Check for updates

ESSAY

Arguments for a rhetorical model of the knowledge ecosystems. Interpersonal communication and the intersubjectivity systems

[version 1; peer review: 1 approved with reservations, 1 not approved]

Codrin Dinu Vasiliu [1,2]

[1]Asociatia Rural Development Research Platform, Letcani, Iași, 707280, Romania
[2]Academia Romana Filiala Iasi, Iași, Iași County, Romania

v1 **First published:** 11 Nov 2025, **5**:346
https://doi.org/10.12688/openreseurope.21236.1
Latest published: 11 Nov 2025, **5**:346
https://doi.org/10.12688/openreseurope.21236.1

Abstract

The question of interpersonal communication is a part of a consolidated theoretical project in the field of social psychology. Interpersonal communication has grown into a fundamental reference beyond the field of exploratory knowledge. Further, in terms of critical thinking, this is the nodal point where interpersonal communication can be discussed under various circumstances and in the shade of different conceptual umbrellas. In light of this perspective, in this extended variant of the research undertaken in the present study, I am operating within three guidelines of analysis:

1.
Modus Operandi - the way I can understand the problem of interpersonal communication, having as a starting point the fundamental problem of subjectivity as tackled through the speculative exercises of philosophy.

2.
Constructio - a rhetorical model of interpersonal communication (RIC Model).

3.
Progressus - a systemic approach for applying the RIC Model in the management of knowledge ecosystems.

Keywords

RIC Model, Knowledge ecosystems, Intersubjectivity, Rhetoric, Philosophy, Model of interpretation, Interpersonal communication

Open Peer Review

Approval Status ? ✗

	1	2
version 1 11 Nov 2025	? view	✗ view

1. **Michael R Kearney**, Dordt University, Sioux Center, USA
Janie M. Harden Fritz, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, USA

2. **Johan Siebers**, Middlesex University London,, London, UK

Any reports and responses or comments on the article can be found at the end of the article.

This article is included in the Horizon Europe gateway.

Corresponding author: Codrin Dinu Vasiliu (codrindinuvasiliu@gmail.com)

Author roles: Dinu Vasiliu C: Conceptualization, Investigation, Methodology, Validation, Writing – Original Draft Preparation, Writing – Review & Editing

Competing interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Grant information: his project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No [101060876]
The funders had no role in study design, data collection and analysis, decision to publish, or preparation of the manuscript.

Copyright: © 2025 Dinu Vasiliu C. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License , which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

How to cite this article: Dinu Vasiliu C. **Arguments for a rhetorical model of the knowledge ecosystems. Interpersonal communication and the intersubjectivity systems [version 1; peer review: 1 approved with reservations, 1 not approved]** Open Research Europe 2025, **5**:346 https://doi.org/10.12688/openreseurope.21236.1

First published: 11 Nov 2025, **5**:346 https://doi.org/10.12688/openreseurope.21236.1

Argument

Suppose that the first meaning of philosophy is related to establishing the relationship between thinking and existence in order. In this case, the second task was directly linked to the analysis of intersubjectivity. How intersubjectivity is constituted at the existential and social levels poses a major speculative challenge. Knowledge is a phenomenon of interaction not only between an agent of knowledge (subject) and an object since, as a phenomenon of interaction, knowledge is produced and consolidated in the relationship between two agents and between two subjectivities.

Given this, the topic of interpersonal communication, as developed in psychosocial theories, provides a good opportunity to fill in blanks from the perspective of intersubjectivity. From this standpoint, in the field of speculative philosophy, I believe there are three pressing issues:

1. The problem of the relation between body and mind,
2. The problem of relation between thinking and language,
3. The problem of intersubjectivity.

Hence, directly or indirectly connected to the above-mentioned courses, I decided to start from the problem of subjectivity and discuss the following issues:

1. **The issue of reflexive subjectivity is a fundamental problem in interpersonal communication analysis.** It involves what we can call a *Modus operandi*, considering that subjectivity within the area of existential experience plays a double role: one constructive (for founding reasons) and one functional (for operationalization actions and procedures).
2. **The possibility of developing a rhetorical model of interpersonal communication (RIC Model).** In this research topic, I am mostly interested in strategic options, namely an interpretive action called *Constructio*, to precisely point out the constituting process of the rhetorical model.
3. **The RIC Model in knowledge ecosystem management starts with tools specific to the systems thinking paradigm.** I have chosen the title *Progressus* for this research dimension to focus the critical exercise on the development possibilities of the strategic action tools belonging to an RIC Model in the decisional processes. Based on this, we provide participatory knowledge, open education, collaborative governance, and inclusive development within knowledge ecosystems.

Regarding the embraced approach, I considered a decentralized approach. Thus, based on tools with critical and analytical objectives, I commenced with the speculative matter of subjectivity. I am trying to translate from philosophy a problem that could even be accepted and understood in the psychology territory and in these new theoretical sets that are growing at the outskirts of knowledge and communication anthropology:

- Interpersonal communication
- Systems Thinking.

