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Husserl Studies

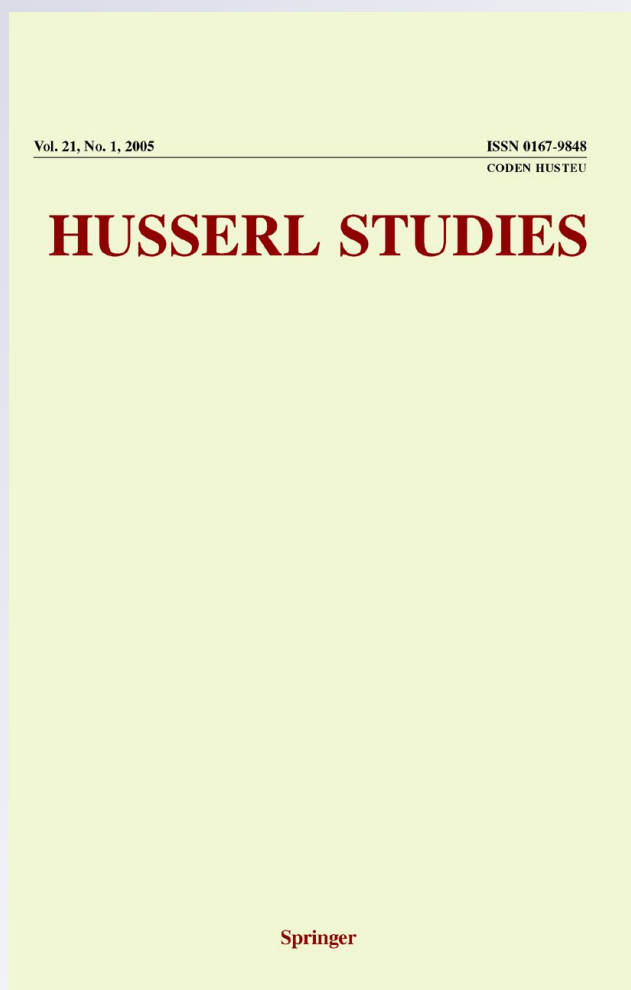
ISSN 0167-9848

Volume 28

Number 1

Husserl Stud (2012) 28:25-47

DOI 10.1007/s10743-011-9097-7



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The Cultural Community: An Husserlian Approach and Reproach

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Published online: 9 October 2011
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Abstract What types of unity and disunity belong to a group of people sharing a culture? Husserl illuminates these communities by helping us trace their origin to two types of interpersonal act—cooperation and influence—though cultural communities are distinguished from both cooperative groups and mere communities of related influences. This analysis has consequences for contemporary concerns about multi- or mono-culturalism and the relationship between culture and politics. It also leads us to critique Husserl's desire for a new humanity, one that is rational, cooperatively united, and animated by a universal philosophical culture. Reflecting on culture, a spiritually shaped and shared domain of the world, draws us to reflect also on ourselves as social and rational animals, and to ask, what should we reasonably hope for—and aim for—in a human culture that expresses and supports our shared lives of reason? Aristotle is used for occasional comparisons and contrasts.

We are men, free willing subjects who are actively engaged in our surrounding world, together constantly shaping it. Whether we want to or not, whether well or badly, we do so. Can we not also do so reasonably? Are reasonableness and effectiveness [*Tüchtigkeit*] not in our power?

Edmund Husserl

As human persons, we owe our rational life to those who have shared with us their thoughts, the way the world appeared to them.

Robert Sokolowski

Culture is a realm of shared human creativity. Reflecting on it allows us to reflect also on ourselves as social and rational animals.

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Using Aristotle as an occasional foil, this paper draws on Husserl's comments on intersubjectivity and the spiritual shaping of the surrounding world to elucidate the rudimentary ground of culture. The intersubjective acts from which culture results will help explain the type of unity and lack of unity that essentially characterize a cultural "we" or "us" and will help us understand this community's structure, how it arises and exists. It follows from this description, though it runs counter to Husserl's highest hopes for humanity, that the cultural community cannot take on cooperative unity and culture cannot be rationally directed individually or cooperatively. Though some of Husserl's rhetorical anticipations of a rational human culture may be unreasonable, his reflections better prepare us to reapproach the question, what should we hope and work for in a human culture that expresses and supports our shared lives of reason?

The fundamentals of Husserl's account of empathy and intersubjectivity have received and deserve continued discussion. Extending beyond these fundamentals, Husserl's theory of community merits attention in its own right and has recently received more scholarly treatment.¹ Such treatments have tended to focus on Husserl's account of higher level communities. While making use of such literature, this paper shifts focus to a few aspects of communal life that have received attention only in passing. Whereas Husserlian discussions of community tend to focus on what Husserl calls properly *social*, "I-thou" acts, this paper aims to recognize the work done by interpersonal motivating acts that fall short of this central case: acts of mere influence. These acts, I argue, play an essential role in the constitution of culture, and therefore in the formation of the cultural community. Further, whereas these scholarly treatments have tended to focus on what Husserl identifies as community in the essential and proper sense, willing-communities, this paper aims to give proper due to communities that essentially lack unity of will, that are inherently unorganized. The cultural community, I argue, is of this type. Finally, though Husserl's analyses of the constitution of the cultural realm and ethics have also begun to attract some attention,² continued cultural work is needed to see how culture, community, and ethics fit together, or fail to, in Husserl's philosophy.

All of this is done, most importantly, not merely because we wish to understand a man's thought, however broad and keen it may be. This man's thought promises to help us to better understand important phenomena, and even when his attempts perhaps miss their mark, they do not fail in this promise. We wish to make faithfully Husserlian contributions to contemporary philosophy by critiquing and renewing Husserlian phenomenology of culture.

This paper has two parts. First (§§1–4), it traces the formation of the cultural community out of the confluence of acts of influence and social interaction, and it then describes key features of this community. Second (§§5–6), it considers this community in the light of Husserl's philosophy of cultural and ethical renewal. The

¹ On Husserl's account of community, see especially the work done by Philip Buckley (1992, 1996, 1998) and John Drummond (1996, 2000, 2002). On Husserl and political community, see Schuhmann (1988), Buckley (1994), Depraz (1995), and Drummond (2000).

² On Husserl's ethics, see especially the work of Ullrich Melle, but also (among others) Donohoe (2004), Drummond (1995), Hart (2006). On the Husserlian account of culture, see especially Steinbock (1994, 1995), Hart (1992a), Melle (1996), and Flynn (2009).

paper's conclusions suggest that though the cultural community intrinsically does not have a purpose, it may still have an essential end or perfection. This perfection would happen not when the cultural us is transformed into a different species of community, a unity of purpose and will, but when it does better its own work of influencing us well, of drawing us into reason and giving us tools for a good life together. Though this amounts to a criticism of Husserl's idealistic calls to a rational culture, it also allows us to appreciate the deep validity and concrete difficulty of the challenge he identifies—that of fostering a reasonable human culture.

1 Types of Intersubjective Motivation, Determination, and Community

Culture is the spiritually cultivated domain of the world, containing the fruits of our shared intentional accomplishments. In this broad sense, culture includes all “objectified spirit,” all things and events that are what they are by incorporating sediments of intentionality—the knowing, valuing, and doing of persons. Because such objectivities “depend for their sense on personal accomplishments,” the cultural aspects of the world go beyond sensible features, which are not sociohistorically conditioned and are accessible to those outside the cultural community.

