



HUSSERL AND SCHUTZ ON CULTURAL OBJECTS

HUSSERL Y SCHUTZ ACERCA DE LOS OBJETOS CULTURALES

Chung-Chi YU

National Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan
ccyuster@gmail.com

Abstract: Lester Embree is very concerned with the issue of culture in his philosophical thinking. Besides his preoccupation with the cultural disciplines,¹ he explores the notions of culture in Schutz and Gurwitsch.² He even brings up the term "phenomenology of culture."³ With inspirations from Embree, the present paper intends to explore culture as a phenomenological theme. Starting with elaboration on the concept of cultural object in both Husserl and Schutz, the paper focuses on the question of cultural difference and universalism. I contend that despite apparent differences between Schutz and Husserl, there is close positioning between them. In the final part of my paper, I make a deeper reflection on the problem of cultural difference.

Keywords: Culture. Phenomenology of culture. Cultural object. Cultural difference. Universalism. Husserl. Schutz.

Resumen: Lester Embree está muy preocupado con el tema de la cultura en su pensamiento filosófico. Además de su preocupación por las disciplinas culturales, explora las nociones de cultura en Schutz y Gurwitsch. Incluso menciona el término "fenomenología de la cultura". Con inspiraciones de Embree, el presente documento pretende explorar la cultura como un tema fenomenológico. Comenzando con la elaboración del concepto de objeto cultural tanto en Husserl como en Schutz, el artículo se centra en la cuestión de la diferencia cultural y el universalismo. Sostengo que a pesar de las aparentes diferencias entre Schutz y Husserl, existe un posicionamiento cercano entre ellos. En la parte final de mi trabajo, hago una reflexión más profunda sobre el problema de la diferencia cultural.

Palabras clave: Fenomenología de la cultura. Objeto cultural. Diferencia cultural. Universalismo. Husserl. Schutz.

¹ Embree, Lester, "Reflection on the Cultural Disciplines", in M. Daniel / L. Embree (eds.), *Phenomenology of Cultural Disciplines*, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1994, pp. 1-37.

² Embree, Lester, "Schutz's Phenomenology of the Practical World", in *Alfred Schütz: Neue Beiträge zur Rezeption seines Werkes*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988, pp. 121-144; "A Gurwitschean Model for Explaining Culture or How to Use an Atlatl", in J. C. Evans / R. W. Stufflebean (eds.), *To Work at the Foundations*, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, pp. 141-171.

³ Embree, Lester, "American ethnophobia, e.g., Irish-American, in phenomenological perspective", *Human Studies*, Vol. 20, 2 (1997) 271-286; cf. pp. 276f.

I

What are cultural objects? Obviously, they are distinguished from natural objects that lie in the causal relations of nature. Cultural objects, namely, belong to the cultural dimension that human beings create. Cultural objects are historical, and most of all, spiritual, so long as they result from the creative activities of human beings. However, cultural objects are also real objects, as they belong to material realities. They are spiritually created, yet materially based. The dual aspects of cultural objects permit us to view them in two different ways. Either we see them as the realities, the real things in the causal connections, or we see exclusively the ideal aspect of them, treating them as ideal objects (Hua IX, 400f). Both ways of treating cultural objects are misleading, however, because the first sees only the natural side, whereas the second sees only the spiritual aspect. Cultural objects are something in-between—they are corporeal–spiritual objects (*körperlich-geistige Gegenständlichkeit*) (*ib.* 111). Differently formulated, they comprise two layers: the “*sinnliche Unterlage*” and the “*aufgestufte Kultur-Bedeutung*.” Both the *sinnliche* and the *außersinnliche* aspects are equally essential (*ib.* 404).

The first component of cultural objects can be reached as a result of abstraction of concrete cultural meaning. The cultural objects can thus become pure reality (*ib.* 118). This is a result of dismissal of their spiritual, mental aspects—that is, so long as the original spiritual (*das Urgeistige*) is ignored. We thus see only the pure physical things, not to mention the *res extensa* proposed by Descartes (*ib.* 380).

Husserl suggests interpreting both layers of the *sinnliche Unterlage*, as well as the *aufgestufte Kultur-Bedeutung*, with the help of the distinction between real physical units (*reale physische Einheit*), which are temporally individualized, and the unreal, ideal unit of significance (*irreale, ideale Einheit von Bedeutungen*) (*ib.* 398). This distinction is well known since his early major work, *Logical Investigations*.

The latter can be incorporated by different material medium. For example, the same mathematic theorem can be printed in different books and with different colors of printouts (*ib.* 400, 503); a musical melody can be played by different musical instruments, be it flute or piano, and it can also be recorded by a recorder of whatever kind, be it analog or digital.

