

## The Experience of Strangeness and the Possibility of Manifestations in Social Roles with Reference to A. Schutz and H. Plessner

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The aim of the article is to describe the peculiar situation of a stranger and a homecomer from the perspective of what they have at their disposal and how they occur in social relations. In this regard, firstly, we explore the configurations of the experience, and secondly, the forms of performing roles in private and public space, diplomacy and tact. This is examined with reference to the ideas of liminal subjectivity in A. Schutz and radical artificiality in H. Plessner. Both thinkers drew from the phenomenological tradition and were concerned with questions of social relations, although they rarely appear together in theoretical considerations. The study does not intend to compare them; however, it does indicate how an exploration of their ideas can contribute to gaining greater insight into peculiar intersubjective relations.

**Keywords:** Schutz – Plessner – phenomenology of sociality – stranger – homecomer – role – manifestation

### Introduction

In the present article I draw on contributions of Helmuth Plessner and Alfred Schutz,<sup>1</sup> whose theoretical projects as well as personal histories were linked to

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<sup>1</sup> For papers analysing different aspects of both philosophies, see, e.g., Goettlich (2011), and especially Strassheim (2024). On the relations of Plessner as philosophical anthropologist and phenomenology, see Vydrová (2021, 2022). Both thinkers draw on phenomenological

the issue of home and its loss,<sup>2</sup> as well as to convoluted societal and political relations. The considerations present in their works are part of the history of ideas of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, both as an integral philosophical element of it and as its mirroring. Turning to their contributions, as I will try to show, draws our attention to the important perspective of liminal subjectivity and the role of embodiment, which reflects an attentive and appropriate approach to inter-subjective relations.

The two thinkers are methodically and thematically linked in their interest in the structures of the social world in everyday life, in ordinary and liminal forms and in the transformations of time and space. It is within the sphere of home and familiarity that the relation of I and Thou is formed in the most intimate sense. Together with spatial and temporal connectedness, and habits, they function as a basis for the constitution of the “We-structure” in a broader sense as the identity of the group, which then acquires a generalized character on a societal level forming institutions and policies. Narratives and political discourse can thus be related to primordial experience, and original intimate experience can occur in different social and public strata. However, between these levels of the personal, intimate and the societal – from personal stories to social narratives, *et vice versa* – inappropriate distortions, misunderstandings and conflicts can appear. Plessner addressed this in his critique of social radicalism and in his interest in role-settings, while Schutz did so in his critique of the scientific approach to social reality and in his interest in stranger/homecomer in relation to the social group. Here, both thinkers attempt to bring a perspective that adequately reflects subjective experience by drawing on phenomenology.<sup>3</sup>

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philosophy and share an analysis of the intersubjective and the living world structures. Both, though at different times and with different impact, were active at the New School for Social Research: Schutz’s activity was longer and significant (1943 – 1952), see Embree – Barber (2017, 41 – 79); Plessner was there as a professor emeritus during his stay in the USA (1962 – 1963), see Dietze (2006, 510 ff., in Embree – Barber, 2017, J. N. Mohanty remembers Plessner).

<sup>2</sup> Plessner emigrated in 1933 from Germany first to Turkey and afterwards to the Netherlands, Schutz in 1939 from Austria to USA.

<sup>3</sup> Texts such as “The Stranger,” “Homecomer,” and “Equality and the Meaning Structure of the Social World” show that the “the clues they find to the inner meanings of human conduct lead us closer to a sensible way of approaching its problems than any treatise on ‘techniques and methods of problem-solving’ could ever do” (Brodersen 1976, ix). At the level of personal histories and societal narratives, shifts between personal and public realms that

The aim of this article is to address two areas: the issue of the constitution of intersubjective relations in the specific situation of the home and the alien will, firstly, concern the particular configuration of the experience of the stranger and the homecomer, namely, of what they have and do not have at their disposal and how their situatedness in an alienated environment is laid out, as explored by Schutz; secondly, the article will consider the forms of manifestation in the private and public space against the background of Plessner's analysis of ceremony, prestige, diplomacy and tact. In what sense can these approaches follow each other? Whereas Schutz addresses peculiar experiential orientation by liminal subjectivity, its relation to time and space of the new group, Plessner looks at embodiment in roles, considering the living body and physical body and how it enables revealing and hiding in particular manifestations. The human, artificial in its nature, expresses itself and creates roles; however, from the perspective highlighted by Schutz, these take on exceptional forms. These dimensions of intersubjective orientation and expressivity can be illustrated with examples of emigration and life in totalitarian political regimes, in our case, with examples from the Central European context.