The domain of culture comes to the fore especially in contrast with the world as conceived by modern natural science, in which we adopt what Husserl calls the naturalistic attitude by which we purportedly abstract from the world all unreal or intentionality-relative formations. In Husserl's words,

He who sees everywhere only nature, nature in the sense of, and, as it were, through the eyes of, natural science, is precisely blind to the spiritual sphere, the special domain of the human sciences. Such a one does not see persons and does not see the Objects which depend for their sense on personal accomplishments, i.e., Objects of “culture” (Hua IV, p. 201/191).

This attitude of modern natural science is one reason why culture becomes subject to philosophical reflection in modernity in a sense that it was not for premodern philosophy. Culture as discussed in this paper is not, for example, understood strictly in the older sense of the proper cultivation of the mind and spirit, but neither is it understood in the sense of the Romantic conceit of a prerational and unified folk-spirit of a people over against civilization.

In the Husserlian sense, culture at large is the entirety of the common goods and bads, the spiritually shaped things, ways of acting, attitudes, beliefs, abilities, ideals, styles, roles that the members understand and live with and in. Somehow we have come to share the world as culturally shaped, and that means sharing in certain past subjective accomplishments. This commonly minded world of culture must emerge from acts of sharing. Articulating the we of culture begins with a description of how events and objects as minded are shared, handed over.

Any handing over or sharing involves the person sharing, the thing shared, and the person receiving. In thinking about the cultural community, instead of focusing first on the person as agent, in the nominative, let us begin with the person as

indirect object, as receiver of something. All understanding of another person requires that I understand his intentional life in some respect, receiving from him the world under the species of his view on it. For this reason, all empathy involves me (indirect object) accepting from the other person (subject) the world in his involvement with it (direct object).

In a manuscript on intersubjectivity, “Gemeingeist I” (Hua XIV, pp. 165–191), Husserl offers us a strategic distinction between two types of intersubjective motivation: the social and the nonsocial (Hua XIV, pp. 165–166).³ Social motivation is communicative. By gesture or language one person addresses another person (indirect object), intending to be understood and also intending the other person to understand that he is attempting to be understood by him. The understanding achieved is cooperative.⁴ In nonsocial intersubjective motivation the act of understanding is not cooperative. We can elaborate two ways this might happen. First, I might be a voyeur, an unintentional indirect object. I might observe the other person but without the observed person intending it, and when I grasp through his action the world as grasped by him, this is accidental to his action. Second, he might be a poseur, making me a covertly intentional indirect object. I observe the other person, and he intends that I understand him in some respect, but he does not intend that I know that he intends it. In both cases, one person influences another’s thoughts; the action gives me (indirect object) a grasp of the world as intended by another, and the world has for me invisible traces of his subjective involvement. The world takes on properties for me related back to his valuing and doing.

In social and nonsocial intersubjective motivation, the understood person scatters seeds that can bear fruit in the lives of others. That is, in addition to motivation between persons, which gives me merely a gloss on the world as the other person views it, values it, and acts in it, there can also be intersubjectively shaped willing, wherein I take over and apply in my own life his gloss on the world.

In a related manuscript, “Gemeingeist II” (Hua XIV, pp. 192–232), Husserl comments that working-through-another’s-will is a “personal connection, formed through empathy” (Hua XIV, p. 194), such that those involved in it achieve some type of personal communion, acquire shared beliefs and values, and give the world commonly held spiritual shapes: “And as correlates we have the unity of ‘an’ accomplishment, ‘a’ work, possibly a unity that extends and develops itself through the open endlessness of a stretch of time: the unity of a state, of a religion, of a language, of a literature, of an art, etc.” (Hua XIV, p. 194). Notice that Husserl here highlights two types of objective correlate. (1) Some amount to a discrete

³ “Motivation” is a technical term Husserl applies to the relation between objects as thought (that is, as perceived, valued, willed, and so forth) in which some noema arouses or “motivates” others; it is distinguished from “causation,” a relation that obtains among realities in their spatio-temporal dependencies. For example, while the red of the shirt causes my optic nerve to transfer certain electrical impulses to my brain, the red of the shirt motivates me to try it on, as I think I look rather good in red.

⁴ Communication is the basic type of cooperative act and the ground for all more complex cooperation, but it is not practical cooperation in the fuller sense: “So far we have dealt with the mere communication of facts; a certain community of willing and a certain agreement are already present here. There is, however, still another kind of agreement, one that is practical in the fullest sense, a practical community of willing” (Hua XIV, p. 168).

accomplishment—say, a play performed by a troupe of actors. The unity of the achievement is mirrored by the unity of the community achieving it, which he describes in the next line as a “limited sociality.” (2) Other accomplishments of intersubjective willing are “open,” indeterminately stretched out, changed over time, amorphous—say, the English language, neoclassical architecture, the Romance novel.

Husserl then distinguishes between types of intersubjective determination, parallel to the above distinction between types of intersubjective motivation.⁵ (1) In cooperative acts there is one shared willing and deed founded on the separate willings and deeds of the cooperators. Communication is itself cooperative and is required for all further cooperation. Husserl claims that such social acts of further cooperation involve “a practical community of willing” (Hua XIV, p. 169), and constitute a community of a special kind, a “personality of a higher order.” A personality of a higher order has, founded on the multiple consciousnesses and wills of its members, a united consciousness of certain facts and a united will to accomplish a single deed for which the cooperators are jointly responsible.⁶ (2) But one person can work through the will of another also by way of noncooperative motivation. Upon understanding him, I can take his accomplishment as a “starting point” for my own performances (Hua XIV, p. 194). That is, I can act separately from him but under his *influence*.

Notice that these two types of intersubjective determination—cooperative willing, on the one hand, and on the other hand mimicking or acting under the influence of another—give rise to the two types of objective correlates just mentioned and to two types of community.⁷ A “definite,” cooperative sociality is a *we* (nominative) in a strong sense, achieving jointly possessed social objects and events related back to our actions together. What type of community with what type of personal communion do the amorphous and temporally “open” and “endless” cultural formations refer back to? Husserl calls them “effect-communities,” *Wirkungsgemeinschaften*; I will call them “communities of influence.”

If we reflect on what Husserl has described, it seems that the “indefinite” influence-community is more of an *us* receiving similar spiritual forces in our lives:

⁵ “Here, however, there is an important difference: (1) I operate through a foreign will in the sense that the goal of my willing lies in that of another, that I want to achieve my goal through his willing and activity (personal connections in the unity of a community-willing). (2) I operate through the foreign willing in the sense that the product, e.g., a technical work, which is executed according to my idea, becomes the starting point for the spiritual work of others... (personal effect-communities [*Wirkungsgemeinschaften*] without the unity of an encompassing communal willing and acting)” (Hua XIV, pp. 194–195).

⁶ Regarding the analogy of a community to a person, in “Gemeingeist II” Husserl explains it and denies that it is mere metaphor because the community is capable of intentional acts, though they are always founded in the members’ intentional acts: “The common, the connected personality, as ‘subject’ of the common achievement, is, on the one hand, an analogue of an individual subject; on the other hand, however, it is not a mere analogue, it is a connected multiplicity of persons, which has in its connection a unity of consciousness (a communicative unity). Within the multiplicity of the will that is distributed among the individual persons, it has for all of them one identically constituted will, which has no other place, no other substrate than the communicative multiplicity of persons” (Hua XIV, pp. 200–201).

⁷ These two types of community do not correspond neatly to Tönnies’ celebrated distinction between *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft*.