The unreal, ideal unit of significance can be repeated in different embodiments, because it constitutes the essential, identical part of cultural objects. Yet we should not overemphasize such ideal aspects of cultural objects, because without embodiment cultural objects lose the essential characteristics of cultural objects. The real, physical aspect of cultural objects should never be sacrificed as long as cultural objects are also objects existing in the space-time world in terms of causal determinations. Defined by Husserl as the mind on objects in the surrounding world (*eine Seele an umweltlichen Gegenstände*) (*ib.* 229), culture is what it is only when related both to the subjective and the natural aspects, which constitutes the in-between of subject and object or the in-between of spirit and nature. As a consequence, cultural objects possess both the *sinnlicher Leib* and *besonderer Sinn*, and they never lose their character as worldly objects (*Weltobject*) (*ib.* 502).

II

Cultural objects result from production—and production is done for the sake of certain purposes. That is to say, cultural objects always serve some particular ends. The original meaning of cultural objects can be traced back to the activities of creative subjects, who intend the meaning and purpose of these objects and express their meaning through production or creation⁴. The users or beholders can comprehend such a meaning. Taking a weapon as an example, Husserl points out that the purpose of the weapon that is expressed by the intentionality of the producers can be captured by the warriors, for whom the weapon serves as an instrument for fighting (Hua IX, 113f/Scanlon, 86). This example shows that cultural objects are not only meaningful to the producers, but always located in a web of social relations, that is, a certain cultural group that serves as the background of cultural objects as products.

⁴ In regard to the origin of cultural sense, Molly Frigid Flynn explains, "Understanding cultural objects, including words, requires, first, the recognizing the living body's fullness-of-soul, and second, noticing how its spirituality spreads to things involved in the body's movement". (Molly Frigid Flynn, "The Living Body as the Origin of Culture: What the Shift in Husserl's Notion of 'Expression' tells us About Cultural Objects", *Husserl Studies*, Vol. 25, 1 (2009), pp. 73f). She also points out that "[...] all cultural sense begins here. The spirit of the person, which animates the person's living body, animates also things in the world by way of the person's bodily involvement with them" (*ibid.*, p. 73). Flynn stresses that, evoking the spirit, the human body serves as the origin of the cultural sense by involvement of the cultural objects without mentioning either producing them or utilizing them. One wonders whether the human body can have the same involvement with the natural object. If this is the case, then we can hardly tell the difference between cultural objects and natural objects; that is to say, the specificity of cultural sense is lost.

Beyond that, cultural objects, in particular the useful ones, are produced and comprehended as objects of a certain type. In accordance with purpose–meaning (*Zwecksinn*), they serve as instruments to this purpose. Therefore, any object that fulfills the same purpose can be treated as cultural objects of the same type. For example, an arrow is regarded as an arrow in terms of the type of arrow; the individuality of an arrow does not play any role at all (Hua IX, 117).

As mentioned above, cultural objects have the cultural significance that is determined as “*außersinnlicher Charakter*”. Such characteristics cannot be explained through natural properties, but only through cultural sense. However, such cultural sense is always different from culture to culture, which means that the cultural significance of cultural objects cannot claim to appropriate universal validity. It is rather restricted to its own circle. Husserl gives the following example:

Even though Bantu people (or any people who have no “access” to our world) treat us as persons and experience us as subjects who actually or possibly have mutual understanding with them, they nevertheless do not experience us as Europeans, as scientists, in particular mathematician, geographers etc. or as employees, engineers, landlords, young nobles etc.–to sum up, we as what we actually are [...] The Bantu people seem to “see” our “parks”, our houses, churches among other things, these things are in their eyes spatial objects, and some of them seem to be characterized as buildings or gardens. However, there is difference. As regards the space-time determinations, the pure nature, there must be some commonness, nevertheless when the question is related to the reason why those buildings are constructed in that manner, relevantly, when the question is related to the aesthetic or practical “meaning”, then it is beyond the comprehension of the Bantu people. (*Ib.* 498)

There is a cultural gestalt (*Kulturgestalt*) in every cultural circle (*ib.* 491), just like every single person is characterized by his life–gestalt (*Lebensgestalt*) (*ib.* 489). The cultural world is a historical world. Cultural objects have historicity, which points to the living sphere of a certain cultural group. The cultural world is a world in which people share some common norms of actions and styles of perceptions, which facilitate their mutual understanding of each other. The people outside of this cultural circle, however, do not share these norms and styles. Viewed by insiders, for example Europeans, the Bantu people from Africa are outsiders; they have difficulty seeing the cultural significance of European

cultural objects. The cultural significance of the cultural objects belonging to Europeans is so to speak only limited to the Europeans.

