endorse Embree’s remark that Schutz assumed that “the ego or I is something that accompanies the stream of consciousness in an inwardly transcendent way and that reflection discloses as always already and identically there.”²³

Thus, Schutz holds to the egologically reduced sphere as the ultimate substratum of all phenomenological enquiries. According to Embree, Schutz even uses the word “egology” in his review of Husserl in the French translation of

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 122-123

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 105.

²¹ *Loc. cit.*

²² Lester Embree, “Dorion Cairns and Alfred Schutz on the Egological Reduction,” in Nasu Hisashi, Lester Embree, George Psathas, and Ilja Srubar (Eds.), *Alfred Schutz and His Intellectual Partners*, (UVK Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, Konstanz, 2009), 211.

²³ Lester Embree, “Some Philosophical Differences within a Friendship: Gurwitsch and Schutz,” in Nasu Hisashi, Lester Embree, George Psathas, Ilja Srubar (Eds.), *Alfred Schutz and His Intellectual Partners*, (UVK Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, Konstanz, 2009), 240.

Méditations Cartésiennes in 1932²⁴. There, having dealt with the primordial reduction, the egological reduction “seems assumed as already performed.”²⁵ Yet again in his unpublished papers of 1936-1937, Schutz speaks of “a transcendental or phenomenologizing *ego*,”²⁶ this time in reference to the self and to “the transcendental Ego”²⁷ reached through “Husserl’s transcendental reduction...”²⁸ Here, Schutz situates his analysis within “the ego after exercise of the phenomenological reduction,”²⁹ and states that “we are not spared from introducing the realm of the transcendental sphere.”³⁰

Also in his paper on William James in 1941, Schutz seems to perform the egological reduction although he does not mention egology: He excludes the topic of intersubjectivity to focus on personal consciousness from the perspective of pure psychology.³¹ Again in his Scheler essay, Schutz seems to operate within the egological reduction.³² The same applies to *Reflections on the Problem of Relevance*, where Schutz relies on the egological reduction.³³

Thus, there is plenty of evidence that Schutz considered egology a main aspect of his phenomenology, whether he mentioned it or not. The transcendently reduced egological sphere becomes then a fertile field of research.

Eidetic reduction

Once the egological reduction has been performed, the phenomenologist “aims at dealing with the eidetic of the transcendently purified consciousness, with the pure Ego.”³⁴ To that purpose, he may “perform the transition to the eidetic attitude, abstracting from the existential positing of actual experience and moving in free arbitrariness in the realm of ‘empty possibilities.’”³⁵

²⁴ Lester Embree, “Dorion Cairns and Alfred Schutz on the Egological Reduction”, in: Nasu Hisashi, Lester Embree, George Psathas, Ilja Srubar (Eds.), *Alfred Schutz and his intellectual partners*, UVK Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, Konstanz, 2009, 181.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 183.

²⁶ Alfred Schutz, “The Problem of Personality in the Social World,” *Collected Papers VI. Literary Reality and Relationships*. (Dordrecht / Heidelberg / New York / London, 2013 [orig. 1936/1937]), 211.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 233.

²⁸ *Loc. Cit.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 252.

³⁰ *Loc. Cit.*

³¹ Lester Embree, “Dorion Cairns and Alfred Schutz on the Egological Reduction,” in NASU Hisashi, Lester Embree, George Psathas, and Ilja Srubar (Eds.), *Alfred Schutz and His Intellectual Partners*, (UVK Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, Konstanz, 2009), 204-205.

³² *Ibid.*, 206.

³³ *Ibid.*, 209.

³⁴ Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers III. Studies in Phenomenological Philosophy*, (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), 46.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 43.