I start as an indirect object of another's motivation, and move into the nominative on my own in a separate deed. The persons connected by influence fashion more or less similar but separately possessed objects and actions with an indefinite family resemblance. This community, like the streams of influence that define it, is open and indefinite, and it results *unintended* when each of us puts to work in our own lives what is given us in intersubjective motivation. Each person is responsible for how he acts under the influence of others, and as an exemplar is partially and indirectly responsible for the actions of others which he influences; but, because there is no unified willing here, there is no *one* on whom to pin responsibility for the estuary that results. Responsibility for the whole indirectly and diffusely belongs to each person caught up in the circulating influences.

2 Communities of Influence

The reception and copying of others' spiritual accomplishments through influence explains a great deal of the shared meaning found in a group's surrounding world. Through it, Husserl explains in "Gemeingeist II," spiritual accomplishments spread from person to person, while the group as a whole and the persons participating in the accomplishments' dispersals do not need to intend to spread the cultural formations or understand the formations' histories.

It [my spiritual work] is mimicked by others, and a model of operating and of works disseminates itself in the culture, or it is then improved further, and thus it goes forth. My spiritual effect breeds without my intention, in unknown persons and surroundings, who themselves need not know anything about me. (Hua XIV, p. 194)

A *Wirkungsgemeinschaft* is a kind of side-effect; it results from the ramifications of influence as it multiplies often passively and anonymously throughout a population. Because there is no cooperative action, the "community" formed through influence may seem to be merely an array of persons identified according to their severally possessing this "spiritual work" or derivatives similar to it. This "community" is closer to a heap than a whole.

If we may elaborate on what Husserl has pointed out to us, here are a few aspects of how a spiritual formation disperses itself in a population by way of influence that help explain the loose unity of this sprawling community, but also its inconspicuous power.

(a) *Influence is often passive and unself-conscious, and a spiritual formation spreading by way of influence quickly becomes anonymous.* The other person may be for me merely a pointer about the world, about what is true, valuable, useful, good, or achievable. I may be only very marginally aware, if at all, of my accomplishment as something relating back to another. "The development of a person," Husserl comments in *Ideas II*, "is determined by the influence of others, by the influence of their thoughts, their feelings (as suggested to me), their commandments. This influence determines personal development, whether or not the person himself subsequently realizes it, remembers it, or is capable of

determining the degree of the influence and its character” (Hua IV, p. 268/281). If I am aware that others share in the spiritual formation, since I may not know exactly which others do, there results a real but vague sense of community.

(b) *Spiritual formations that spread merely via influence*—without the aid of cooperative sharing, explanation, and maintenance—are often very fluid, reinforced in the community but also often transformed by the change of hands.⁸ I change what I receive purposely, perhaps, but I transform it often merely because I am a different person and it might play out in my life differently. The passivity and anonymity of the influence weaken any ability or concern I might otherwise have to preserve the spiritual accomplishment in some original form. Repetition by new people, the source of the spread of an influence, can be at the same time the cause of its frequent transformation. As Husserl comments in *Ideas II*, “Others’ thoughts penetrate my soul; they can exercise various influences, either enormous or small, under changing circumstances, according to my psychic situation, the stage of my development, the formation of my dispositions, etc. The same idea has different effects on different persons in the ‘same’ circumstances” (Hua IV, p. 268/281). Anthony Steinbock concludes from this fact that though “the constitution and reconstitution” of a normal surrounding world “constantly goes on,” we should not “take [it] for granted.” This world’s “sense does not remain fixed since its normal, typical structure is *modified in repeating*, that is, it is transformed through reconstitution” (1995, p. 199).⁹

(c) *Influence works by providing norms*. In scholastic terms, it works by way of exemplar, not efficient, causality. By understanding another’s beliefs, emotions, attitudes, actions, we grasp a model possibly applicable to ourselves, and influence consists in this model affecting our beliefs, emotions, attitudes, actions, etc., whether or not we explicitly copy it or recognize it as our standard or source of influence. A systematic treatment of the development of norms in a cultural community is beyond this paper. Still, we should sketch two distinctions relating to how norms operate in influence and in a community of influence. First, we can distinguish between norms influencing us from particular others and norms influencing us from the indeterminate community itself. Second, we can distinguish between norms established and developed through influence and a type of norm special to willing-communities.

When I see another person do something, find that he believes something, or understand how he comports himself in a certain situation, I receive illustrations of what is possible, but I also receive prompts to follow. A used path invites us.¹⁰ This

⁸ Words, especially written words and also words attributed to some important figure, provide more stability to a subjective accomplishment, allowing them to be more durable when passed around.

⁹ It should also be remembered, however, that spiritual accomplishments can retain identically the same sense for various persons. As Husserl comments in *Phenomenological Psychology*, “diverse cultural formations in spite of really separated individual matter can very well have identically the same sense. Thus, a mathematical proposition which is objectively embodied in the German language and is thus a German cultural formation, can become embedded in other languages with fully identical mathematical sense; and everyone can also grasp this identity” (Hua IX, p. 117/88–89).

¹⁰ Of course, and very importantly, some paths also repulse us. This is less passive, however. Because being repulsed by what someone has done requires first grasping it as possibly something to do, repulsion

is based not only in the human drive to imitate and in the structure of empathy, which almost forces me to think as the understood person thinks. It is based also in the structures of “habituation” and “sedimentation” by which my experiences prepare me to reapprehend passively the world in the same way later. The sediments of past spiritual activity have their subjective correlates in habitualities (secondary passivities), which is to say that they are not merely static, like layers of rock that are built upon by further layers; rather, like a radioactive residue, they exert a force over future acts of consciousness. By virtue of habituality and sedimentation, each experiencing subject develops a character and a personal style and the world as he experiences it accrues abiding determinations. The person I understand leaves in the world spiritual marks that become part of how I experience things from then on. For this reason, the entire realm of spirit is susceptible to reciprocal determination between the person and his communities, on the subject side, and their accomplishments, the sedimented correlates of their activities, on the object side.

According to Husserl, all acts tend toward conventionalization intra- and interpersonally (Hua XXXVII, p. 359). While influence works by way of norms in the sense of models, it also can produce norms in the sense of patterns within a community. The same or a similar spiritual formation can be replicated via influence by multiple people such that a convention is formed (Hua XXXVII, p. 358). This means that we receive norms both from particular others and from the indeterminate open community of others; the macro-patterns produced by ground-floor influences have a mode of influence of their own.

An influence dispersed widely in the population is increasingly anonymous and passive, carries more objective force, and has a normativity related to the “indeterminate generality” of the community itself: this is simply what “one” does, and the world increasingly shows up as simply calling for the given valuation and action.¹¹ As Husserl describes it in *Ideas II*,

Besides the tendencies which proceed from other individual persons, there are demands which arise in the intentional form of indeterminate generality, the demands of morality, of custom, of tradition, of the spiritual milieu: “one” judges in this way, “one” has to hold his fork like this, and so on—i.e., demands of the social group, of the class, etc. (Hua IV, p. 269/281–282)

All of this can happen within mere influence-communities and should be further distinguished from a particular type of norm that operates in willing-communities. In a willing-community, each member has a role or function in the joint willing, and

Footnote 10 continued

requires an assertion of oneself against the draw of the used path. The repulsion is partly based on being compelled, by passive empathic understanding, to think of the world as valued and actionable in that way.