### **I. Being a Stranger and a Homecomer according to Schutz**

In the introduction to his first essay "The Stranger" (1944, a year before "Homecomer" was published), Schutz characterizes the social group as something which functions on the basis of its own pattern (of the relevant cultural circle) as an "unquestioned scheme of reference" (Schutz, 1976a, 97), which represents a system of what the individual considers as relevant,<sup>4</sup> important, according to which they can cope with situations, understand them and orient themselves within them. All this is firmly in our hands as members of a particular group, and we rely on it in our spontaneity. We do not have to know why it is so and yet we know how to act and decide. This is anchored in our experience and grounded in habits; it works when it is forgotten because we do not have to think about it all the time. We build structures of the life world that we affirm by validity, the commonplace, certainty – the way of writing, body movements when dancing, the way of greeting a neighbor, for

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take place in our everyday world, and which are carried out by our agency enable significant features to be uncovered, such as imposed relevances (Schutz 1976c) or a playful character of engaging the roles (Plessner 1999).

<sup>4</sup> The notion of relevance has been addressed by Schutz in a systematic way (cf. Schutz 1996, 3 – 5, 67 – 70).

instance; group members often get along without saying a word. In a group, we navigate as if we were in a professional kitchen, where everyone has a place and knows in advance what tool to reach for and where to put it, what to give to whom before they ask for it. We could say that it is the stranger who helps us to think about the layers creating such a functional group system – because a stranger's and our concepts of anonymity, typicality, risks and chances do not overlap, do not meet, and thus manifest themselves – precisely in their otherness.

Both the stranger and the homcomer are liminal figures. Foreigners come from a different cultural or social space – as immigrants or refugees, but also, as Schutz points out, as grooms, villagers moving to the city, candidates for membership in the professional community. The homcomer, by contrast, has left home and returns after a time to relationships trying to rebuild them – the most striking example of these texts, given the temporal framework, is the veteran, but we can also mention the re-emigrant,<sup>5</sup> the traveler, the person moving between urban and rural settlements.

The transition to another social group is accompanied by a certain confusion, problematicity, and crisis, and we will be interested, along with Schutz, in the configuration of experience that arises here. This is determined by its transitional character, the actual situation of loss of domestic space without yet being assimilated into the other group. There are different types of configurations of such experience, depending on who the actor is, on the axis of the researcher or observer, of the stranger and of the local community member. For these axes capture different intentions of thinking, acting and experiencing as dominant for the particular participant. While the researcher first reflects and observes the situation as well as their own position at some distance, the group member is immersed in the group, even if situated at a distance, usually in order to consolidate their own position as “in.” While the goal of the former is to minimize participation in such relations and merely reflect on them, the goal of the latter is to orient oneself according to relations and stabilize them. The stranger takes up a special distance and lays out own position to the group by confronting the system of relevances, making it explicit, but this is, of course, a different kind of distance compared to the observer.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Frequent examples of re-emigrants after the fall of the Iron Curtain describe various forms of unexpected alienation in families and old friendships or nostalgia in relation to culture and society.

<sup>6</sup> In a similar way Schutz points to the three different layers of analysis by equality (cf. 1976c, 227).

Schutz uses the analogy of a map with contours, distances that are an accurate guide to orientation. Contours express relevances (cf. 1996, 69), person's interests that increase or decrease. The knowledge of the world that accompanies and requires them is formed and sedimented accordingly. Erwin Straus uses a similar analogy of landscape and map when he traces how one orientates oneself on a journey or in a new terrain according to the questions one asks. As beings in the world, according to Straus, we are "questioning beings," which expresses our existential-anthropological nature. Questions structure, lay out and reveal the world, and so the map of our world reflects the space where we see our possibilities – our *where, why, how, with whom, for what* – they can be answered, are meaningful and can even be asked here. We expect an intelligible answer, and such a situation is then intersubjectively determined by the relation of receiving and giving. The question anticipates a meaningful context as the world as a whole which is more than the sum of its parts:

A map, just like language, does not simply reproduce something that would, in the same way, be available to us without it. The map is more than a merely mnemonic device, more than an illustrated symbol of an absent object, more than a summary. With its aid we take control of the territory in a new way...we are able to place the immediate data into an encompassing order comprehending that which is not immediately available to the senses (Straus 1955, 64).