That is, the phenomenologist “may perform the ‘eidetic reduction,’ discarding all questions as to the actual unities of consciousness, and turn to the *eidos* of perception, the eternally identical meaning of possible perceptions in general.”³⁶ He can do the same

“with respect to recollections, phantasies, expectations, cognitive, emotional, volitive experiences of any kind. Directed toward the essences in eidetic-intuitive apprehension, the full contents of these experiences and their intentional correlates, such as they are given to psychological experience are fully preserved in the *eidos*.”³⁷

In the eidetic attitude, as a phenomenologist, I am free “to transform this perceived object in my fancy, by successively varying its features.”³⁸ In whatever way I transform “the ‘Gestalt’ of the thing in free phantasy,” vary its qualitative determinations, or change its real properties, all these products of my phantasy “still show particular regularities.”³⁹ I may imagine an infinite number of variations, but they “do not touch on a set of characteristics” which remain “unchanged among all the imagined transformations”: its “kernel” or *eidos*.⁴⁰ “Thus eidetic investigations do not deal with concrete real things but with possibly imaginable things,” and “the latter are of even greater importance for the phenomenological approach” than the former.⁴¹

Eidetic investigations not only have to be pursued in order to account for things but also for the psyche, given that the phenomenological reduction “makes accessible the stream of consciousness in itself as a realm of its own in its absolutely unique nature,” which can be experienced and whose “inner structure” can be described.⁴² Phenomenological psychology is the aprioristic science which must carry out this task and deal with “the ‘Eidos,’ with the essence of thoughts.”⁴³ Schutz conceives it as a “*psychology of intentionality*” and “a *constitutive phenomenology of the natural attitude*” which must be undertaken as an eidetic mundane science.⁴⁴

³⁶ Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers I. The Problem of Social Reality*, (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), 44.

³⁷ *Loc. cit.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 114.

³⁹ Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers III. Studies in Phenomenological Philosophy*, (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), 43.

⁴⁰ Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers I. The Problem of Social Reality*, (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), 114.

⁴¹ *Loc. cit.*

⁴² Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers III. Studies in Phenomenological Philosophy*, (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), 5-6.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴⁴ Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers I. The Problem of Social Reality*, (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), 132.

Phenomenological psychology

Phenomenological psychology, in Schutz's view, is a science which must be pursued in two different levels, rational and descriptive. In the first place, rational psychology, as a phenomenological "eidetic science of the realm of the psyche,"⁴⁵ does not deal with empirical facts but with "the correlates of those transcendental constitutional phenomena which are related to the natural attitude. Consequently, it has to examine the invariant, peculiar, and essential structures of the mind" (i.e., their *a priori* structures),⁴⁶ and, based on them, "the aprioristic structures of the social sciences" by means of intentional analysis.⁴⁷ In the second place, descriptive psychology deals with "the concrete description of the spheres of consciousness [...] within the natural attitude."⁴⁸ It consists in

"the description of a closed sphere of the intentionalities [...], which] requires not only a concrete description of the experiences of consciousness [...] but also necessarily the description of the conscious (intentional) 'objects in their objective sense' found in active inner experiences."⁴⁹

Briefly, phenomenological psychology is not only an eidetic but also a descriptive science.⁵⁰ Thus, to a certain extent, phenomenological psychology is a "positive" science promoted in the 'natural attitude' with the world before it as the basis for all its themes."⁵¹ It is a science of the conception of the world valid for "the naively living human being."⁵²

Phenomenological psychology and transcendental reduction

Phenomenological psychology is pursued in the constitutional process in the inner time consciousness within the phenomenological reduction, but only insofar as it is needed in order to clearly understand the inner time

⁴⁵ Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers III. Studies in Phenomenological Philosophy*, (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), 44.

⁴⁶ Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers I. The Problem of Social Reality*, (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), 132.

⁴⁷ Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers. Volume IV. Phaenomenologica 136*, (Dordrecht / Boston / London, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1996), 164.

⁴⁸ Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers I. The Problem of Social Reality*, (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), 132.

⁴⁹ *Loc. cit.*

⁵⁰ Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers III. Studies in Phenomenological Philosophy*, (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), 7.