¹¹ We might also add that in addition to being influenced by particular others in particular actions, and to being influenced by the indeterminate “they” (what “one” does), we can also be influenced by particular others because what he or she does is exceptional from within the typical or conventional. Fashion develops this way: we are drawn to models that both fit with, and are exceptional within, the general style of what one does. Similarly but at a higher level, influence can also operate by way of—and so also produce—norms in the more serious sense of standards by which we recognize something as a good or bad instance of its type.

so he has duties (Hua XXXVII, p. 359; Hua XIV, pp. 180–181). A member of an influence-community is not as such ordained as a functionary, possessing roles and duties. Still, we can be influenced in our understanding of our roles and duties within willing-communities—e.g., our culture and particular people we have met inform how we understand our roles as parent, colleague, etc.

We can conclude that to the degree that people are under the sway of the same influences, they furnish their worlds analogously. Furnishings, though added to a space, make the place, expressing, reinforcing, and shaping our manner of life. Our cultural formations become invisibly familiar parts of our lives. They structure our abodes to make some activities easier and others harder. By coinheriting such spiritual formations, persons increase the similarity of their ways of life, and their worlds receive parallel aesthetic, valuational, and practical patterns, but due to the passivity, anonymity, and fluidity of influence, they are part of a “community” in a very watery sense.¹²

3 The Cultural “We”: Not a Mere Community of Influence

How does this distinction between a cooperative unity and a community of influence apply to the we that shares a culture? The cultural community is puzzling because it seems to be both and neither.

I am involved in no cooperation with anyone merely by being part of the same culture. But, a mere community of influence is too loose to describe our unity and our unified cultural-spiritual world. Communities of influence would include, for example, the set of women having dyed black hair or of people who play solitaire. Incorporating these many streams of influence, there is one cultural world for us all. Members of the cultural community live not merely in similarly furnished worlds but in a jointly possessed world, and influence alone gives us parallel rather than joint possessions.

Husserl calls the ultimate subject of culture a “communicative community,” and he denies both that it is a cooperative community and that it is a mere community of influence. Rather, it is a higher level community of influence in which the members live with one another in overlapping groups of communication and cooperation.

In *Ideas II* §51, Husserl describes the socially shaped surrounding world as involving “an intentional linkage of our lives” accomplished through communicative acts. The members communicate with other members, constituting cooperative unities, and each member is aware of being communicatively linked even to those members with whom he does not communicate, linked both indirectly and potentially. As Husserl puts it: “The persons who belong to the social association are given to each other as ‘companions,’ not as *opposed objects but as counter-*

¹² As Drummond points out regarding Husserl’s use of *Gemeinschaft*: “Persons achieve a common understanding through communicative acts, and a personal association, i.e. an association of persons or a society, is thereby formed. But such associations are communities only in a weak, imprecise sense. While Husserl often uses the term ‘community’ and its cognates when discussing such experiences and such associations, at other times he reserves the word ‘community’ and its cognates for a more intimately united intersubjectivity” (1996, p. 245).

subjects who live ‘with’ one another, who converse and are related to one another, actually or potentially” (Hua IV, p. 194/204). Because this community for me incorporates many members indeterminately, as unknown but potentially known, when I meet a new person I do not encounter him as a new member, but as a previously unknown member.¹³

The communicative community is therefore a web of persons joined by influence and communication and other types of cooperation, and this is the subjective correlate of the cultural world. The people actually communicating or involved in other cooperative relationships are, as such, members of willing-communities, but the overarching “world of social subjectivities,” based on these overlapping communicative relations, is not itself a cooperative unity.¹⁴ Yet, because acts of communication involve combined comportments toward the world, they “foster a higher unity of consciousness” (Hua IV, p. 194/204). That is, I-thou acts cultivate the sense among the members of their joint comportment toward their one, shared, spiritually shaped world. This heightened sense of mutual belonging and of common belongings, Husserl claims, surfaces in the attitude that the members take toward one another as companions.¹⁵

What follows from Husserl’s description of the cultural community? Given that it is a type of community of influence we should expect it to possess the qualities outlined above. Because it is constituted in acts of communication and other cooperative acts in addition to acts of influence, these features must belong to it differently. Communication and cooperation, by which we together give our beliefs

¹³ H. Peter Steeves describes this well: “Part of the problem here is in thinking of the ‘new’ community member as an ‘addition.’ This description is misleading. What I would like to submit is that such members are ‘actualizations’ rather than ‘additions’” (1998, p. 98). Though Steeves is describing cooperative communities here, his description fits the indeterminate cultural community better.

¹⁴ It is important to note that the communicative community is not cooperatively structured; it is not a community of united purpose and will, even though communication is a cooperative activity and those involved in any given communicative act are united cooperatively (see note 4, above). “The subjects in communication with one another constitute personal unities of a higher level,” Husserl points out, but it is “the sum total” of these, “extending as far as actual and possible personal ties do,” that “makes up the world of *social subjectivities*. To be distinguished from this world of social subjectivities is the world correlative to it and inseparable from it, the world *for* these subjectivities, the *world of social Objectivities*, as one might say” (Hua IV, p. 195/205). This “world of social Objectivities” is our topic of culture. Gerhart Husserl also emphasizes that a cultural community is not a willing-community: “A people is a natural growth, not a purposive society. It has no functionary in whom power and authority are vested. Membership in the community of a people implies no subordination whatsoever to officials or functionaries; no such exist. No one is empowered to issue commands in the name of a people” (1939, pp. 133–134).

¹⁵ The conclusion suggested by *Ideas II* §51—that the cultural world is the correlate of a communicative community, which is a higher level community of influence—is corroborated by Husserl’s discussion in “Gemeingeist II” of the constitution of the sensible world. “Physical nature [is] constituted by mutual overlapping of the personal subjects in a communicating community” (Hua XIV, 201). According to Husserl, by communicating we acquire together, as it were, the status of a superpersonal subjectivity utilizing the sensibility of all of us. Each person uses the senses of others through direct or indirect communication with them, and what each one knows as the sensible world he knows as the correlate of this communicatively connected intersubjectivity. As known, the sensible world is therefore an essentially communal world and an aspect of the cultural world. The attempt and claim on the part of the naturalistic attitude to abstract from all irreal or subject-relative determinations is therefore “a kind of self-forgetfulness” according to Husserl (Hua IV, pp. 183–184/193).

and actions categorial structures, uplift communities of influence. Cultural life is “political” in the broadest sense, since it is structured especially by how people cooperate and talk with each other regarding (in Aristotle’s words) “the advantageous and the harmful, and hence also the just and the unjust” (1253a14–15; 1984, p. 37). Its objects are more solid and stable, since communication and cooperation give them more intersubjective force. With the help of others’ explanations and corrections, these objects are less protean when handed around.¹⁶ Many of its objects and actions are inherently cooperative and implicate us in obligations toward others. Many of its norms are linguistically expressed and explained and not merely picked up, making them both more sophisticated and enduring. In general, we can say that language uplifts the mere influence of this community, making many of its objects, styles, and norms more determinate, stable, and complex.

An influence can breed in chance acts of voyeurism and posing, but a cultural community is not a set of individuals occasionally bouncing off of each other. People are members of it by continually taking part in overlapping cooperative communities, making it a textured web of personal unities whose members share their lives together, continually intergerminating their partial cultural worlds by cooperating with people who are parts of other cooperative groups. Most importantly, the human requirements of birth and physical and spiritual development, especially linguistic development, mean that we are given the world of culture as the only world we know with the sustained help of those who raise us. This is a shared life, and we are immersed in it. It is not a merely similar life or the inheritance of a few strains of related influences.