This study was based on a research endeavor that started in 2018, Interpersonal Communication and the Issue of Intersubjectivity, (Dinu Vasiliu, 2018). At that point, I was merely interested in the speculative problems raised by the relationship between reflexive subjectivity and participatory intersubjectivity. In the research actions undertaken within the *Cities2030*[1] and *Ruralities*[2] projects (financed by the European Commission through the Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe programmes), I have developed concepts and methodologies for integrating the systems thinking paradigm in the knowledge ecosystems. Accordingly, I believe it is worth rethinking the problem of intersubjectivity in this context of knowledge ecosystems, which are constituted and developed using systems thinking instruments. I also intend to further develop this research as a connecting point between the first objective of this research, explored in 2019, and the epistemology that I have been developing in my research projects for some time now, which is based on the systems thinking paradigm.

Concerning the research project on systems thinking, I would like to express my sincere thanks to my colleagues, without whom my actions would not be possible in this new field of exploratory thinking, namely Tuula Löytty (SmarLean - Finland), Ioan Sebastian Brumă (Rural Development Research Platform - Romania), and Lucian Tanasă (Romanian Academy - Iasi Branch - Romania).

In terms of discourse, I cannot detach myself from the speculative philosophical exercises. It is the environment of my choice in terms of critical thinking and exploratory heuristics because, in my opinion, it provides the most appropriate habitat for substantiating my knowledge objectives. The preliminary speculative exercises, a distinct feature of the philosophical ways of interpretation, are the starting point of this endeavor, complemented by methods of systemic critical analysis. These methods have clear objectives for substantiating decisional processes that can secure sustainability in knowledge ecosystems.

Modus Operandi - the way I can understand the problem of interpersonal communication

Concerning this course of action, I feel that I should come up with a few preliminary clarifications that can shed further light on the matters discussed. First, I would like to voice a matter that can be taken for granted. With all the strengths and possible rhetorical resources, I would like to underline

[1] Horizon 2020 Project: CITIES 2030 - Co-creating resilient and sustainable food systems. Project funded by the European Commission under grant agreement 101000640, Website: https://cities2030.eu/.

[2] Horizon Europe Project: RURALITIES - Climate smart, ecosystem-enhancing and knowledge-based rural expertise and training centres. Project funded by the European Commission under grant agreement No. 101060876. Website: https://www.ruralitiesproject.eu/.

the following: psychology puts a lot of faith in psychology. It is a self-granted trust, based on which it works as a science of psychology. Psychology has furthered this line of epistemological remobilization, which allows it to better represent and, even more, certify. Self-set tasks are related to experienced epistemological emergencies and are strongly connected to their rise and decline throughout history. Psychology is in a strong position when it comes to its relationship with the domain of activity. It has an honorable *ratio* and an important *rationale* in terms of the discipline space under its control, and is comfortably settled between the parentheses opened by itself as an autonomous science, at least from Franz Brentano until now[3] (Brentano, 2009). This is a good acquisition, as one might say, in the field of knowledge.

This is a common feature of any knowledge domain in which autonomous science has arisen and consolidated. When science consolidates as autonomous and rigorous, the circularity of its legitimacy emerges. To step out of this tautological atmosphere, it should be mentioned that this circumstance is triggered by at least three phenomena or three determining factors that are not often remembered in an epistemological order.

First, psychology has already established a discursive canonical system that allows its entrance into the good management of psychological positivities. Historically speaking, the speculative literature of the soul phenomena produced, at one point in the 19th century, sufficient accumulations and sufficient precautions to claim and occupy a territory for which it has shown the best understanding. Psychology is backed by the development of scientific claims (from the modern period), which have become a theory of psychology in terms of the best control solution for thinking about psychological events. In other words, psychology, seen as a corpus of discourses on soul matters[4], has settled well in its own theoretical claim, and has become a clearly defined science of the psychic. Therefore, the first confidence granted by psychology is scientific safety. Hence, autonomy is a hallmark, as mentioned previously. Accordingly, psychology believes in the science of psychology and this is not something to be disregarded. This relationship of trust and self-legitimization is produced at least due to epistemological circularity. The phenomenon of epistemological *autopoiesis*[5] appears here, through which we can characterize the organic development of an autonomous science within the horizon of its own knowledge ecosystem. The concept was developed within the study Autopoiesis and Cognition: The Realization of the Living (Maturana & Varela, 1980).

Second, psychology has filled a good place in the interdisciplinarity between the sciences of the natural body and the sciences of the psychosocial body. As a knowledge ecosystem, it settled in the corpus of sciences; however, as an autonomous scientific program, it clearly defined its borders and intertextual interaction phenomena. To this end of its own territorialization, some epistemological conventions and speculative demands from beyond the border have been taken over as useful tasks in the theoretical field. To some extent, things are connected. The good scientific position of psychology has decided for its faith in other scientific projects, which have slightly refined their ways of raising the issue of its particular problems. One can no longer believe today, for example, in the theoretical discourse of psychology, if this is not connected to the issues raised by biology or sociology.