A certain disadvantage of cartographic metaphors is the notion that the orientation in a group/space is equally a process of explicit knowledge, which is in fact only one part of it. As we have described above, the concept is a more holistic one based on implicit, habitual, embodied knowledge of *how*, a pre-understanding, more than merely reflected knowledge or knowledge of *what*. Speaking of this peculiarity of understanding and knowledge, Schutz distinguishes three characteristics: "(1) incoherent, (2) only partially clear, and (3) not at all free from contradictions" (Schutz 1976a, 93). The interests, plans and beliefs that form a system of relevances are relativized in time and environment, and are subject to what we are living at a particular time in our lives, whether we are in the private or public sphere. They are also often about convictions, beliefs and emotions, and less about pure rational reasoning. Orientation in social reality is stabilized in the group thanks to shared practices that hold the group together. This follows its own logic of intersubjective and practical matters and refers to sufficiency that is created by possibilities and affordances in which the actions and relations of group members are realized.

From a phenomenological point of view, we can trace various manifestations of such “sufficient knowledge” as positing attitude towards decision-making, beliefs, shared opinions and joint actions. Belief in a group, for example, is a mixture of trust and distrust; it can be manifested by an unverified acceptance of information within the group, but also by a suspicion of what is built on objectifying knowledge. When a society is in a state of crisis or social change, the imaginary scissors of belief and mistrust can open too wide. Circles of trust and distrust, certainty and suspicion are important factors in the construction of a social group.<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, attitudes based on positing bind other acts and are also intertwined with the positive knowledge of the group.

Any member born or reared within the group accepts the ready-made standardized scheme of the cultural pattern handed down to him by ancestors, teachers, and authorities as an unquestioned and unquestionable guide in all the situations which normally occur within the social world (Schutz 1976a, 95).

The above mentioned positions of researcher, stranger and group member can now show us how the occurrence of the stranger enables us to trace what might be referred to as the standardized schema of the group in its constitutive layers more than the effort of the researcher focused on the home group. The researcher can then describe these layers. However, the stranger cannot stay only in a position of attempts to get to know (*what*) the group but at some stage must enter knowing *how*, in other words, must change attitude and attempt to act, share, experience immediately. Schutz describes these shifts between mediate and immediate experiencing with a similar example to Plessner, using the example of acting on stage.<sup>8</sup> The insight into the behavior of the self is based on the performance of the role. Thus, the stranger moving from the home to the alien environment and then constituting a new home is an actor of immediate performances attempting to take roots that are mediated by

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<sup>7</sup> In a paradoxical way, this works in a totalitarian society, where, as V. Havel points out the life of a group can become a renunciation of truth and a life in lies: “life in the system is so thoroughly permeated with hypocrisy and lies...Individuals need not believe all these mystifications, but they must behave as though they did, or they must at least tolerate them in silence, or get along well with those who work with them. For this reason, however, they must *live within a lie*. They need not accept the lie. It is enough for them to have accepted their life with it and in it” (1985, 30, 31).

<sup>8</sup> Plessner offers a detailed view of the structure of experience in excentric positionality in three anthropological principles (2019) and in the anthropology of acting (2016).

primary experience of alienation, reflecting on the loss of certainty and trying to know new situation. When the stranger enters the group, a crisis emerges that disrupts the sharing in the group, the replication of its practices and the immediacy of living in the group. The crisis mediates that and makes the schema of the group more explicit.

What the stranger, by contrast, cannot unveil, and what remains locked in, is a shared past. In the new group, he finds himself as “a man without a history” (Schutz 1976a, 97). Also here a confrontation between image, representation, observed knowledge of the (home and foreign) group and the immediate experiencing and acting takes place. This confrontation of the mediate and the immediate can then be a source of mutual misunderstanding, mistrust and conflict. To use the analogy of the map again, it can be said that the stranger does not possess an orientation schema as a group member who moves within the map of the group does; the stranger enters it from the outside and suffers the “dislocation of his contour lines of relevance” (Schutz 1976a, 99). Moreover, the map not only presupposes a secure orientation and notion of the whole, as discussed above, but it also has its margins, “nooks,” or details that hold together the spontaneity of group members’ experience and action.<sup>9</sup> While awareness of the whole and knowledge of the map complete the objective aspect, schema and narrative of the group, more detailed knowledge is interwoven into the subjective histories and orientation in the edges. This means a level of sufficiency in which knowledge “at hand” becomes knowledge “in hand,” which is stabilized in typification. The stranger finds himself in a problematic situation both in terms of distance and the typification of behaviors that are supposed to resolve situations, as well as in terms of a subjective emotional framework that is supposed to provide reassurance and grounding. These frames are reversed – where the home member sees a place reserved for objectification, the stranger replaces it with a subjective attitude; the place of background and intimacy can in turn become rationalized, subjected to distance in distrust. Pseudo-typicality and pseudo-anonymity thus arise, as in terms of the pseudo-home of the homecomer.