This community’s primary institution or cultural good is the shared language that is the depository of accumulated cultural wealth and that gives us ready handles for other objectivities of culture and allows new personal connections of cooperation and influence to get off the ground easily. We generate and regenerate it, but a language doubles back to generate us as members of the community. As correlated to a community of influence it lacks exact boundaries and remains open to further development in an indeterminate future. It, with its imprecise and porous boundaries, is the easiest way to demarcate the indeterminate communicative community, with its imprecise and porous boundaries, as encompassing all those who have coinherited this cultural world and are present to each other as ready interlocutors and interactors in prepackaged ways.¹⁷

Language gives people a sense of unity *with each other* as potential interlocutors facing the same named or namable objects. Our sense of unity *as a whole* is especially fostered by influences about our shared influences, traditions about our traditions, and these are made possible by language. Gerhart Husserl explains, “A

¹⁶ With communication we also have the possibility of tradition in the special sense of something handed down to a new generation *unchanged*. For example, sacred traditions cannot be sustained through mere influence, but require cooperative maintenance. On this sense of tradition, see, e.g., Congar (2004) and Pieper (2008). Such a tradition is not necessarily dead. On the reason for this, see note 9 above.

¹⁷ This easiest way is imperfect. Because of translation and bilingualism, the communicative community is broader than the community that shares a particular language. We encounter people of languages that we do not speak as communicatively linked to ourselves, but more indirectly and “potentially.”

people is animated by the consciousness of a common past,” and he points out that “[t]he peculiarly retrospective character of a people comes to the fore” in the fact that “it is represented not by living men but by its great dead” (1939, pp. 131, 134). Though there could be a communicative community without them, these stories or histories about the emergence of and changes to our ways of doing things, or about the “founding” of “our people,” are particularly important in giving the community self-consciousness as having a shared past or as being a people. Because the unity essentially belonging to this community arises historically as a result of commonly inherited influences, it is in hearing stories about shared sources that its members get a deeper sense of themselves as coinheritors. Steinbock (1995, pp. 213–219) emphasizes that historical narratives have generative import also in that by retelling them, perhaps selectively or creatively, people critically renew or reconstitute the community.

Like all communities of influence, the cultural community gives us norms. But it is the community of influence that possesses not merely one or two similar items, but the entire cultural world into which all influences are subsumed. Thus, it provides *something like* a cosmos of norms. It endows its members with standards for action that are more ordered, categorially structured, and powerful, often rising to the level of principles. These norms are sometimes articulated, but are often unself-conscious, implicitly and powerfully intimated by the speech, activities, and attitudes of our everyday common life. Thus, according to Husserl in The Vienna Lecture, the cultural community shares an overarching style, way of life, or governing attitude that runs very deep: “Attitude, generally speaking, means a habitually fixed style of willing life comprising directions of the will or interests that are prescribed by this style, comprising the ultimate ends, the cultural accomplishments whose total style is thereby determined. The individual life determined by it runs its course with this persisting style as its norm” (1970, p. 280).¹⁸ The cultural community supplies its members with convictions and values in hierarchies, but as influences these are in constant redevelopment rather than being rigid.¹⁹

Here Husserl’s analysis of the cultural community’s governing style or attitude approaches Aristotle’s claim in the *Politics* that a people is united by a regime (*politeia*) that amounts to a whole way of life comprising an understanding of the good life and of justice and that is reciprocally determined by and determines the regime or governing body (*politeuma*) and their style of life and rule. Husserl’s concept of a governing attitude is, however, more amorphous, implicit, and historically dynamic, and more faithful to the nonmonolithic character of a people’s way of life. Also, the “attitude” Husserl speaks of is not as directly tied to the

¹⁸ A cultural “attitude” occurs within the natural attitude, and is not in competition with the natural attitude or with the phenomenological attitude.

¹⁹ As the just quoted passage from The Vienna Lecture continues, “Humanity (or a closed community such as a nation, tribe, etc.), in its historical situation, always lives under some attitude or other. Its life always has its norm-style and, in reference to this, a constant historicity or development” (1970, p. 280). And as Husserl points out in *Phenomenological Psychology*, works of objectified spirit “appear amid constant change in the unity of a history” such that “the experiential world as cultural world has a perpetually changeable historical countenance” (Hua IX, pp. 53, 113/39, 86).

government as Aristotle's "regime," which arranges its members via offices in a cooperative community.

It follows from our description that, although the cultural community shares a governing attitude, its rule is not totalitarian. Each person and personal community has a style that can be more or less wrapped up into the culture's overarching way of life.²⁰ Moreover, though there are dominant spiritual forces in this community, there is no unified center.²¹ Each person deals with some people more than others, in tighter or looser communities, in actions that are more or less important for the total shape of one's life. Consequently, all cultural communities must contain innumerable subcultures.²² A culture is simply the type of thing that must both constitute an all-encompassing spiritual world of language, objects, and norms and also comprise many personal spheres with their own subcultures that might push against the current but will still more or less fit into the culture and give this culture's generalities varied determinate expressions.²³ The culture at large, which is constituted only through these myriad subcultures, is made of genuine but very general currents. The universe of norms it presents to us resembles but falls short of

²⁰ Husserl claims that each human is not merely an individual of a categorizable kind, the important features of which are preknown by knowing the type. Because of reason and the development of personal character, each person is someone we would have to "get to know" beyond all typifications: "To see a man does not mean to already know him. To see a man is—as we have found—different from seeing a material thing. Each thing is of a certain kind. If one knows the kind, the rest can be dispensed with. A man, however, has an individual kind, and each man has a different one. According to the universal, he is a man, but his kind as his character, his person, is a unity, constituted in his course of life, as a subject of position-takings, i.e., a unity of multifarious motivations based upon presuppositions" (Hua IV, p. 274/286–287). Husserl here is discussing the human being as member of a biological species, but the same holds for our cultural memberships: the person has an individuality or personality that is never captured completely by any cultural classifications.

²¹ This claim contrasts with Husserl's hope that, in a fully mature human culture, all people would freely subordinate themselves to a centralizing shared will, concentrating themselves into a willing-community, and philosophers would be like the brain of the body or *nous* of the soul ordering the community according to their insights. This is discussed in Sect. 5, below.

²² Drummond, in discussing Aron Gurwitsch's account of membership, explains that we identify with others in the community because "membership... is based simply upon the fact that one has the same historical heritage as other members do, that one lives in the present in virtue of the same past, that one is born into the same life-context as they." He also critiques Gurwitsch by emphasizing that differentiation occurs because I encounter others as involved in "autonomous thinking" and thus "as having appropriated these traditions in varying ways, ways that arise from their free and responsible exercise of critical reflection" (2002, pp. 146–148). This is correct, but it overlooks that differentiation occurs also because no one shares the same life-context completely; no one inhabits the same position in the web that is the cultural community. That is, culture is essentially not monolithic, even prior to critical reflection and idiosyncratic appropriation.

²³ This aspect of culture, along with how Husserl understands "Europe," might help explain why Husserl does not view a universal human culture, even one that is European in his rarified sense, as inconsistent with substantial cultural heterogeneity and national differences. And this might help address those commentators who have criticized Husserl as Eurocentric and insufficiently sensitive to diversity. Steinbock, for example, writes, "While achieving the one world seems to be Husserl's goal, I contend that his generative descriptions of intersubjectivity challenge it forcefully: such a synthesis of homeworld and alienworld generatively examined is impossible" (1994, p. 460). Nevertheless, in this paper I will not address the question of Eurocentrism or the possibility of a universal culture directly.

a rationally ordered and stable cosmos, since it contains multiple forces straining against each other and pulling us in contrary directions.²⁴

4 The Cultural “Us”: Not a Cooperative Community

It is not news that persons sharing a culture influence each other accidentally and purposely and talk and cooperate regularly. The strategic distinctions Husserl has given us between types of intersubjective motivation and determination and between types of community help us understand the essential necessity of these features of our living together culturally. A further feature follows: it is impossible for the cultural community to become fully, cooperatively reasonable and responsible, putting culture under our plans.