In a word, cultural objects imply cultural difference (*ib.* 497), and every cultural world is more or less enclosed in itself. As Husserl sees it, the *personale Eidetik* is the discipline that deals with the essential characteristics of every culture, which involves the stable form of intentionality prevalent in the cultural group. It studies how the lifeworld of a cultural group is constituted. According to Husserl, every particular culture is related to a certain kind of humanness (*Menschentum*), which generates a sort of noetic *a priori* (*noetisches Apriori*) in the cultural group (Hua IX, 500). This specific form of humanness can be transmitted from generation to generation and helps shape or substantiate the tradition of this culture. A certain sociocultural group is thus a historical unity and this particular style of humanness is developing toward a specific "personality", which lays ground for mutual communication between people of the same group. In general the cultural objects play pivotal roles in such communication because they function as the medium of their mutual understanding.

III

The cultural world of a certain cultural group makes up what Husserl later calls "homeworld" (*Heimwelt*), in contrast to alienworld (*Fremdwelt*) (Hua XV, 214, 219, 431f). The notion of homeworld, scattered around in *Intersubjektivität* Band III (Husserliana XV), indicates the normal lifeworld of the "homecomrades". The normality is the result of tradition, which formulates itself from generation to generation. The generality (*Generalität*) is the key notion in the Husserlian descriptions, both of homeworld and alienworld. The alienworld is thus understood as the world with which the homecomrades have no common tradition, i.e., any common forerunners through the generations. Because tradition and history shape cultural characteristics, the differences between homeworld and alienworld can be viewed as the differences in culture.

Now Husserl raises the question: Are cultural difference to be surpassed or overcome? Is there not the common core for both the homeworld and alienworld? (Hua IX, 498).

Husserl seems to be optimistic by introducing the idea of the one world (*die eine Welt*⁵) and suggesting there has to be a commonly recognizable core accessible to all people regardless of cultural backgrounds.

So long as we have lots of facts about the many real worlds in relation to the personal communities we encounter the following difficulties, is there still an objective world along with different worlds? Let us look at the question in accordance with the consciousness, are people from whatever communities unable to understand each other? Do they not share the identical world? Is there not this same sun, star, earth etc.? With the same clarity, when people argue with each other, no matter which culture they belong to, they become persons for each other, and they all belong to the object-world (*Objektwelt*), for them there exists the universal world for all human beings. At the same time, as mentioned above, it continues to exist naturally.⁶ (*Ib.* 380)

But one might wonder, what makes up the contents of such a common ground for all cultural worlds? Is it still a world of culture? Husserl seems to deny that by saying:

The experiential world is concrete; it is given in original perception. But if it is accessible to all people in accordance with perception, it refers to nature. (*Ib.* 380)

So long as the common ground is deprived of cultural sense, it seems to denote the world of nature—but is it the world of pure nature? Does what Husserl mean by nature in such a context denote the nature seen through the eyes of the natural scientists? Obviously he denies it. Husserl rejects the idea that the common core is a world irrelevant to the subjects, as he points out definitely that the nature in the lifeworld is not the nature in natural science (*ib.* 401).

What, then, is such a common core? What does Husserl refer to when he says that what is common to all possible worlds is the natural world, the world

⁵ According to Klaus Held's interpretation, this "one world" is constituted in the same way as the intersubjectivity illuminated in the Cartesian Meditations V. Just like the other subject (*alter ego*) is to be recognized through his body, especially through the similarity of his body and that of mine, so is the forerunner of the other cultural world recognizable through the basic human phenomena like birth and death. The experience of generality creates so to speak the bridge between culture and culture. Cf. Klaus Held, "Heimwelt, Fremdwelt, die eine Welt", in Ernst Wolfgang Orth (ed.), *Perspektiven und Probleme der Husserlschen Phänomenologie*, Freiburg/München: K. Alber, 1991.

⁶ Hua IX: 380; also cf. Hua XV: 632, where Husserl says, "For all that, no matter how foreign, there is commonality, earth and heaven, day and night, stones and trees, mountain and valley, diverse animals—everything that can be grasped analogically in the most general type, albeit as strange" (citation from Dermot Moran, "Even the Papuan is a Man and not a Beast: Husserl on Universalism and the Relativity of Cultures", *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 49, 4 (2011) 463-494).

devoid of cultural sense? In such a context, Husserl brings up the natural world concept (*natürlicher Weltbegriff*), to which he says,

The natural world-concept is the structure of identity that is valid for all the people throughout all the various surrounding worlds. (*Ib.* 493)

It is a concrete world that can be experienced in their reality, and ultimately given in their original perception (*ib.* 380). Two closely related concepts—the personalistic attitude (*personale Einstellung*) and the experiential world (*Erfahrungswelt*)—will help clarify the natural world-concept and should be elaborated next.