To complement the part of liminal subjectivity, we can look at the situation of the homecomer. The home is both a geographical and highly symbolic and emotional identification with a particular space, relations and things. While the

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<sup>9</sup> “In order to command a language freely as a scheme of expression, one must have written love letters in it; one has to know how to pray and curse in it and how to say things with every shade appropriate to the addressee and to the situation” (Schutz 1976a, 101).



stranger is coping with alterity, unfamiliarity, and a sense of threat in relation to a new group, Schutz points out that homecomers, on the contrary, rely on renewed trust through memories and basic typification. Here, too, rupture and alterity emerge. On the one hand, there is a rupture in the familiarity, routine and intimacy that are originally rooted in the environment of home and which build the structure of memories, habits and simplifications; on the other hand, there is an obfuscation, an opacity of the situation which arises after the home coming (referring to Odysseus, Schutz mentions a fog around the homecomer). Home is a “null-point of the system of co-ordinates” from which the “texture of the home group” emerges as a temporal and spatial presence against an experiential and corporeal background (Schutz 1976b, 107, 111). Bodily sharing thus co-constitutes a continuity of the relational “we,” transparency, and the possibilities to manifest itself for the other. With that, however, the homecomer has lost living contact. Re-emigrants returning after 1989 to the post-communist countries experienced misunderstanding in such a way that they often gave up restoring relationships and a sense of home and returned to the foreign country while remaining in the role of an emigrant.<sup>10</sup>

The dynamics of transparency, sufficient clarity and, conversely, obscurity, unfamiliarity and uncertainty, derive not only from the relations between I and Other, laid out on the intersubjective level, but are also connected to the relations of the self to itself in terms – to introduce Plessner’s concept – of its excentricity. This means becoming who one is and expressing oneself in concrete manifestations and embodiment in roles that we will discuss in the next part.

## II. Modes of Manifestation: Plessner’s Conception of Expressivity

Plessner elaborated his conception in his seminal work *Levels of Organic Life and the Human* (1928) where he introduced fundamental anthropological principles of excentric positionality such as mediated immediacy, natural artificiality and the utopian standpoint. The issues of human expressivity and social relations were also analyzed in the *Limits of Community: A Critique of Social Radicalism* (1924) and *Political Anthropology* (1931). In the expressivity in which a person becomes who one is, expresses oneself, however, we also find opacity, the

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<sup>10</sup> The experiences of home loss occurred in a significant way after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, as described in many literary works, e. g. Zweig’s *Flight Without End*. “Zweig and Roth...represent the voices of being Central Europeans who have no place to go back to” (Trávníček 2009, 263).



constant coping with oneself and one's situation and the need to create expressions, roles, the need to act. In unproblematic situations and interactions revealing enables expression of one's own individuality and personality, establishing face-to-face relationships, sharing personal space; veiling, by contrast, functions as a form of conscious or unconscious protection on the societal level. This compensates for human vulnerability by giving up a part of one's own individuality in the public sphere and adopting patterns of public behavior in order not to jeopardize interiority. This can make situations in the public sphere easier to manage. The transition between the private and the public, grasped through the modalities of manifestation, shows the possibilities of stabilizing intersubjective relations in such a way that human dignity is preserved.

The individual at first must give himself a form that makes him unassailable, an armor that he can wear entering the battlefield of the public sphere. After having become visible in this manner, the individual demands corresponding relationships to (and answers from) other persons...An unassailable form has constantly two sides: it protects the inside and influences the outside. Such a form can possess, however, these sides only if it hides conclusively. To enter the public sphere without the unreal compensation of a form is too great of a risk. However, the human masks himself with this unreal compensation; he renounces his becoming respected and seen as an individual to produce, at least, representative effects in a representative meaning – that is, in a particular function – and to be respected for them (Plessner 1999, 133).