Third, psychology has developed a solid empirical culture and a strong relationship with empiricism. It is not just about the causes and contents of perception and representation, but mostly about how psychology has built up an entire edifice for experimenting with the particularity and analyzing the psychological datum in terms of empirical positivity. Historically, descriptivism and critical analysis of the psyche went from the patronage of speculative philosophy to the scientifically controlled methodology exerted by the empirical experiment. Psychology always returns to its experimental task, which strengthens its role as an exploratory and demonstrative field. According to one of the current terms in the vocabulary of living lab systems, psychology can be considered as a demonstrator. Therefore, I think that psychology is defined by precise self-trust. This epistemological state strikes me as profoundly justified when the legitimacy of the well-formed sciences is discussed.

In comparison, we can speak about an almost comic thing. Accordingly, and ironically, we could say that philosophy does not trust itself. Skepticism has always been the median discourse of philosophy, while doubt and critical obsession have always been required in the speculative discourse of a philosophical nature. “I know that I do not know”, “I doubt everything, “I cannot know what I do not yet know,” “Which are the limits of knowledge?”, “What is the thing itself?” “What are the things we should keep silent?”. All of these represent the badges and brands favored by philosophy. Philosophy seems endlessly trapped within the thought best expressed by Felix Guattari and Gille Deleuze (Guattari & Deleuze, 1994): “What if philosophy does not wish to be sincere?”, “What if philosophy does not want to convey the truth?”.

From a critical standpoint, there is no justification for considering philosophy to be a well-formed science. Furthermore, I cannot relate to speculative exercise unless I question, in its preliminary data, its claim to legitimacy. In philosophical

[3] As is known, the establishment of psychology as an autonomous science was achieved mainly through the contribution of three thinkers: Wilhelm Wundt, Hermann Ebbinghaus, and Franz Brentano. But Franz Brentano is the first to definitively separate it from the body of philosophy and outline the first systematic epistemology of psychology. Must see work by Franz Brentano *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkte* (*Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*).

[4] Until the 19th century, psychology was considered (with rare exceptions) to be part of the body of philosophy and to have the soul as its object.

[5] The concept of autopoiesis was first used by Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela to define the phenomenon of organic growth of a system, which develops through its own resources, components, functions and data. See the work *Autopoiesis and Cognition: The Realization of the Living.*

reflexive projects, there is a permanent exchange of legitimacy between critical and speculative actions. Nevertheless, let us consider this.

Traditional theories of interpersonalization

I have discussed the autonomy and auto-consistency of psychology science. I have also discussed the epistemological decision announced, at a systemic level, by the theories of psychic discourses integrated into a scientific project, generally called psychology. Precise auto-consistency has become a regulatory factor in discussing the matter of interpersonalization and intersubjectivity. Autonomy provides the critical distance required to approach these matters. We have reached a moment when it is necessary to review how interpersonalization and intersubjectivity are being problematized. Initially, we should underline a few features related to these problems in the field of psychological theories.

First, intersubjectivity is not an issue of subjectivity evidence in the theoretical field of psychology, as it appears in philosophical speculation. Intersubjectivity is not analyzed to close the case of the subject as the foundation of both knowledge and action. Thus, intersubjectivity is neither a consequence nor a speculative necessity of subjectivity. In contrast, intersubjectivity works as either a dimension of interpersonalization or a phenomenon of interpersonalization. In the first instance, it is about the cognitive dimension, and in the second instance, it is about a symbolic psychosocial phenomenon. Second, intersubjectivity is conceptualized as an interaction issue due to its interpersonal nature. Interactivity appears to be a decisive component of this composite meaning.

Starting from these two preliminary clarifications, within the area of psychosocial theories, the most interesting approaches to interpersonalization are, in my opinion, as follows:

1. **The behaviourist approach to non-reflexive behaviour in recurrent relationships**. Mitchell defines this circumstance as ”in recurrent relationships, we build together patterns of interactions that imply a reciprocal influence”[6]. As it is known, this is about what we do with one another in pre-symbolical interpersonal relations (prior linguistic relations, such as the mother-newborn relationship).

2. **The theory of emotional contagion.** On the other hand, when we refer to the theory of emotional contagion, Mitchell stresses the importance of this phenomenon in interpersonal relationships (with reference to authors such as Harry Stack Sullivan, Edward Tronick, Hans Loewald, and T. Ogden)[7] and mentions that circumstances with a strong emotional charge trigger contagion phenomena, namely, strong affects cause correspondent effects.

3. **The Me-Other psycho-social configurations.** This topic is rather vast, and, in this case, I would only mention the issue of empathy and the need for recognition.

4. **The constitution of language in the psychosocial community.** Language refers to the idea that language is the product of an almost unlimited system of interpersonal relationships (from a historical and social standpoint).

5. **The neuro-cognitivist subject of mirroring neurons.** It is common knowledge that, by the late 20th century, some neurophysiologists at the University of Parma[8] discovered the existence of certain neurons that react in the same way when monkeys notice someone grabbing their food or when they do the same thing.[9] It is tempting to think that this is precisely the neurocognitive nexus of interpersonalization.

In the scientific literature, these approaches rarely appear as defining from a unique standpoint. Thus, they are more likely to overlap and complement each other. For instance, affective contagion can be partly explained by the theory of mirroring neurons. However, there are consistent debates about the historical or cultural formatting of these phenomena. It is not a place to establish a general configuration. I am more interested in the common conceptual framework in episteme, where they are formulated and problematized. These are the defining notes of all these circumstances related to what appears to be, at least to me, the most interesting examples of psycho-social theorizing of interpersonalisation.