⁵¹ *Loc. cit.*

⁵² Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers I. The Problem of Social Reality*, (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), 127.

consciousness.⁵³ Once we understand the problem of the inner development of the inner time field by means of the eidetic reduction, we will then be able to safely apply our conclusions to phenomena of the natural attitude, on one condition: that we stay as phenomenological psychologists, in the realm of the inner appearance as the manifestation of what is peculiar to the psychic. Even so, Schutz does not propose a science of facts in this internal realm of appearance but a science of essences in search of the invariably unique a priori structure of the mind.⁵⁴ However, no revisions of the conclusions regarding inner time need to be made in order to apply them to the realm of ordinary life since every analysis made in the phenomenological reduction is also valid within the psychological introspection, therefore within the natural attitude.⁵⁵ Accordingly,

“the transcendental reduction is important for phenomenological descriptive psychology not only because it reveals the stream of consciousness and its features in their purity, but, above all, because some very important structures of consciousness can be made visible only within this reduced sphere. Since to each empirical determination within the phenomenological reduction there necessarily corresponds a parallel feature within the natural sphere and vice versa, we can always turn back to the natural attitude and there make use of all the insights we have won within the reduced sphere.”⁵⁶

Henceforth, for Schutz, counter to what Husserl holds, the transcendental attitude must be reconducted to the natural attitude, and not the other way around.

⁵³ Alfred Schutz, *La construcción significativa del mundo social. Introducción a la sociología comprensiva* (Spanish translation of *Der sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt*), (Barcelona, Paidós, 1993), 73.

⁵⁴ *Loc. cit.*

⁵⁵ *Loc. cit.* It can be said that Schutz interpreted “Husserl’s transcendental findings as phenomenological psychological.” (Lester Embree, “The Nature and Role of Phenomenological Psychology in Alfred Schutz,” *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 39, 2008, 145)

⁵⁶ Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers III. Studies in Phenomenological Philosophy*, (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), 6. This parallelism aims to fluently articulate scientific research and phenomenology rather than clearly separate them like Thomas Luckmann does with his idea of a “parallel action”: “Luckmann draws a division line between phenomenology and sociology; for him phenomenology is philosophy and sociology is science. The perspective of phenomenology is egological, that of science cosmological; the method of phenomenology is reflective, that of social science inductive. Therefore, the aim of phenomenology is to describe the universal structures of subjective orientation in the world, whereas science aims at explaining the general features of the objective world.” (Jochen Dreher, “Investigating Friendship: A Prospective Dispute between Protosociology and Phenomenological Sociology,” in NASU Hisashi and Frances Chaput Waksler (Eds.), *Interaction and Everyday Life. Phenomenological and Ethnomethodological Essays in Honor of George Psathas*, (Lanham, Lexington Books, 2012))

Transcendental and mundane phenomenology

As I said before, even if Schutz has been very critical of some results of transcendental phenomenology, particularly of its unsuccessful attempts to account for intersubjectivity, he did not reject it in full. An attentive reading of his reviews of Husserl's works on the subject will illustrate to what extent he considered it as a legitimate task.

According to the Schutzian reading of Husserl, phenomenological philosophy "is an approach to the questions hitherto called metaphysical"⁵⁷ based on the explanation of the activities of the transcendental ego.⁵⁸ These issues, related to the foundations of phenomenological philosophy, are only set aside by Schutz because he believes "that under the present circumstances American scholars may be much more interested in the methods and results of phenomenological psychology."⁵⁹ That is, Schutz does not object to transcendental philosophy in principle but only for the sake of convenience, aiming to address "widespread misunderstandings" of transcendental phenomenology such as the idea that it "denies the actual existence of the real life-world, or that it explains it as mere illusion by which natural or positive scientific thought lets itself be deceived."⁶⁰

In this context, Schutz considered that the fact that many of Husserl's analyses were carried out in the phenomenologically reduced sphere and that the problems dealt with become visible only after this reduction is performed, does not impair the validity of their results within the realm of the natural attitude.⁶¹ In Schutz's view, "Husserl himself has established once and for all the principle that analyses made in the reduced sphere are valid also for the realm of the natural attitude."⁶² Furthermore, he was confident that, since to each empirical determination within the mundane sphere there necessarily corresponds a feature within the aprioristically reduced sphere, "all our discoveries within the reduced sphere will stand the test also in the mundane sphere of our life within the world."⁶³

This confidence that "all analyses carried through in phenomenological reduction essentially retain their validation" in the mundane sphere sets the basis of an eidetic mundane science as a "psychological apperception of the natural attitude," which "stands at the beginning of all methodological and

⁵⁷ Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers III. Studies in Phenomenological Philosophy*, (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), 115-116.