In terms of the stranger/homecomer, these schemes are inverted. To integrate into another group, the stranger needs to accept his own interiority and discover the internal structures of the group, but risks losing dignity, which tends to be stabilized in the schemas of social behavior. Conversely, the homecomer relies on the revelation of intimate relationships, but returns to the group with a schematized idea of the simplified typification which was experienced before leaving. He lacks the experience of the living presence of sharing; habituality has been interrupted and appears in various ways inadequate.<sup>11</sup>

Moreover, the narrative generalizes the representation of “stranger” and “homecomer” not as roles in the Plessnerian sense, but as generalized

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<sup>11</sup> “In a place where everything changed, the old memories and habits do not serve their purpose of orientating the subject in the world. They are still there, though. And this is...precisely what makes this situation unbearable for the subject” (Cavarrallo 2025, 292).

concepts that bind together attitudes accumulated in mainstream opinions and policies in relation to foreigners who are labelled as migrants, refugees or re-emigrants. The lived subjective and intersubjective situation can thus not only get out of hand for the stranger and the homecomer, since, as we have seen, their situation is complicated by their transition between the home and foreign groups, but also at the level of narratives producing their projections.

Plessner relates the genealogy of societal relations and expressions to the issue of formality. However, he argues that it is based on lived corporeality and the revealing and hiding that make recognition possible (1999, 134). This is realized through the performance of subjectivity (as in a play), embodying these tendencies through masks, formal and physical signs, through a sphere of ceremony and prestige.<sup>12</sup> Lived subjectivity is constantly in the performance of one's own life and cannot be grasped in essential or abstract determinations. And so, conversely, public space "rescues dignity in that it offers for (hard to comprehend) natural dignity the equivalence of one that is unreal, but clearly delimited" (Plessner 1999, 135). Personal and public life thus oscillate as dynamism and variability of life searching for the stabilizing forms of social reality. The term *nimbus*, aura, refers here to what is significant, in its irreal function and represents subjectivity, not as subordinated to externally given schemas. The idea of "*Noli me tangere*"<sup>13</sup> – to show and at the same time veil oneself, to protect one's untouchability and at the same time to show oneself in the performance of a role – points to how the situation of the individual in society can be bearable when one does not expose oneself to increased vulnerability, but at the same time remains present, embodied, in the situations at hand. As Plessner points out, there must be a "room to maneuver; they must have elastic flexible forms and levels, an entirely open system of possibilities and chances to succeed, or...chances to become valid" (Plessner 1999, 139).

Furthermore, corporeality can also be joined to the structure of social relating described by Schutz. Excentric positionality means being a body (*Leib*) and having a body (*Körper*), of a human finding oneself and acting in the

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<sup>12</sup> "...as a living being, the person contains a profusion of unexploited energy that demands activity and which is released principally in play. An elementary physical need, a play drive, governs the organic world. Even human relations must do justice to this drive (consciously or unconsciously), regardless of whether it concerns cheerful or serious life situations" (Plessner 1999, 146).

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Plessner (1999, 136): It "produces for its bearers space and the force of attraction, mask and face."

structures of the world and intersubjective relations. It thus relates to behavior which unfolds in the role and its particular expressions. One does this by animating the role, but at the same time one experiences a distance, because one is not fully absorbed in the immediacy of life and is also a mediated being, aware of one's own situation, of having and creating a role. One's nature is thus fundamentally artificial. "Naturalness is a task which appears to man in many guises when, in his personal or social development, he penetrates the artificiality of his existence" (Plessner 1970, 44). The role is thus not only an external function, nor are the manifestations of the role separated from one's own bodily being such as gestures, mimics, but also clothing, various status signs etc.<sup>14</sup>

We can illustrate this in the stranger/homecomer situation. In her autobiographical and reportage books, Irena Brežná describes the emigrant experience during the Communist period, after the invasion of the Warsaw Pact forces in 1968.<sup>15</sup> She captures the bodily alterity of refugees who could not come to terms with the new environment and experienced their corporeality as alienated, controlled, inappropriate – we could say that having a body dominated here as a reaction to an unbearable situation. The fact that people lost their home and found themselves in a foreign environment is seen in the disruption of the habitualities that they can no longer perform; not only in the impossibility of speaking the language, but also, more generally, in the impossibility of expressing themselves in a bodily expression (being a body); they were immobilized, without initiative. The self-relation contains the doubleness of what one experiences and at the same time incorporates the experience into one's own bodily schema. However, in terms of the stranger, both the relation to the "self" and the "place, the world" become liminal, for the novelty of the situation is too radical and cannot be transferred into the