Personhood is normative for Husserl, requiring the ability to measure one's free subjective life by the norms of reason (e.g., consistency, truth, insight). He reserves the title “personality of a higher order” for those communities that can take responsibility for their shared deeds. Doing so requires that the common spiritual works are purposely done. Cooperative communities do not always act reasonably or with full authenticity of their members—one thinks of Kim Jong-il's master-minded gymnastic shows, where the participants' actions are coercively subsumed in his insane works of choreographic art—but they are purpose-communities and thus are able in principle to be (and should be) judged by the norms of reason. In contrast, Husserl states in “Gemeingeist II,” “[b]ut personalities of a higher order, authentic personal connections, and mere communicative communities, effect-communities, must be distinguished; a language does not originate as a constitution does in a parliamentary state” (Hua XIV, p. 201).²⁵

Husserl discusses the possibility that a people becomes a personality of a higher order by its members acquiring a practical communion. A linguistic community, he concludes, is not a community of purpose with its distribution of functions and obligations, and he then adds: “If the people is a civil nation [*Staatsvolk*], then the unity of the state and the unity of the community constituting forms of custom, etc., are nevertheless separate” (Hua XIV, pp. 182–183). If a cultural community takes on a cooperative identity, these two levels remain distinct. Recalling the similarity between Husserl's governing “attitude” and Aristotle's “regime” allows us to state a difference. Aristotle claims that the *polituema* is the *politeia*, “the governing body is the regime” (1278b9–11; 1984, p. 94), and that the governing group gives the city its form such that the regime is “the way of life of a city” (1295a40–b1; 1984, p. 133). Especially when it springs from the culture's deepest convictions about justice and the good, a governing body seems to be something of a unified center for

²⁴ As Steinbock puts it, “even within the homeworld itself there can be diverse conflicting and rivaling normalities. The renewal of a culture's generative force may even require such diversity and such a transcending” (1994, p. 461).

²⁵ Along the same lines, in a note supplementing *Ideas II* Husserl comments that there are “forms of community which are not full personalities and which are not societies of will and action” and offers as examples “linguistic communities [and] national communities without a national ‘will’” (Hua IV, p. 316/329).

the cultural community and it is usually the cooperative community of greatest cultural influence.²⁶ The culture provides matter for the polity, and the governing body tries to take it in hand to make it more of a defined unity and to arrange its various ways of life and norms into an ordered whole. The polity provides the cultural community with a more stable shape and more self-control, but it exists at a different level, founded on culture, and its power over culture is always imperfect and indirect. In other words, Husserl helps us understand why regime (*politeia*, constitution) change is not as simple as regime (*politeuma*, ruling group) change and why our political “way of life” together encompasses much more than our governmental organization.²⁷

It is an abstraction to think of the human as pure person. Our spiritual life grows up out of a “root soil” of subrational animality, drives, sensibility, and habitualities, and requires also higher level habitualities by which the residue of reason’s past acts returns to enrich this soil. Our rational acts set up habitualities that sink down into us to permeate our styles of thinking. Though this process uplifts the human person as a whole, allowing him to live more reasonably, it works because past acts, however reasonable, exercise a pull over future acts that is not in itself rational. These subrational aspects of the human being support but also limit our ability to live up to reason’s norms.²⁸ At the communal level, we must remind ourselves that the analogous “personhood” of a cooperative community, too, is grounded in strata not produced by or fully under the control of cooperative reason, including the communal habitualities that constitute culture. As Drummond puts it, “The active community arises against the background of the passivity essential to the generative community” (2000, p. 34). The cultural community continues spreading from person to person despite the comings and goings of any cooperative unity built upon it. Our cultural world and its constantly propagating spiritual fruits seem simply out of reach of our plans and organization. Cultural activities are “unorganized and unorganizable” even when cooperative communities successfully build themselves within and on top of the cultural community (G. Husserl, 1939, p. 144).

The question arises how or whether the cultural community might be able to take responsibility for itself and its development.

²⁶ As Aristotle puts it, “for whatever the authoritative element conceives to be honorable will necessarily be followed by the opinion of the other citizens” (1273a40–2; 1984, p. 82).

²⁷ This also helps us appreciate why Husserl devotes significant time to philosophy of culture while remaining regrettably poor in political philosophy. As Drummond points out, “Husserl, unlike, say, Aristotle or Hegel, does not believe that the community *qua* political is the *telos* or fulfillment of all social groupings; he reserves that privilege for the authentic moral community” (2000, pp. 41–42). Also, Husserl helps us see why a good culture is not to be gotten primarily through governmental action.

²⁸ According to Husserl, “The spiritual ego” is an abstraction from the corporeal side of the human (Hua IV, p. 97/103). The empirical subject is not fully a person “in the specific sense” whose acts are free, self-responsible, and to be judged by the norms of reason (Hua IV, p. 257/269). While the “autonomy of reason, the freedom of the personal subject consists in the fact that I do not yield passively” to drives, inclinations, or influences (Hua IV, p. 269/282), the spiritual ego has “its underlying basis” (Hua IV, p. 275/288) in unfree layers of conscious life: “The specifically spiritual Ego, the subject of spiritual acts, the person, finds itself dependent on an obscure underlying basis of traits of character, original and latent dispositions, and thereby dependent on nature.” He continues: “All life of the spirit is permeated by the ‘blind’ operation of associations, drives, feelings” (Hua IV, p. 276/289).

5 Reproach: A “Philosophical” Culture?

Husserl often states that the entire human world should be governed by reason and purpose.²⁹ As he comments in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*,

To be human at all is essentially to be a human being in a socially and generatively united civilization; and if man is a rational being (*animal rationale*), it is only insofar as his whole civilization is a rational civilization, that is, one with a latent orientation toward reason or one openly oriented toward the entelechy which has come to itself, become manifest to itself, and which now of necessity consciously directs human becoming. (Hua VI, p. 13/15)

Husserl’s argument here seems quite simple. Humans are social and cultural beings. Humans are rational beings, and reason is normative. For us to live up to the norms of reason, our social and cultural lives need to live up to them; and that means, we need to actively guide ourselves according to the goal of living up to these norms, even in our cultural lives. This gives us Husserl’s thesis that the fulfillment of the norms belonging essentially to the person requires an entire rational humanity.

Given the above discussion of the cultural community, our concern is with what Husserl might mean by conscious direction of, or an actively guided, cultural life. In the third Kaizo article, for example, Husserl alludes to communities without a centralizing common will: “Sometimes a community works many-headedly and yet in a higher sense ‘headlessly’: that is, without concentrating itself into a unity of a willing-subjectivity and acting analogously to an individual subject. It can, however, also take on this higher form of life and become a ‘personality of a higher order’” by becoming a willing-community. He then seems to imply that the will on the part of members to renew their culture and to make it genuinely human must take the form of a will to become a willing-community, and that success here—actually renewing and living out a genuine human culture—happens only in the transformation of the cultural community into a willing-community (Hua XXVII, p. 22). It seems that to make culture genuine is for Husserl to transform it into a community of purpose rather than allowing it to drift along as a “mere” *Wirkungsgemeinschaft* (Hua XIV, p. 204).