⁵⁸ Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers I. The Problem of Social Reality*, (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), 113-115, 115.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 115-116.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 123.

⁶¹ Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers I. The Problem of Social Reality*, (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), 149.

⁶² *Loc. cit.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 104.

theoretical scientific problems of all the cultural and social sciences.”⁶⁴ According to Schutz, here lies “the tremendous significance of the results achieved by Husserl for all the cultural sciences.”⁶⁵

Indeed, the transcendental phenomenological reduction discloses a “universe of the experiencing life of the transcendental subjectivity” where a philosopher of the “I” finds his “entire cogitations of the life-world” which surrounds him, a life-world to which also belong his “life with others and its pertinent community-forming processes, which actively and passively shape this life-world into a social world.”⁶⁶ These experiences, which are found in the conscious life of the transcendental subjectivity, are either “originarily giving and primally founding experiences of this life-world,” or experiences that “can be examined concerning the history of their sedimentation” by returning “to the originary experience of the life-world in which the facts themselves can be grasped directly.”⁶⁷

As just said, the life-world, “which may only be constituted by the activities of my transcendental subjectivity, is certainly not my private world”⁶⁸:

“The world which is experienced after the completion of the reduction to my pure life of consciousness is an intersubjective world, and that means that it is accessible to everyone. All cultural objects [...] point back, by their origin and meaning, to other subjects and to their active constitutive intentionalities, and thus it is true that they are experienced in the sense of ‘existing there for everybody.’”⁶⁹

Consequently, Schutz considers that “the wealth of his analyses pertinent to problems of the *Lebenswelt*” is “Husserl’s signal contribution to the social sciences.”⁷⁰

The Sciences and Phenomenological Ontology

Phenomenology is significant not only for the social and cultural sciences, but for all kinds of sciences. Schutz claims that “the results of phenomenological research cannot and must not clash with the tested results of the mundane sciences, or even with the proved doctrines of so-called philosophies of the sciences.”⁷¹ He mentions two good reasons for this.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 132.

⁶⁵ *Loc. cit.* On Schutz and the cultural sciences, see Lester Embree, *Schutzian Theory of Cultural Science*, forthcoming.

⁶⁶ Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers I. The Problem of Social Reality*, (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), 123.

⁶⁷ *Loc. cit.*

⁶⁸ *Loc. cit.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 123-124.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 149.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 115.

On the one hand, the method of empirical sciences leans on phenomenological ontology because it is “determined or at least co-determined by the general essential structure of the realm of reality to which these sciences refer.”⁷² Thus, “the examination of this structure as to its constitution in pure intuition” should lead to “an ontology of this particular realm.”⁷³ Consequently, ontology should refer to “the various regions of objectivities and to the methods which any empirical science dealing with facts belonging to these regions has to observe.”⁷⁴ Therefore, “there must *a priori* exist as many ontologies as there are regional concepts and, consequently, all radical classifications of the sciences depend upon the concept of the ‘region’ [...] and its essence which can be disclosed by noematic intuition.”⁷⁵ This is, then, one reason why phenomenological research cannot clash with mundane sciences: Because it co-determines (by saying the least) the *eidōs* of the objects which mundane sciences take for granted.