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<sup>14</sup> Naming is also one such example, belonging to identity as well as to personal documents. Brežná after arriving at the refugee camp experienced striking alienation while the captain "wrote the name on the form and took away all its wings and sheets [diacritics]. He also crossed out my round feminine ending, gave me my father's and brother's surname...What was I to do with that severe masculine name?" (2014, 0:7–8) She could not officially get back the diacritics in her name in a new country: "so I wrote them down every time. And I was myself again." (1:23)

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Observations of an Emigrant or The Thankless Foreigner* (*Nevďačná cudzin(k)a*) – the Slovak title contains a word game "thankless foreigner/foreignness."

bodily schema as a productive innovation.<sup>16</sup> It is human nature – both as a desire and a need – to create forms of self-expression and to make use of concealment. This correlates with the constitution of the public realm, narratives, rights and dignity in society. In ordinary normal expressivity, one is anchored as a being who can act in the broadest sense of “*Ich kann*,” and express and shape oneself – in this sense the human is a being of power. Power is understood here, however, in the context of diplomacy and tact, as the protection of the aura, that is, as the skill of self-defense and the justification of the power one wants to achieve.<sup>17</sup> One then gives others as much space to express themselves as one needs to express oneself, but also to hide oneself. In other words, the reciprocity of forms of public appearance correlates with veiling, where I want to be invisible to the other and the other to me. Moreover, according to Plessner, tact is an attentiveness to the other and a respect that creates “pleasant sociable interactions, as it never permits too much closeness nor too much distance” (Plessner 1999, 163).

These structures of behavior, based on natural artificiality, have their effect in inconspicuousness and spontaneity, and thus they contribute to the natural social and psychological protection of the individual. Their exaggeration and enforcement come at the expense of normality in society and may be manifested by withdrawing from public contact or, on the contrary, by too much pressure for exposure in external manifestations. At the same time, tact is, according to Plessner, “the art of inner social differentiation” (1999, 165), which facilitates coping with situations when encountering otherness – tact in the narrow personal sense (and thus information-rich and detailed), diplomacy within broader social and institutional frameworks.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Cavarallo also points out that: “it is not a lack of habitual knowledge that causes the emotional distress typically associated with the experience of exile, but rather the maintenance and enactment of habits in a place other than where they were originally formed” (2025, 284).

<sup>17</sup> “Just as little as the person wants to be discovered, just as little as he endures a memory of the all-too-human, so too does he flee from the memory of the all-too-common brute force, without which, due to the inner legality of the public sphere, the aura [Cachet-tr.] would be impossible” (Plessner 1999, 154).

<sup>18</sup> Plessner shows where it leads if diplomacy and tact are not mastered, then inhospitality, tactlessness, fanaticism of ethics, purism, enmity, a pathetic Pharisaic devotion to authenticity etc. appear (1999, 167f.).

### **III. Conclusion**

The contributions of A. Schutz and H. Plessner together reveal relevant features of the convoluted intersubjective situation. It should be mentioned that although Schutz and Plessner did not refer to each other, they shared philosophical backgrounds. We can also say that both influenced other disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, and within that offered methodological and thematic insights based on phenomenology. This was the basis for their effort to find an appropriate approach to human affairs, and in this we see the first possibility of synergy in their attitudes.

We have observed the mutual interconnectedness of their approaches in how the liminal case of subjectivity by Schutz can be joined with the radical artificiality of Plessner. The form of the role in public space should serve not only for protection, but also for restraint. The aim is thus to secure realization of roles and maintain a status quo of society as balancing antagonisms. In terms of the stranger/homecomer and the perceived cultural and social divergences which are often sources of conflict, the appropriate response is to keep the sphere of performing the role and the possibility to hide in the role. There must therefore be a space for handling and arranging, for adaptable forms and an open system of opportunities for recognition. Plessner thus anticipated the multicultural nature of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, but also the need for creative citizenship and flexible role settings, reflecting oneself and one's often changing position under the pressure of social change, inventing new forms of social behavior as a counterbalance to nationalism, uniformity or populism. Hengstmengel (2014) sees in that the fruitfulness of Plessner's conception for social and legal theory. Likewise, Barber (2024) offers an updated version of Schutz's philosophy and highlights resilience, the affordances and potentials of social relations, to which playfulness and responsiveness can be engaged, as a reaction to pressures or stiffness and challenging situations. It opens for us further possibilities for linking the two thinkers, as well as linking phenomenology and philosophical anthropology. For while both Schutz and Plessner provide phenomenological elaboration of the issue of how subjectivity is intersubjectivity, they also present a diagnosis and the risks of liminal situations as well as a search for an appropriate point of departure from the turbulences they reflected and also witnessed.

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