The personalistic attitude is the attitude that the human being assumes when dealing with things in the surrounding world. This attitude denotes interest in the meaning and value of things, and in this attitude,

my body is [...] given for me in the surrounding world as the center of the rest of the surrounding world, as a spatial thing of the surrounding world with somatic properties, in which I hold sway, and even as that by which I exercise an influence upon the rest of the surrounding world, etc. (*Ib.* 228/Scanlon, 175)

This attitude is definitely different from the naturalistic attitude, which exclusively has interest in the pure nature that is deprived of value and meaning. For Husserl the surrounding world is related to the personalistic attitude and the pure nature results from the privation of personalistic attitude (Hua IV, 185). Originally, the world is never independent of our experiences. The items we encounter are never just natural things, but always involving significations beyond pure nature, not to mention the persons we encounter. As a person I am living in the world with all these things and other persons. It is the sociocultural science that deals with the personal subject living in his surrounding, cultural world (Hua XXVII, 211). In such a situation, the things around him are significant (*bedeutsam*) (Hua IX, 111/Scanlon, 84). Husserl even notifies that between the personal subject and his objects there is intertwining relationship (Hua IX, 226/Scanlon, 173).

Viewed as such, the eidetic description of the personalistic attitude can provide us with an appropriate approach to understand the world that is common to all people regardless of cultural difference. Husserl calls a study of this world “the eidetic study of the world of natural experience” (*die Eidetik der natürlichen*

Erfahrungswelt) (Hua IX, 225). As long as this science aims at describing the a priori of the experiential world, it is close to phenomenological psychology and a most general science of the world (*eine allgemeinste Weltwissenschaft*) (*ib.*).

Phenomenological psychology, the universal science of the world or “the eidetic study of the world of natural experience”, are all to be characterized as a *priori*, eidetic, intuitive, descriptive, and intentional. In addition to that, it remains in the natural attitude instead of assuming transcendental attitude. A *priori* implies that between subject and world there is a universal structure that is revealed through constant styles and types. Such a *priori*, universal structures make up the presuppositions of daily life. Yet these presuppositions are not aware of. Even the subject that is involved does not pay attention to them, either. In daily life people have their preoccupations with all kinds of matters that concern their living. One needs to step back in order to get in touch with these presuppositions, as well as the subject that has been constantly co-functioning. What is hinted at is none other than what Husserl means by phenomenological reduction.

Through reduction we become aware of the presuppositions of daily life and come in touch with the experiential world, which Husserl explains:

By the title “experiential world” we mean clearly what makes up the unity of concordant total actuality which is continually reestablished in the course of our experiences. (Hua IX, 59/Scanlon, 44)

The world is a world related to the subject, not just the world of pure nature, as already mentioned above. Such an experiential world has the universal structure that is revealed in stable types and styles. The structure is, on the one hand, related to the subject; it is, on the other hand, related to the world. The subject and the world are just correlated to each other.

Husserl points out further that the experiential world, with its eidetic structure, is the “all-inclusive world for natural sciences and socio-cultural sciences” (Hua IX, 232, 178). It contains the world truth (*Weltwahrheit*) (Hua IX, 63/Scanlon, 47) that constitutes the basis for all truths in factual sciences, be they natural or sociocultural. Based on the truth of such a world, we can be sure of truth in scientific knowledge. The world is a domain of prescientific experience, the structures of which will be reflected in other sciences (Hua IX, 64, 46, 232/Scanlon, 33, 47, 178).

Thus, the experiential world is the foundation of all scientific research. The experience has it that, as human beings living in the natural attitude, people hold lots of unshakable beliefs that concern the reality and totality of the world. We accept it as firmly as possible. But that which is revealed in the original experiences is for Husserl much too contaminated by the scientific culture, that we may find it extremely difficult to return to the world in original experiences and recognize it. It is for this reason that Husserl repeatedly recommends the use of phenomenological reduction, which helps overcome such difficulties.

To sum up, the investigation of cultural objects serves as a clue to the study of the experiential world, which reveals itself as the core of human experience and can be uncovered and made explicit through phenomenology. The meaning of cultural objects, no matter how subjective-relative it is, no matter how diversely different it is from culture to culture, remains a subject worthy of eidetic research. As Husserl mentions,

No matter how clear or unclear such a science is, how valid or entirely invalid, just like all the human works, they belong to the moments of the world as the world of pure experience. For this reason, they may provide us with a point of departure in regard to the investigation into the pure experience of the world, that is to say, they lead to the description of the universal field of the spiritual culture and make us aware of the structural differentiation of the concrete contents of the experience that belongs to the experiential world, for example the subjectivity of the human being and animal, or the cultural constructs that at first sight are not in principle clearly enough articulated. (Hua IX, 380)

The study of cultural objects serves as the prestage to the study of the experiential world via the mid-stage of natural world concept and personalistic attitude. The personalistic attitude is the attitude that people assume in the daily lifeworld; therefore, it is very close to the natural attitude. Based on this attitude, the world is full of animations or spiritual meaning, instead of pure nature in the eyes of the natural scientists. The world is a world of spiritual sense, for such attitude and cultural objects are not only treated as things with natural properties, but as things full of meaning, sense, value, etc.