On the other hand, this clash is impossible because “the clarification of the ontologies has to precede that of the pertinent empirical sciences.”⁷⁶ Accordingly, Schutz considers that “it is the ideal of phenomenology to establish a complete realm of fully clarified ideas, that is, a complete system of all intuitively knowable essences”⁷⁷ by means of the eidetic analysis both in the mundane and the reduced sphere.⁷⁸ Such a clarification of ideas is to be found in the “original method” of the eidetic investigation, which “opens the way to a scientific ontology.”⁷⁹ Indeed, “only by the eidetical method may we [...] discover and describe the important relationship of foundation which subsists between certain ontological realms.”⁸⁰ This is why Schutz, in a Husserlian spirit, states that “phenomenology has its field of research in its own right, and hopes to end where the others begin.”⁸¹

As a consequence, the relation of phenomenology to the social sciences cannot be demonstrated by merely “analyzing concrete problems of sociology or economics [...] with phenomenological methods,”⁸² among other reasons because there are questions that cannot be answered by the methods of the social sciences but require a philosophical analysis⁸³ since the discoveries of all empirical sciences “take place within the frame of an *a priori*, which cannot

⁷² Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers III. Studies in Phenomenological Philosophy*, (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), 42.

⁷³ *Loc. cit.*

⁷⁴ *Loc. cit.*

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 42-43.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 48.

⁷⁷ *Loc. cit.*

⁷⁸ Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers I. The Problem of Social Reality*, (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), 113.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 115.

⁸⁰ *Loc. cit.*

⁸¹ *Loc. cit.*

⁸² *Ibid.*, 116.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 117.

be grasped by the dogmatic empirical sciences but is accessible to the eidetic methods of phenomenology.”⁸⁴ So even if phenomenological methods can be “applied with the greatest success within the empirical sphere [...] only by recourse to the eidetical sphere can the aprioristic character of phenomenology as a *prima philosophia* and even as a phenomenological psychology be assured.”⁸⁵

It’s important to notice that, while Schutz admitted the legitimacy of first philosophy, his work was mainly devoted to technical problems posed by the sciences. However, he dealt with some main objects of *prima philosophia*, such as “reality” —a main concern in many of his writings.⁸⁶ In his latest years, he also addressed the *humana conditio* based on philosophical anthropology. However, some of the central issues of first philosophy remained undiscussed. Especially important is the question of givenness, which is the basis of his position on intersubjectivity⁸⁷ and of what some consider a “given ontology” of everyday life-world.⁸⁸ Probably Schutz intended to address these kinds of matters in the future, since he was increasingly interested in fundamental and transcendent questions regarding the human condition. Unfortunately he did not make it explicit, so the question remains open to interpretation.

On absolute certainty: an epilogue on naturalized phenomenology

To summarize, we can say that, for Schutz, phenomenology is a technical task consisting in the clarification of sense and meaning structures of the natural attitude, both in its noematic and noetic poles. This duty can be undertaken in three different levels: transcendental, eidetic, and empirical. This means that, although transcendental phenomenology is a “legitimate task” for philosophy, it is not needed in empirical sciences because they are not founded on transcendental philosophy but in everyday thinking and acting.⁸⁹

Consequently, empirical sciences are based on the life-world and not on any particular philosophy. Of course it is possible to undertake a philosophical exploration of the life-world, but this “paramount reality” is open to very

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 113.

⁸⁵ *Loc. cit.*

⁸⁶ I deal with this question in detail in “El problema de la ‘realidad’ en el marco de la influencia hispánica en la obra de Alfred Schutz,” *Investigaciones fenomenológicas*, vol. Monográfico 4/II, 2013, 245-277.

⁸⁷ This is my claim in “The Tuning-in Relationship: From a Social Theory of Music Towards a Philosophical Understanding of Intersubjectivity,” in Michael Barber and Jochen Dreher (Eds.), *The Interrelation of Phenomenology, Social Sciences and the Arts*, (Switzerland, Springer, 2014).

⁸⁸ María del Carmen López Saenz, “La sociofenomenología de A. Schütz: entre el constructivismo y el realismo,” *Papers*, 47, 1995, 71

⁸⁹ YU Chung-Chi, “On Schutz’s Way of Doing Phenomenology: The Phenomenological Psychology of Husserl as a Clue”, in CHEUNG Chan-Fai and YU Chung-Chi (Eds.), *Phenomenology 2005*, Vol. I, *Selected Essays from Asia*, (Bucharest, Zeta Books, 2007), 760.