Constructio - building a rhetorical model of interpersonal communication (RIC Model)

All circumstances mentioned above share the fact that they involve a threshold situation. They are defined by the limits of reciprocal permeability in interpersonal relationships. Accordingly, interpersonalization is mainly defined by the following: (1) transpersonal dimension, (2) analogy, and (3) interaction occurrence. If we correlate all these features, we can conclude that we are dealing with interaction isomorphism. These phenomena occur when the interaction occurs, and can only be understood by the common symmetry and constitutive structures. Overall, interpersonalization emerges when the limit of subjectivity interferes with the fine edge of reciprocity, through which personalization and interpersonalization are constitutive one to another. Thus, from a constitutive standpoint, interpersonalization involves a circumstance that we might call alter-personalization. Its intentional dimension is related to the experience that my own person has with the other as a psychosocial person born out of this interaction isomorphism.

[6] „People in recurrent relationships co-construct behavioral patterns of interaction involving reciprocal influence.” (Stephen A. Mitchell, *Relationality from Attachment to Intersubjectivity*, Taylor & Francis, New York, 2000, p. 60)

[7] „Affect is contagious, and, on the deepest level, affective states are often transpersonal. Intense affects like anxiety, sexual excitement, rage, depression, and euphoria tend to generate corresponding affects in others.” (ibidem, p. 61)

[8] Giacomo Rizzolatti, Giuseppe Di Pellegrino, Luciano Fadiga, Leonardo Fogassi, and Vittorio Gallese.

[9] Mirror Neuron, Articol Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mirror_neuron).

However, this isomorphism implies that the constitutive structures of my person are the same as those of the other person. Here, we arrive at the most complicated question asked by phenomenology, especially in the tradition of Edmund Husserl: "How can we be sure that intersubjectivity is related to this isomorphism?", "How can we provide sufficient grounds for intersubjectivity, starting from the situation of subjectivity?", "How can I be sure that another exists… ?", "How can I be certain that they think in the same context as I find myself with my own thinking?", "How can I be certain that their thinking has the same subjective effects as the subjective effects of my thinking?", "How do I know that we meet the same type of thinking in knowledge, the same empirical organization, and the same relation with the world we are part of?", "How is my subjectivity sufficient justification to believe that other subjectivities also work within the same parameters, beyond our knowledge of capital and ideological formatting?", "How is it possible to talk, know each other, and transform ourselves as long as we do not know each other as such?".

The phenomenological constitution of intersubjectivity

As founder of the idea of phenomenology, Edmund Husserl, particularly in *Cartesian Meditations*, debates the most celebrated case of intersubjectivity metaphysics (Husserl, 1994). Commencing with *Cartesian doubt reduction*, with the intent to define the principles of a universal science, reaches a first conclusion according to which "I cannot issue or either conceive as valid any judgment that I have not previously created myself from a certain evidence or experiences where the things and states of affairs in question are present to me themselves, alone" (Husserl, 1994). This is the birthspot of the idea that the foundation of universal science is subjectivity, as it is determined by the absolute constitution (self-evident, immanent, and universal) of the transcendental self.

The issue is of an epistemological nature and the argument is far way complex, yet the following should be taken into consideration: subjectivity is trapped in the indetermination between the continuous flow of consciousness and transcendental existence of the self. In other words, I am forever trapped between the permanent data of my own consciousness (either external or internal) and the absolute structures of subjectivity, which determine the existence and knowledge of these data. From the standpoint of epistemic deeds, every knowledge actor is a permanent and ongoing effect of the interaction between a world that offers itself to the knowledge (shrine) and the consciousness that builds it. Accordingly, in the vocabulary of research programs, knowledge is equivalent to a living lab laboratory, where the knowledge deeds are experimental and exploratory in an ongoing real context and in direct relation to the beneficiary. Thus, knowledge becomes a process of continuing dynamic interaction and, therefore, in epistemological terms, in alignment with one's consciousness, is the result, output, and outcome of the interactions between the information flow and knowledge possibilities. This similarity to the idea of a living lab provides strategic instruments for structuring these types of exploratory laboratories in epistemological ecosystems. This is the main reason why living labs are very important tools not only for their demonstrative dimension but also for their dynamic production of knowledge and local-based epistemology. When we define a living lab as an entity working in real-time and direct interaction with stakeholders, oriented by an exploratory and demonstrative scope, we have to take into consideration the following aspects: knowledge production and transfer is an interactive and dynamic phenomenon. Living labs, policy labs, co-creation labs, innovation labs, knowledge hubs, innovation accelerators, exploratory platforms, lighthouses, demonstrators, and other similar entities, organizations, or systems should consider the dynamic participatory dimension as a ground principle for their actions. Knowledge is an interactive ecosystem based on the intersubjectivity of the participatory ecosystem.