Of course, due to the fact that the natural attitude, no matter how personalistic, is bound by naïve mindedness, it is impossible for this attitude to take a look back at itself in order to gain a deep insight of what has been going on. Only by way of reduction, that is, self-awareness in a phenomenological

sense, will such an end be attained. At the moment he gains insight to himself, he gains a brand new understanding of his surrounding world. On such a basis, he sees cultural objects in a fresh manner, which means, following the reduction the world is no longer the same as it used to be, but nor is it so much different, as long as the person with personalistic attitude has been always occupied with cultural objects and familiar with their meanings—and such a familiarity prepares exactly for his fresh looking.

IV

Although Schutz handles “cultural object” as early as in his early major work *Der sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt (The Phenomenology of Social World)*⁷, it is not until his later writings, in particular the paper “Symbol, Society and Reality”, that Schutz systematically elaborates on his ideas about “cultural objects”. In order to unfold his viewpoints, the concept of “appresentation” serves as methodological ground and should be clarified first.

The concept of appresentation originates in Husserl. Husserl uses it to explicate the experience of the other, i.e., alter ego (*Fremderfahrung*). For him it is a mediate intentionality (*Mittelbarkeit der Intentionalität*), which means it is a kind of making copresented through association with direct experience (Hua I, 109). Husserl deals with *Fremderfahrung* by asking the question: What takes me from my pure primordial sphere (*primordiale Sphäre*) to the other subject?

The pure primordial sphere is arrived at, according to Husserl, through the second epoché (the first is the transcendental reduction). It is a sphere of pure consciousness without any reference to other ego. In this sphere appears the other ego, not as self with psychological contents, but as just bodies (*Körper*).

⁷ Although Schutz deals with cultural objects when he discusses the social relationship, in the relationship that is not face-to-face we can characterize the objects only with typifications. In this way, the objects show themselves not in their lively particularity. Their particularity is nothing but an individuation of a certain type. A typified other person is in fact something that is projected by a subject; it can never be fully realized in the real world. Such projection is indispensable because it embodies some functions that are necessary in everyday living. There are, for example, postmen who deliver letters, bus drivers who transport passengers, or public officials who work for the government. Now in the *Mitwelt* not only alter egos exist, but also cultural objects. They include more abstract objects like state, art, and language and more concrete objects like vehicles, utensils, and paintings. What differentiates them from the alter egos is that they can never be embodied with a consciousness. The alter egos are taken to possess the “subjective context of meaning” (*subjektiver Sinnzusammenhang*), whereas the cultural objects possess only the “objective context of meaning” (*objektiver Sinnzusammenhang*). That means the cultural objects cannot be thought to behave like individual persons (Alfred Schütz, *Der sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt: Eine Einleitung in die verstehende Soziologie*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1991, pp. 273 and 281).

Now through the similarities of his body with mine, which Husserl names "pairing," may the body of alter ego be recognized as like mine, that is, it possesses also the meaning of animate organism (*Leib-Sinn*). The other ego's body becomes, namely, a body with a *waltendes Ich* and many psychological properties (*ib.* 119). All these "inner parts" cannot be directly experienced; hence, there is a mediate intentionality i.e., the appresentation, which becomes indispensable. Husserl emphasizes that the appresentation never occurs alone, but is always accompanied by the direct presentation. Here it should be noted that appresentation is not equivalent for Husserl to the pairing association, because it has nothing to do with the relation between two data at all. Rather, it is a way of appearing, as we have just mentioned, which could at best be applied to the appearing of an alter ego, because the alter ego is understood by Husserl as the "accessibility of what is not originally accessible" (*die Zugänglichkeit des unzugänglichen*) (*ib.* 114). He can only be indirectly experienced. The relationship between direct and indirect appearance is quite similar to that of the pairing association; however, Husserl never calls it pairing. Pairing refers for him always to my body and to that of the alter ego.