different approaches. For instance, it is accessible to a psychology of the natural attitude and even (in some of Schutz's latest writings) to a psychiatry of the "normal natural attitude."⁹⁰ Accordingly, transcendental phenomenology is just one of many different possible explorations of the life-world. This explains why "Schutz felt no need in his own investigations for transcendental reduction and considered 'phenomenological psychology' or 'constitutive phenomenology of the natural attitude' sufficient for his purposes."⁹¹

In this regard, we can see in Schutz a non-cognitivist naturalization of phenomenology which makes his stance amazingly current. At a time when writers like Gallagher, Zahavi, and others have achieved great success discoursing on this matter, the productiveness of the Schutzian perspective has not yet been fully noticed, perhaps because it challenges the very premises of the cognitivist approach by rejecting scientificist rationalism and going way beyond intellectualist approaches to intersubjectivity.

In addition, Schutz conceives his naturalist program between two stools: on the one hand, orthodox phenomenologists, who saw nothing deep or lasting in the natural attitude; on the other hand, the capitulation to objectivist naturalist scientism and positivist science, reluctant to any *sui generis* manifestation of the life of spirit (*Geist*). This Solomonic position is adequately described by Steven Vaitkus, who distinguishes Schutz's natural attitude of those assumed by the average phenomenologist and by the natural scientist. Most phenomenologists (in particular, philosophical phenomenologists) consider the natural attitude "as merely a first methodological level or step on the way towards much deeper phenomenological analyses."⁹² And most natural scientists take "naturalness" or "naturalism" as related to their own empirical sciences. For Schutz, instead, naturalness "is not to be confused with any sort of naturalism or concept of nature from the natural sciences, but is to be understood in a much deeper lived sense and precisely in relationship to the above potentially developing direction taken by transcendental phenomenology."⁹³ What Schutz conceived as "naturalism" is the description of the constitutive mechanism of our natural attitude to the life-world. He considered that "the notions of life-world and natural attitude are inseparably bound up together"⁹⁴ because the natural attitude is worldly oriented.

⁹⁰ See "Language, language disturbances, and the texture of consciousness," in Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers I. The Problem of Social Reality*, (The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1967), 260-286.

⁹¹ Lester Embree, "Dorion Cairns and Alfred Schutz on the Egoological Reduction," in NASU Hisashi, Lester Embree, George Psathas, and Ilja Srubar (Eds.), *Alfred Schutz and His Intellectual Partners*, (UVK Verlagsgesellschaft mbH, Konstanz, 2009), 184.

⁹² Steven Vaitkus, "The 'Naturalness' of Alfred Schutz's Natural Attitude of the Life-World," in NASU Hisashi, Lester Embree, George Psathas, and Ilja Srubar (Eds.), *Explorations of the Life-world. Continuing Dialogues with Alfred Schutz*, (Springer, Dordrecht, 2005), 98.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 104.

⁹⁴ YU Chung-Chi, "On Schutz's Way of Doing Phenomenology: The Phenomenological Psychology of Husserl as a Clue," in CHEUNG Chan-Fai and YU Chung-Chi (Eds.), *Phenomenology 2005*, Vol. I, *Selected Essays from Asia*, (Bucharest, Zeta Books, 2007), 761.

In consequence, the phenomenologist, as well as the layman and the scientist, take as the starting point the world in which they live, act, and think. We may say, then, that the life-world is the alpha and the omega for any kind of activity: acting and practical thinking, eidetic and empirical sciences, and transcendental philosophy. No matter what the goal of our reflection is, we should always start by, and end getting back to, the life-world as the ground of all certainty. Therefore, unlike Husserl, Schutz finds the certainty in the universal structures of our mind and the anthropological invariable features of the life-world, not in the transcendental sphere.

This change of perspective produces not only a methodological redefinition whereby the constitutive phenomenology of the natural attitude partially substitutes transcendental phenomenology, but also a renewal of the ontology of the life-world which is no longer seen as merely relative but as endowed with universal and eidetic features that give it a dimension of necessity. Of course, we speak here of mundane (not transcendental) certainty, anchored in the natural attitude, which bestows the Schutzian conception of the life-world with unparalleled originality.

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