Coming back, for the moment, to Husserl, it should be emphasized that his concept of subjectivity has epistemological implications, although Husserl was profoundly influenced by his professor Franz Brentano. As a methodological task, this concept must define grounds for the possibility of knowledge. I believe that this is the core meaning of the metaphysical sense of the idea of subjectivity. Because of this intransigence, the transition from subjectivity to intersubjectivity has stood for the groundbreaking point of phenomenology, at least historically speaking. It has not been convincing every time, yet it moves the appropriate context for building the entire edifice of phenomenological speculation. Another interesting feature is that the limit of this conceptual framework provided by the epistemology of knowledge tools and possibilities becomes the functional space for problematizing the relations between the knowledge data gathered and modelled in one way or another and the organizing environments of the decision-making processes. Simpler put, we could say that along the lines of this epistemology, we can make strategic connections between the knowledge of a societal system and the organization of the decision-making environment. Here, the idea of a local epistemology appears. Consequently, in the continuous interaction between the system data and working epistemology, the methodological framework becomes dynamic, adjective, and constantly modelled by the reference context. Under these circumstances, the phenomenological paradigm justifies the idea of local epistemology in methodological terms in the strategic management of knowledge.

In knowledge ecosystems and processes of strategic management, another essential matter is related to the issue of collaboration and intercommunication. In this context, returning to Husserl, I notice that in the phenomenological program, there is a certain habit of translation when moving from the issue of subjectivity to that of intersubjectivity. The movement is subtle, and yet, for this very reason, important, too. She plays within the terms of analogy and concerns that, in order to fully support the evidence of subjectivity given by the transcendental self (the transcendental *ego*), I must accept the fact that otherness makes sense; at this point, the idea of otherness

produces all the necessary conditions for other subjectivities to exist in analogy with my own subjectivity.

This is one of the few places where phenomenological deduction has atypical behavior, operating through a heuristic discourse. Epistemological intransigence was no longer present. This intransigence is specific to the radicalism of reduction, through which the idea of a transcendental self is reached, starting from the dubious deduction of the Cartesian cogito. At the same time, one of the necessary principles of phenomenological existence is found here. The phenomenological approach is necessary for responding to the issue of intersubjectivity based on an analysis of subjectivity. Phenomenology is the right context where I can understand the other one as self-evident, just as I am self-evident, acting as the agent of the transcendental self. I think that epistemological analysis can go further here, through criticism of the Agency I represent and play, at the level of consciousness flow, as the subject of the transcendental self. This provides a speculative opportunity to debate the idea of intersubjectivity in terms of systems thinking paradigm and epistemology.

Furthermore, this strategy is justified by the fact that the phenomenology of alterity is given by the transcendental necessity of otherness. In other words, I give meaning to otherness not to produce a horizon of reference for my own subjectivity but because the other cannot be meaningless and his subjectivity can only be in a relationship of analogy with my subjectivity. To put it differently, I give meaning to alterity not for opening a reference horizon for my own subjectivity, but because the other one cannot be meaningless and their subjectivity can only exist in an analogy relation with my subjectivity. Thus, the principle of intersubjectivity is primary: it determines the principle of subjectivity, and not otherwise. Intersubjectivity not only completes the subjectivity file but also provides the necessary ground. Surprisingly enough, intersubjectivity becomes the transcendental instance of the community of subjectivities in the same way that the pure self is the transcendental instance of subjectivity. Under these circumstances, the critical speculative task is to make explicit the emergence of subjectivity and subjective immanence of intersubjectivity from the same speculative perspective. Consequently, the problems raised by constituting intersubjectivity beyond representing fundamental problems in the phenomenology of the person and intersubjectivity become primary issues in systems thinking, at least in terms of justifying the system as a system of interpersonal communication. The aspect that I want to preserve for the knowledge ecosystem theme is that intersubjectivity and interpersonal communication constitute the main ground for any concept of participatory action.

Progressus - developing a systemic approach for applying RIC Model

At this point, I think it is important to open the theme of systems thinking to an epistemological paradigm. Systems thinking, as a set of theories, procedures, and practices, is widely used as a strategic methodology in many horizontal projects. The systems Thinking approach tackles the complexity of socio-economic ecosystems and offers good tools for multi-actor participatory actions. In the Cities 2030 project, funded by the European Commission, I was part of a research team that developed the project's epistemology and methodology based on the systems thinking methodological paradigm. The research group and grant made the deliverable D3.3 Systems Thinking Methodology (Löytty *et al.*, 2021). Deliverable D3.3 describes the process and results that embrace a methodological and logical framework for cities and regions' food systems to apply Systems Thinking. The challenge in the cities project was to collaborate in a multi-actor system with small groups of stakeholders in extremely complex contexts. Systems thinking proved to be the most effective methodological paradigm, not least because it offered us the following tools.

- Qualitative data analysis in a dynamic, localized system starting from quantitative data collection tools
- Qualitative analysis of small-data type information;
- Adaptive methodologies for organization and strategic actions;
- Systemic modeling and public presentation for the Cities2030 good practices.