What differentiates Schutz from Husserl concerning appresentation is that Schutz understands this concept as a pairing between two data in consciousness. Appresentation is therefore for him the pairing association between appresenting and appresented data (CP I, 294f). He takes this pairing association to be a common phenomenon among the psychological and transcendental spheres of consciousness. Accordingly, the appresentation could be applied not only to the *Fremderfahrung*, but also to any experience of transcendence, i.e., any experience of things that do not directly appear here and now. For example, things in memories and expectations, in scientific models and religious beliefs. In addition, the inner world of the alter ego and the self-illuminations of cultural objects of other cultures also belong to it.

Moreover, what is new in the Schutzian notion of appresentation is a relation between two orders or realms, not just two data. Schutz's idea is founded on the awareness that no experience occurs in a horizon. Each side of the appresentational relationship must rely on its background or order (*ib.* 306). For example, one side may belong to the physical world and the other to the spiritual world. Schutz explicates his viewpoint using a flag as an example.

If we see a flag as representing something, such as a state, a land, an institution, a team or anything else, then there appears in the flag an appresentational relationship between the physical and the spiritual ideal world. On the occasion that we do not recognize the flag as a "flag", but just as a material thing, then this appresentational relation is broken. The same flag remains belonging to the physical world, but no longer representing something else, or in the terminology of Schutz, no experience of transcendence is possible through it. In this situation we perceive the flag as a flag, something belonging only to the physical world, that is to say, only the apperception scheme is functioning, not the appresentational scheme. (*Ib.* 299)

Certainly in the same way in the physical world we may also make use of the appresentational scheme to perceive something. We may, for example, "see" the fire by just perceiving the smoke. Both smoke and fire belong to the same order, namely the physical world. Likewise two things in the realm of mind, for example, the unicorn—a product of imagination—and chastity as an abstract idea may also have the appresentational relation. Schutz objects definitely to the conception that the appresenting side of the appresentational relation must belong to the physical world. What he denies is namely the pure experience in the lifeworld in the Husserlian sense to be the fundamental experience (SL II, Nachlass, 338). The problem of pure experience will be discussed again later.

Schutz, on the ground of appresentation, explains phenomena like mark, indication, sign and symbol, which he calls the appresentational references. All of them serve as the means to overcome the above mentioned different experiences of transcendence. Schutz regards the appresentational references as essentially useful for the everyday living of ordinary people in the lifeworld. He says:

The reality of everyday life [...], as a sociocultural world, is permeated by appresentational references. (*Ib.* 347)

According to Schutz, the problem of cultural objects is therefore relative to cultural differences between social groups. Any cultural object has certainly also material components, and hence can be conceived as a "normal object". Is a holy stone not just a physical object; a church or a temple not just a building? The appresentational references might get lost in the eyes of the laymen, who might conceive such things just with the apperception scheme. But for the "experts" it is quite different. These things consist of something transcendent. In their conception of them, the appresentational scheme is always functioning. Someone

might inaugurate the cultural elements of these things, yet as long as they are commonly accepted, they would seem to be as natural as their physical components, or might even be more natural! These cultural components, which constitute the cultural characteristics of a social group, might seem bizarre in the eyes of the "outsider" or "layman". These cultural values might seem to be only relative, yet the relativity results only from the "outsider-standpoint", that is, only if one refrains from recognizing these values. For the "insider" these meanings might seem absolutely valuable. Anyone who does not share such valuations—voluntarily or not—is to be treated as a stranger (CP II, 106f).

Until now, what Schutz thematizes does not seem to depart from the Husserlian notions of homeworld and alienworld. Now the question arises regarding how Schutz views the idea of one world in Husserl. Does he also agree with the universalism that Husserl evokes? Schutz is quite ambivalent in regard to this question. First of all, he calls the experience of lifeworld or experiential world the pure experience of lifeworld, which is a layer of experience prior to any cultural involvement. Basically, the pure experience of lifeworld in the sense of Husserl is not at all impossible from Schutz's viewpoint. In the situation when people do not understand the cultural meaning of a thing, the pure experience of the lifeworld turns up automatically. For example, a layman in art might wonder what is expressed in a painting and come to the conclusion that there appears nothing but certain lines, colors, and figures. The appresentational scheme is on this occasion out of function. The painting is thus dissolved into physical components and the observer undergoes the pure experience of the lifeworld. In the conception of Schutz, we have to get acquainted with the necessary background if we wish to become capable of appreciating the works of art; acculturation is here beyond question very much required.

In brief, cultural objects have no cultural meanings at all for people who do not understand them. What matters here is basically the cultural difference between social groups. In addition, when we say that cultural objects have a social background, we might say that the appresentational references rest on intersubjectivity. That means, they are not only valid for a single person, but the whole social group or cultural milieu. The cultural meanings or the appresentational references are thus objectified meanings (*Sinnobjektivationen*). As long as they are commonly accepted, they are, in the natural, unreflective attitudes of the insiders, taken to be absolutely valuable. The insiders have their own inter-

pretations concerning these cultural objects, which have counterparts in the interpretations by the outsiders.