Husserl articulates the supreme practical goal of his philosophy, often put in troublingly ambitious terms, as a “godly person of a higher order,” which is the fully authentic community of fully authentic individuals; that is, its members live ethically and participate insightfully in the community’s cooperative will for the ethical life of the community and its members.³⁰ This community, a “genuine

²⁹ Hart (1992a, p. 99) paraphrases Husserl on how the norms of reason need to be applied to communities: in full authenticity, the community “no longer lives in a culture of blind becoming and growth, as rich as this might be in the creation of values. Rather, now it is organized to a unity of will which is directed to its true humanity as an absolute idea and strives to take the shape suitable to the development toward an absolutely valuable human community” (Hua XXVII, p. 119).

³⁰ On the philosophical culture and a “new humanity” as the ultimate practical goal of Husserl’s philosophy, see especially Brainard (2001, 2007).

humanity,”³¹ would share a “philosophical culture.”³² Its leaders (“archons”) use philosophy’s insights to “rationally order communal life” (Husserl 2003, p. 291). It requires philosophy for two tasks: defense and offense. Just as it defends the accomplishments of the natural attitude, philosophy must defend the foundations of the community and of the ethical life from sophistry and cynicism, which attack the person’s ability to live reasonably, with insight into the good. Philosophy must also articulate the life of reason and truth, the ethical life, as the fully human life (see Husserl 2003, esp. p. 292). Philosophy thus breaks ground for “the idea of a new humanity and human culture...based on philosophical reason” (Husserl, 2003, p. 291).³³

Husserl’s description of this ideal humanity seems to forget that the cultural community is essentially different from a willing-community. It does not make sense to force the abstract-ideal teleological fulfillment of willing-communities onto it.³⁴ While Zdzisław Krasnodębski seems wrong to say that Husserl “combined seemingly radical individualism with collectivism,” he seems right that “Husserl’s political philosophy may be seen as a manifestation of the striving for the abolition of society and its replacement by community” (1993, p. 346).

Even Husserl’s description of the authentic willing-community comprised of fully authentic persons seems to go overboard with rationalistic hope, based as it is on abstracting the free and reasonable subject from the concrete human animal, who is not all “person” in Husserl’s sense. Richard Velkley suggests that, in this part of his philosophy, Husserl seems to assume that the fallenness of humanity can be blamed on bad theory such that true philosophy can save the community practically, and this seems to assume that rationality is the human essence, that we have no *nature* that might put limits on our ability to live rationally, individually or communally.³⁵ Husserl’s exhortations that we should strive to live in constant

³¹ Regarding “genuine humanity,” Husserl elaborates: “For what is that but a truly responsible humanity, which as such strives to live in self-responsibility that is wakeful at all times; that is determined at all times to follow ‘reason’ to govern itself, and only in accordance with norms that it has thought itself and into which it itself has had insight; and that is able at all times to defend the absolute, normatively justified character of its actions with reference to ultimate sources of finality” (Husserl 2003, p. 286).

³² Husserl’s call for a “philosophical culture” seems to mean not that all people become philosophers, but that they become philosophical in a Socratic, ethically awake sense. His call is for “renewal in the sense of ethical turnaround and the formation of a universal ethical culture” (Hua XXVII, xi; trans. in Hart 1992a, p. 91; see also Brainard 2007, p. 28).

³³ As Depraz (1995) helps us appreciate, the role of the philosophical community here for Husserl is noble rather than forceful; philosophers lead and order community life through authority, example, and articulation of the good, rather than through force or state power.

³⁴ Drummond comments that such communities “do not fulfill their teleological direction toward the fullness of community” and are not “genuine communities,” which are “those populated by authentic individuals each of whose willing activity involves a rational insight into what is valuable and an autonomous willing grounded in that insight” (1996, pp. 245, 247). I am making a further claim: it is a mistake to apply this norm to the cultural community.

³⁵ On these two points, see Velkley (1987), to which this paper is, in some respects, a response. For example, Husserl implies that sin or human fallenness results only from the failure of reason to live wide awake all of the time: “A naïve, unreflective living-along leads to sin. Man as man is afflicted with the original sin; it belongs to the essential form of man” (Hua XXVII, p. 44; trans. in Brainard 2001, p. 233).

wakefulness and that all human beings should become philosophical are indications that his thought here is abstracting from the undersides of human rationality.

Of course, Husserl knows this.³⁶ He has himself instructed us that “every spontaneity sinks down into passivity” (Hua IV, p. 333/345), that lively cultural activity always has its basis in sedimented culture,³⁷ and that philosophical reason clarifies and augments pre-philosophical reason without being able to replace or needing to direct it. This is not to be lamented as a mere limitation on our ability to live rationally, since secondary passivity provides pregivenness for future acts, necessary for the development of personal character and for communal life. Lamenting this as mere limitation commits the same philosophical error as lamenting that we can see a physical thing only by seeing its outsides and from a certain angle, or lamenting that we cannot hear a song all at once. Human rationality itself is dependent upon nonrational forces, and large-scale group action is dependent on a prior community of influence and tradition. Forgetting this can be dangerous. Though Husserl identifies cynicism and skepticism as the primary dangers facing humanity, idealism, especially about communal life, also has proven fatal to ethical living. After all, idealists, because they are more optimistic about what could be, are often the most cynical and destructive toward what is, concretely, now.³⁸

Husserl rightly warns us against the *Realpolitikers* and pessimists who refuse to be governed by the ideal because it cannot be realized completely (Hua XXVII, p. 4). Equally, when pursuing the ideal we must remember that our approaches to the absolute are relative to our way of being. “We must have the courage to face up to the relativities,” Husserl says (Jaegerschmid 2001, p. 333). When talking about the new humanity he occasionally adds reminders of these relativities, e.g., of human finitude and of the continuity with life below or before the philosophical turnabout that is ethical and cultural renewal. Still, his exhortations to rationality and responsibility are too often not balanced enough by an appreciation of human limits.

³⁶ Husserl knows, and describes well, the limitations of the life of reason based on its dependences in subrational subjective life. See note 28, above. Although Husserl does not often speak of human nature, he does tell us that “every spirit has a ‘natural side,’” and that “[i]n a certain sense there is, in the obscure depths, a root soil” (Hua IV, p. 279/292).

³⁷ “Culture, however, always has its milieu of civilization, the productive liveliness its milieu of externalized liveliness, its milieu of immersion, of ‘conventional,’ merely ‘traditional,’ no longer or hardly still understood spirituality” (Hua XXVII, p. 111).

³⁸ For example, Krasnodębski criticizes Husserl’s philosophy of culture by reminding us about a threat that Husserl did not warn Europe against: “communism was neither cynicism nor nihilism nor a manifestation of the Asiatic spirit—or at least not exclusively—but rather a radical humanism which arose from European culture. Patočka and Ingarden had to deal with a system born not of dislike of science but excessive confidence in it, not of skepticism and irrationalism, but of rationalism” (1993, p. 349).

6 Reapproach

So what shall we do with Husserl's urging that humanity throw off passivity and rationally direct its own future development? One might object either by denying that a cultural community can be a community in the relevant sense, or by pointing out that Husserl here is demanding the impossible, based on treating the human as pure person. Both responses are appropriate but do not absolve us of the responsibility to try to live insightfully in our cultural lives and to aim for a humane culture at large. Since we should not become the *Realpolitikers* who shrug off the norms of reason and the goal of an authentic human life in truth, we must not deny the deep validity of Husserl's calls to take up our personal responsibility and to foster for ourselves and other people a reasonable, healthy, and genuinely human culture.