I must also point out that there is an excess in the use of systems thinking methodologies without a critical epistemological foundation localized to reference systems. There is a substantial emphasis on current theories on the complex nature of systems. The set of *systems thinking* theories is at best a corpus of narratives and methodologies of complexity. Challenges related to the complex nature of a system must always be considered, as they represent the first dare in any strategic understanding of ecosystems. In this context, how can we describe the emergence and immanence of subjectivity in the field of systems? In its constitutive moment, I believe we can understand the stream of consciousness (as the context of the subject's experience) in terms of a second, reflexive relationship in which subjectivity develops with its given experience. It is about living with this experience, and under personal circumstances, rating a given experience highly. In this case, I am fundamentally the other, based on my experience. I am the prime alterity in the emergence of my own subjectivity. I am my own intersubjective. Therefore, if I have spoken about alter-personalization, I think the term alter-subjectivization is appropriate here.

At this point, it is quite obvious that the matter of intersubjectivity has little to no chance of being resolved in terms of concordance between the constitution of one's own subjectivity and the constitution of subjectivity that I sense in others. For the very reason that subjectivity and intersubjectivity begin to express themselves together, providing me punându-mi la dispoziție o alteritate pe care o experiez în contextul propriei subiectivități. An alterity that I experience in the context of my own subjectivity. This is the difference in the level. Is it enough to open the theater of intersubjectivity? For the moment, I do

not think it is. I do not have sufficient speculative tools to consider them sufficiently. However, this is necessary. Yet, what opens up in the midst of this necessary but not yet sufficient condition?

I believe that the constitution of intersubjectivity should no longer be the subject of radical reductive analysis. Further, I believe this is precisely the perspective that the theoretical field of interpersonalization, as developed in the psychological sciences, offers me. The analysis of intersubjectivity must relieve the burden of a reductive and constitutive metaphysical description and must be considered in terms of a personal project of subjectivity. Intersubjectivity must become an alter-personal dimension. However, to further open this idea, I think I need, at least in the beginning, a speculative context in which to place and interpret it. In other words, I need no less than a working hypothesis for my speculative exercise to move forward.

The speculative context of intersubjectivity, as a dimension of alter-personalization

The issue of intersubjectivity as a dimension of the interpersonalization of subjectivity can be discussed in the context of the ideas of consistency and coherence of subjective experience. Furthermore, the consistency and coherence of this experience can only be understood as the primary determinations of a project of happiness. It seems to be an established fact in our experience that subjectivity tends towards consistency and coherence, which can only be explained in terms of the pursuit of happiness.

We use the expression "personal happiness" quite often in our everyday speech, and I think that this expression refers to something more than the simple appropriation of a state of bliss. I also think that the expression speaks of the fact that happiness is a project of personalization in terms of alterpersonalization.

At the same time, I believe that we cannot consider the consistency and coherence of subjectivity as simple indicators of a certain state. In my opinion, we are dealing with the values that must be played. In other words, consistency and coherence can only be constituted through engagement; they represent the subjective coordinates of intersubjectivity precisely by the fact that I, as subjectivity, put them into play and valorized them. In this case, I believe that the situation is decided by a wide range of factors, generated especially by the biological existence of bodies and psycho-social existence of bodies. However, I would like to emphasize at least one thing: In terms of personalizing our own subjectivity, we are not enough for ourselves. We are never fulfilled but under the sign of fulfillment. There is something that unplays and dismantles me precisely, where my subjectivity is played and engaged. Living one's own experience is subject to another intentional dimension: that of (permanently) engaging in securing the consistency and coherence of one's own subjectivity only as a player of intersubjectivity.

This may very well be another solipsism, but it is not a weak one, which we can analyze beyond a radical metaphysical task. The theoretical certainty of psychology brings me to this point, where I no longer need a radicalization of intersubjectivity. However, these factors must be understood differently.

Consistency and coherence in terms of fascination and fictionalization

This is the right moment for another comeback that is due to the fact that some additional clarifications need to be made. Their relationship with our experience, defined as subjectivity, has often been described in terms of apperception. The primary emergence of the epistemic constitution of subjectivity is related to this idea of apperception: it represents a sensitive, immanent, immediate, permanent, dynamic, intentional, overall, and unmodulated experience. Further, it provides content for the permanent flow of consciousness. Here, the comeback becomes transparent and we can see that we return to one of the primary problems of speculative metaphysical projects.

How do we move from an unmodulated state (in its raw state, psychically formed, but not semantically formulated) to a rational expression? There's the rub. The question can also be posed in psychological terms, and there is much literature on what we might call the psychosocial constitution and organization of consciousness. However, my speculative interest lies in another plane of significance. I am interested in how we can give meaning to these unmodulated substances of apperception. What are the semantic effects of the constitution and psychosocial organization of consciousness in the horizon of apperception? This is, for instance, the question asked by Martin Heidegger about unity of imagination, as viewed by Immanuel Kant. Essentially, the question can be formulated along these lines: How do I interpret myself as a personal subjectivity, starting from my permanent empirical exposure? And the question goes further: What is my semasiological relationship with my own experience?

Having started the idea of Paul Ricoeur, I believe this relationship can be understood in terms of narrativity (Ricoeur, 1985).[10] My relationship with my own subjectivity can be described as a continuous narrative flow. My discursive consistency is narrative consistency. The sentence, the propositional function, the judgment, the discourse, the phrase, and the concept (even the categories), in my opinion, have a narrative substance. The semantic emergence of subjectivity is narrative, because it always concerns a certain phase[11] and is temporally determined[12]. The stream of consciousness is a narrative; it's a story; it's

[10] In the third volume of Temps et récit, Paul Ricoeur speaks about narrative identity and sees it as the existential dimension of a double narrative integration: that of the story in the historical sense and in the narrative sense.