Schutz repeatedly emphasizes the fact that different people live in different cultural worlds. Through these self-interpretations of cultural objects, there arises the *Kulturmuster* who functions as a guiding principle of cognition and behavior. They are relevant as to how to define situations and solve problems. Relevant also is the “socially approved knowledge” inherited from generation to generation. It is taken for granted by the respective social group. This knowledge needs not be scientifically true. What is important is that it is commonly accepted and constitutive for their notion of reality. Accordingly, Schutz accentuates this point by saying:

The world of everyday life is thus permeated by appresentational references which are simply taken for granted and among which I carry on my practical activities [...].
(CP I, 328)

However, Schutz seems to hint at the universal stratum of experiences as well, which will be explored in the next section.

V

Schutz’s position about universalism seems clear as he refers to universal symbolism. In the essay “Equality and the social meaning structure”, Schutz begets the idea that there exists a universal cultural ground in all human societies despite cultural differences. Schutz argues that certain features are common to all social worlds because “they are rooted in the human condition”, which Schutz explains as

Everywhere we find sex groups and age groups, and some division of labor conditioned by them; and more or less rigid kinship organizations that arrange the social world into zones of varying social distance, from intimate familiarity to strangeness. Everywhere we also find hierarchies of superordination and subordination, of leader and follower, of those in command and those in submission. [...] There are everywhere, moreover, cultural objects, such as tools needed for the domination of the outer world, playthings for children, articles for adornment, musical instruments of some kind, objects serving as symbols for worship [...]. (CP II, 229)

It is philosophical anthropology alone that can work out the basic and universal dimensions of the human condition, and in the essay "Symbol, Society and Reality" Schutz himself tries to fulfill such a task with the notion of "universal symbol", which starts with the Chinese Yin-Yang concept (CP I, 334).

It is bewildering to read texts like this in Schutz's works. If we take the cultural difference to be a consequent interpretation of lifeworld, then how can the universal symbolism be integrated into his comprehension of cultural difference? Are they compatible? Does Schutz want to argue that there exists the grounding layer, rather than many concrete lifeworlds? The idea of universal symbolism and consequently the idea of the grounding Lifeworld remind us of Husserl's Lifeworld or experiential world notion. Although Schutz definitely rejects the pure experience of perception to be the essential Lifeworld experience, he does seem to share with Husserl the idea of grounding (*Grundlegungs-idee*)⁸. Schutz is on the one hand appealing to cultural difference, yet on the other hand he does not give up the idea of universalism.

CONCLUSION

In the essay "A Gurwitschean Model for Explaining Culture or how to use an Atlatl", Embree mentions a student who happens to encounter an artifact used by ancient Indians in North America while wandering in the wild. The student begins with little knowledge about the utensil, seeing it first as "a stick of wood less than a meter long with a small protuberance at an end" or at most "a piece of equipment of some sort from the caves". He ends up with knowing the item as "a spear thrower" which is named "atlatl" by professional archeologists. How can Embree's example be of help regarding the problem of cultural difference and universalism?

As first, we might raise the question in relation to Husserl's ideas that only through reduction can people confirm the natural experience of the lifeworld or experiential world, which Husserl renders universal. We could ask more about the question: Does this kind of experience have to be natural? That is to say, is it a kind of experience deprived of any cultural implication at all? Schutz points out that when people are incapable of comprehending the cultural significance of

⁸ Waldenfels, Bernhard, "Verschränkung von Heimwelt und Lebenswelt", in *Topographie des Fremden*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997, pp. 66-84.

something, this something turns automatically into the pure experience of lifeworld, which is delineated by natural characteristics such as spatial, temporal, lineal, extensive, and color.

Yet we might wonder, why are the unfamiliar objects that are culturally meaningful to other groups of people deprived of cultural meaning in such a moment? Do unfamiliar cultural objects remain cultural objects? Even though I have not disclosed yet the meanings of these objects at this moment, they are somehow expected to be disclosed at another moment. The crucial point should be how I can get access to its significance. The process to get close to the unfamiliar meaning or significance is similar to the relationship between what Husserl coins between intentionality and fulfillment of intentionality. I might intend the cultural object that appears unfamiliar to me in an insufficient way or even in a wrong way. In such a case, my intention will be unlikely to be fulfilled.