To be an "authentic," rational, and self-conscious community in Husserl's sense, the cultural society would have to acquire "an appreciation of itself and a will directed to itself, a will to self-formation" (Hua XXVII, p. 49; trans. by Hart 1992b, p. 269). We might, I think, attempt this in two ways. First and most obviously, we do so through cooperative groups specifically tasked with maintaining or reforming our common way of life. Some cooperative communities—parts within the whole of the cultural community, such as governments, churches, and schools—often understand themselves in this way. Such organization is indeed very important, especially because (as Aristotle reminds us) most people some of the time and some people most of the time need external guidance in living well.³⁹ But precisely because the community of influence is not the same as any such community of purpose, it would be absurd to expect this to be the primary way in which a cultural community lives authentically. Though we may wish that reasonableness and effectiveness (*Tüchtigkeit*) in reforming culture were within the power of our will (Hua XXVII, p. 4), culture and the cultural community, as arising obliquely, require more indirect strategies for reform.

Second and more mundanely, the community of influence can per se take on a will directed to its rational development only by its members becoming self-conscious as students and tutors of culture. Each of us, when made aware of how we are influenced by others, must try to bear our status as inheritors nobly rather than slavishly, to adopt or reject influences critically, creatively, and with insight.⁴⁰ Each of us, when made aware of how we influence others, must try both to

³⁹ See *Nicomachean Ethics* 10.9, 1180a: "For most people are more obedient to compulsion than to argument, and are persuaded more by penalties than by what is beautiful" (2002, p. 197).

⁴⁰ Although influence is often inauthentically passive, it need not be. I can self-responsibly take ownership of another's spiritual accomplishment, while still taking it up as from another. As Husserl puts it in *Phenomenological Psychology*, "When I follow the other, it is possible that I can reproduce his insight and that I do so. In this way I follow him rationally and decide according to his reason and simultaneously according to my own, since his becomes my own when I follow his example....My decision is a decision fashioned after another's and yet I have decided by free exercise of reason. I can justify it to myself. On the other hand, it remains true that it does not stem purely from me, I am not the author; I follow another's authority but on the basis of my own reason simultaneously" (Hua IX, p. 213/163). This point is crucial for the possibility of reasonable traditions and traditions of reasonableness.

influence them well and to help them be influenced authentically rather than slavishly.

This is a tall order, because all of our actions can influence others indirectly. As Husserl tells us in “Gemeingeist II,” “no personal deed is actually isolated,” thanks to its disposition to motivate others: “But as far as empathy—existence for each other, existence in a common life-horizon—extends, that far it is valid to say that no personal deed is actually isolated, that it is always at least disposed to motivate other subjects” (Hua XIV, p. 206). This disposition of our deeds to motivate others belongs most obviously to public actions and most subtly to character-shaping private actions. This power belongs also to the traces our deeds leave in material culture, in which our meaningful activities persist embodied in the world such that they “subsequently can become again and again radiation-points [*Ausstrahlungspunkten*] of spiritual forces” for whoever can understand (Hua XXVII, p. 21). In this regard, making an analogy to the propagation of light, Husserl speaks of a “spiritual Huygens principle,” so that we might generate a spiritual movement by influencing others who then influence others, etc. This suggests to me that perhaps culture might be renewed and made more reasonable through small but multiplying steps, the daily work of influence rather than through the activist transformation of cultural life into a purpose-driven project.

This second strategy could be understood as a nuanced version of the first. The cultural community cannot be turned into a cooperative community, but it could approach becoming coextensive with one, acquiring a will directed toward itself as a cultural community, if we functionalize our membership in it. By appropriating my *de facto* status as an inheritor and transmitter of influence, I take on, founded on this status, a role in the cooperative enterprise of fostering the culture itself. Such a cooperative community would ideally encompass the culture’s mature members. Yet, such a role in each member’s life must remain partial; it could never exhaust any member’s personal identity, since that would turn him into a mere receiver-and-transmitter rather than a subject with reason and integrity, creatively adding to and transforming culture through his own vocation, living ethically with insight into his life and accomplishments. The person is always more than his cultural inheritance and cooperative roles.

This second strategy, I suggest, is a more palatable way of reconceiving Husserl’s talk of “a new humanity” led by and grounded in a scientific philosophy. Sometimes it seems that this is just what his exhortations are asking from us. Because this would not put the content of culture’s development under our rational designs, culture would still involve blind becoming: no person or group could plan or take responsibility for the sprawl of culture in its details. This community must remain headlessly multiheaded, and no unifying will can concentrate it into a different type of thing. This strategy would overcome blind becoming in another sense, though: it would place reasonableness, truth, the true good, and insight themselves atop the hierarchy of culturally transmitted norms. Putting aside Husserl’s rhetoric, to the extent that our species of social animal is rational (and the extent is far from complete), and thus called to live together and to live in the truth, this responsible appropriation of our status as receivers and transmitters of influence is required to foster a mature culture.

Although this strategy might make us more receptive to what Husserl says, we must also worry about what he does not say. As James G. Hart points out, Husserl tends to neglect the theme of “how culture is also *ethos*, i.e., how, to put it in Aristotelian terms, culture establishes the beginnings of character over which the individual agent has no control” (1992a, p. 108). Thus, even this second strategy courts a dangerous abstraction, because it answers to only part of our need for a rational culture. Rather than focusing on how to make the cultural “us” into an authentic “we,” we should focus on what the teleological fulfillment of culture is, as distinct from the fulfillment of cooperative communities. The cultural community inherently does not have a purpose; yet it may have an end, a characteristic work that it can do better or worse. How does it, in its own essentially distinct way, serve the living well of the human person? Clearly, by influencing us well, i.e., by forming us, by first forcing us and then allowing us to join in and learn from others’ lives. It shapes our capacities and gives us avenues for exercising them with an open multitude of other people.

By focusing on how the cultural community and its expressions can become “authentic” (i.e., reasonable, responsible, and insightful), Husserl skips over half of culture’s being: culture is not just expression of our spirit that is shared with others but also a source of influence to us from others. Husserl insists that to be rational the human person, because he is social, requires a rational culture. But the human person needs a rational culture not primarily as an expression of his rationality. He first encounters his culture as something given him (indirect object) in influence from others, and he needs it before he can even express or appropriate anything insightfully. He needs it first as a source of rationality. And because he is not just rational and social, but also animal, he needs a culture that addresses his subrational life, preparing it for, drawing it into, and supporting his life of reason. A reasonable human culture addresses us as humans, as not perfectly rational. Thus, when we try to influence others well, this influence should take many forms—rhetorical and emotional as well as more calmly rational. Ironically, it is when Husserl is the most rhetorical that he most neglects the aspects of human life and culture that make rhetoric necessary and legitimate.

Finally, our two epigraphs pull in opposite directions. Husserl urges us toward a rational culture, and because he focuses on our identity as free and rational agents (in the nominative), a rational culture means one in which we rationally, purposively and insightfully, produce and take over spiritual goods; Sokolowski reminds us to appreciate how our rationality arises only in our being shaped and informed by others’ influences. These thoughts may be brought together if we reconsider what makes a culture reasonable.

A culture is reasonable not because it is the *product* of rationality or because it is *received* rationally (“appropriated”), but because it *cultivates* our reason.

If our rational and cooperative achievements build upon, rather than radically oppose, our animal and social root soil, we should not reject as cynicism all opposition to Husserl’s abstract ideal of replacing historical culture with a philosophically founded and ordered community. Our root soil needs cultivation, and not just through arguments: “Someone who is going to be good needs to have been raised and habituated in a beautiful way.”⁴¹

⁴¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 10.9, 1180a; 2002, p. 198.

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