[11] Widely debated idea by the analytical tradition.

[12] This is also a widely debated idea by the analytical tradition.

something about the fact that I am a continuous narrative of my own subjective experience. My relationship with my own experiences is a narrative. The consistency and coherence of subjectivity are presented along the narrative line.

There is a rhetorical declension. Everything I experience in relation to myself has only fictional meaning. By difference, I do not know if there is another possibility of subjectivity in the world. In other words, I live with the most restricted modality. In contrast to Leibniz, my relationship with my subjective experience is radical: I live in the only possible modality. I am my own world, and I do not have certainty about it. Along these lines, we return to Descartes, and in contrast, my existence can only be fictional. This depends on my narrative relationship with my own subjectivity. Things get even more interesting: Husserl's speculative exercise takes Descartes out of his speculative exercise. However, this seems to be a problem on another occasion.

Resuming our conclusions, my fiction must exist in a language; in a discourse, that is, it must make an external fictional imposition to make self-fascination possible. It must mesmerise. To exist, as a fiction of my own subjectivity, I must become a reliable witness of the fascination of alterity. In the project of happiness, generated by the necessity of consistency and coherence of subjectivation, there must be a significant connection between the subjective function of self-fictionalization and the intersubjective function of fascination. This is the limit that I would call rhetoric. In addition, concerns the threshold that interpersonalization provides to intersubjectivity. This is where things get a little more settled.

General conclusion

Starting from an interesting but complicated critical ground offered in philosophy by phenomenology in the tradition of Edmund Husserl, we tried to provide lines of connection between very important concepts at the operational level in projects funded by the European Commission. Intercommunication, interpersonalization, and intersubjectivity represent the pillars of a three-dimensional model of participatory knowledge production. Participatory knowledge and, in the mirror, participatory governance and collaborative development find participatory, dynamic, pro-active, and adaptive meaning in the functions of intercommunication, interpersonal multi-social systems, and intersubjective cultures. These coordinates also represent the starting points for the concept outlined in this article: the rhetorical model of interpersonal communication (the RIC Model). The matrix and methods for this model are in the research and development phase of the Ruralities Project.

We can always say that there are difficulties in a critical speculative substantiation of the main concepts that are part of the set of methodologies in European projects. However, to get out of formalist ideologies and the risk of artificial languages, according to the *langue de bois* concept established by Francois Thom (Thom, 1987), we need theoretical foundations that provide the consolidated concepts of the epistemology of our projects and programs.

The initiative to support SSH approaches in future European projects is a good initiative for the European Commission. In this context, the critical tools offered by philosophical thinking also provide important perspectives and tools for a better understanding of the foundations of the concepts, principles, and methods used in our projects.

For this reason, I consider that the rhetorical limit, which I speak about at the end of this speculative exercise, is a frontier that should not be crossed but rather explored and actively used to maximize outcomes and impacts.

Disclaimer

The content of this document does not reflect the official opinions of the European Union and the European Commission. The responsibility for the information and views expressed therein lies entirely with the author.

Use of AI tools

AI-based digital tools were only partially used to translate some paragraphs. Google Translate was used for approximately 2% of the texts.

Open data policy

The article does not contain datasets that require uploading to institutional repository platforms. The article complies with the RRI and FAIR principles and open knowledge values. The article is in alignment with the principles of gender equity and the principle of DNH.

Ethics and consent

Ethical approval and consent were not required" to this section.

English translation

We would like to thank Sonia Bulei for translating the text.

Author presentation - Codrin Dinu Vasiliu

My primary academic training is based on philosophy, with particular interest in the theory of interpretation, knowledge theory, knowledge ecosystems, systems thinking, and digital culture. I have also been concerned with the practical philosophy and possible applications of speculative discourse in contemporary anthropology (visual, digital, rural anthropology, and knowledge transfer). I have a systemic, consolidated, and complex experience in knowledge and action management for the theoretical and practical frameworks related to urban systems, rural development, knowledge transfer, living and policy labs, stakeholder communities, open science, participatory knowledge, governance, and development. I developed and contributed concepts, models, methodologies, toolkits, and strategies for local, regional, national, and European projects.

- www.CodrinDinuVasiliu.eu
- CodrinDinuVasiliu@gmail.com
- ORCID: orcid.org/0000-0001-8465-1801
- Research ID: AAE-7983-2019

Acknowledgment

Research lifecycle

This study is based on a research endeavor undertaken in 2018 and presented at the International Scientific Conference, 9th edition of Interpersonal Communication. Psychological and Educational Benchmarks organized by the Romanian academic-Iasi branch. The first results of the research were published in Romanian on the study of Interpersonal Communication and the Issue of Intersubjectivity. Arguments for a rhetorical model of subjectivity (Dinu Vasiliu, 2018). The 2019 study focused on analyzing the relationship between subjectivity and intersubjectivity in the field of social psychology. In the present study, the first research was extended into the theoretical field of systems thinking to analyze the possibilities of applying the RIS Model in the management of knowledge ecosystems.