Yet, even at this time, that cultural object has never completely reduced itself to merely natural object. Both Husserl and Schutz seem to skip too far in this context, as they both claim that the unfamiliar object has lost cultural sense already (Cf. the Bantus in Husserl's example or the perception of artwork in Schutz's example). However, we might contend that it remains what it is as a cultural object. The absence of cultural sense does not mean the non-existence of cultural meaning from the start. The absence means instead the expectation of fulfillment of the intentional absence. When both Husserl and Schutz regard the unfamiliar object as natural object, they seem to denounce the cultural sense of alien cultures. Even if it may not imply the dismissal of their cultural meanings, it hints at a kind of indifference. They do not treat it as a chance to learn from others. It is not a chance for them to broaden their own visions through contacting other cultures.

In sum, I hold that unfamiliar cultural objects are never reduced to natural objects completely. Cultural objects are something that people (either from alien or one's own group) give meaning to. There exist intentional correlation between their mental activities and these objects. The cultural objects are constituted object. They are built by the people who constitute them. Despite the situation when the specific meaning of culture is not recognized, the general structure of intentional correlation between subject and object is always there. No matter whether or not the objects are familiar, we may never dismiss the general structure that is fundamental to cultural objects.

The Husserlian conception of disclosing lifeworld experience through reduction reveals the fact that Husserl skips over the cultural layer of the objects. His appeal to universalism is consequently a movement of abstraction of the cultural objects. Although Schutz is more concerned with cultural difference than Husserl, he appeals to universalism as much as Husserl; that is, he hints at the overcoming cultural difference by introducing the notion of universal symbolism.

Granted that the intentional structure of consciousness is reflected in cultural experiences, we might raise the question about the universality of natural experience, which Husserl suggests. Even if we agree that encountering cultural objects –familiar or not– denotes the encountering intentional structure, it does not mean that each time we encounter the cultural objects we witness the commonness of all cultural objects only because of the universal structure that lies behind. The diversity of cultural objects makes it that, in particular, by encountering the unfamiliar ones we witness the alien properties therein. As we come close to them, learn about their meaning, we broaden our own horizon of knowledge.

Universals are not at all plain facts in cultural issues. The difference always remains as it is in the cultural dimension of human existence, which demands acceptance as well as respect.

WORD CITED

- EMBREE, Lester, "Reflection on the Cultural Disciplines", in M. Daniel / L. Embree (eds.), *Phenomenology of Cultural Disciplines*, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1994, pp. 1-37.
- , "Schutz's Phenomenology of the Practical World", in *Alfred Schütz: Neue Beiträge zur Rezeption seines Werkes*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, pp. 121–144.
- , "A Gurwitschean Model for Explaining Culture or How to Use an Atlas!", in J. C. Evans / R. W. Stufflebean (eds.), *To Work at the Foundations*, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1988, pp. 141–171.
- , "American Ethnophobia, e.g., Irish-American, in Phenomenological Perspective", *Human Studies*, Vol. 20 (1997) 271–286.
- FLYNN, Molly Brigid, "The Cultural Community: An Husserlian Approach and Reapproach", *Husserl Studies*, Vol. 28 (2019) 25-47.

- HELD, Klaus, "Heimwelt, Fremdwelt, die eine Welt", in Ernst Wolfgang Orth (ed.), *Perspektiven und Probleme der Husserlschen Phänomenologie*, Freiburg/München: Karl Alber, 1991.
- HUSSERL, Edmund, *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*, Ed. Stephan Strasser, Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973. (Hua I).
- , *Phänomenologische Psychologie. Vorlesungen Sommersemester 1925*, Ed. Walter Biemel, Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962. (Hua IX) / *Phenomenological Psychology: Lectures, Summer Semester, 1925*, Trans. John Scanlon, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977.
- , *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Texte aus Nachlass. Erster Teil: 1929-1935*, Ed. Iso Kern, Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973. (Hua XV).
- , *Aufsätze und Vorträge 1922-1937* (1988), Eds. Hans Reiner Sepp/Thomas Nenon, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers. (Hua XXVII).
- , *Logische Untersuchungen. Zweiter Band: Untersuchungen zur Phänomenologie und Theorie der Erkenntnis* (1984), Ed. Ursula Panzer, Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff. (Hua IXX).
- MORAN, Dermot, "Even the Papuan is a Man and not a Beast: Husserl on Universalism and the Relativity of Cultures", *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Vol. 49, 4 (2011) 463–494.
- SCHÜTZ, Alfred, *Collected Papers*, Vol. I, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962. (Abbr. CP I).
- , *Collected Papers*, Vol. II, The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964. (Abbr. CP II).
- , *Der sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt: Eine Einleitung in die verstehende Soziologie*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1991.
- SCHÜTZ, Alfred / LUCKMANN, Thomas, *Strukturen der Lebenswelt*, Bd. II, Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1990. (Abbr. SL II).
- WALDENFELS, Bernhard, "Verschränkung von Heimwelt und Lebenswelt", in *Topographie des Fremden*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997, pp. 66–84.