References

Brentano F: **Psychology from an empirical standpoint.** London & New York: Taylor & Francis, translated by Antos C. Rancurello, D. B. Terrell and Linda L. McAlister, 2009.
Reference Source

CITIES 2030 - Co-creating resilient and sustainable food systems. Horizon 2020 project funded by the European Commission under Grant ID 101000640.
Reference Source

Dinu Vasiliu C: **Interpersonal communication and the issue of intersubjectivity. Arguments for a rhetorical model of subjectivity.** Iași: Ars Longa, in Comunicarea Interpersonală. Dialogul social, Volume 1, coordinated by Marinela Rusu, 2018.
Reference Source

Guattari F, Deleuze G: **What is philosophy?** London & New York: Verso Books, 1994.
Reference Source

Husserl E: **Meditații carteziene. O introducere în fenomenologie.** Bucharest: Humanitas, translated by Aurelian Crăiuțu, 1994.
Reference Source

Maturana H, Varela F: **Autopoiesis and cognition: the realization of the living.** Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1980.
Reference Source

Löytty T, Dinu Vasiliu C, Brumă IS, *et al.*: ***D3.3* systems thinking methodology.** Cities2030 deliverable: Horizon 2020 project funded by European Commission under the Grant ID 101000640, 2021.
Reference Source

Mitchell SA: **Relationality from attachment to intersubjectivity.** New York: Taylor & Francis, 2000.
Reference Source

Ricoeur P: **Temps et récit, Volume III.** Paris: Édition de Seuil, 1985.

RURALITIES - Climate smart, ecosystem-enhancing and knowledge-based rural expertise and training centres. Horizon Europe project funded by European Commission under Grant ID 10051963.
Reference Source

Thom F: **La langue de bois.** Paris: Julliard, 1987.

Open Peer Review

Current Peer Review Status: ? ✗

Version 1

Reviewer Report 12 December 2025

https://doi.org/10.21956/openreseurope.22970.r63944

© **2025 Siebers J.** This is an open access peer review report distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

✗ **Johan Siebers**
Middlesex University London,, London, UK

This article addresses an important and timely topic. A rhetorical model of interpersonal communication is a genuine desideratum of rhetorical theory. However, the article needs more and more substantial, work in my view. The language is in many places incomprehensible. Perhaps translation problems are behind this (there is one sentence which switches half-way through to Romanian and which obviously escaped the translation process).

But apart from this difficulty, the argument of the article remains a problematic conflation of philosophical, psychological and systems thinking discourses, which accomplishes little more than a reiteration of the modernist paradox of solipsism and an equally hackneyed reference to narrative fiction as a way out of the problems of understanding personal identity and intersubjectivity.

There is no reference to the wide philosophical literature within phenomenology that took a very different approach than Husserl (Buber, Levinas, Heidegger and others) and found ways of thinking through the interpersonal relation that offers a way out of many of the problems presented here. There is no discussion of any relevant literature, in fact (this would not be a problem if the argument itself were clear).

I conclude that a relevant question is being posed here, but that the article suffers from a rather extreme confusion of different registers of explanation: philosophical conceptual analysis, normative epistemology, empirical (social-)psychology and systems thinking.

I cannot see the point of this article, except that it is to be hoped that the author will rewrite it to make his argument clearer. As it stands it is a confused restatement of solipsism. The idea of Rhetorical Model of Interpersonal Communication, adequately philosophically grounded, seems a welcome addition to rhetorical theory. But that model is not even stated explicitly in the article, despite the author's promise to do so.

Is the topic of the essay discussed accurately in the context of the current literature?

No

Is the work clearly and cogently presented?
No

Is the argument persuasive and supported by appropriate evidence?
No

Does the essay contribute to the cultural, historical, social understanding of the field?
No

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: Philosophy, Linguistics, Communication Theory, Rhetoric

I confirm that I have read this submission and believe that I have an appropriate level of expertise to state that I do not consider it to be of an acceptable scientific standard, for reasons outlined above.

Reviewer Report 24 November 2025

https://doi.org/10.21956/openreseurope.22970.r63947

© 2025 Kearney M et al. This is an open access peer review report distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

?

Michael R Kearney
Dordt University, Sioux Center, Iowa, USA
Janie M. Harden Fritz
Department of Communication & Rhetorical Studies, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, USA

Thank you for the opportunity to review this research project. It offers a valuable contribution to interdisciplinary intersections of philosophy, communication, and social psychology. According to our reading, the article attempts to situate interpersonal communication as a field of study that offers a point of departure (a "nodal point") for issues of psychology, philosophy, and questions of human existence and meaning in general. It sounds as though the author is attempting to establish communication as part of the fabric of human existence, akin to Calvin Schrag's (1986) project in Communicative Praxis and the Space of Subjectivity. Furthermore, the author seems to perceive intuitively that the rhetorical tradition provides a vocabulary and historical texture needed to engage in this project of "situating the self" communicatively (Benhabib, 1991). Our review centers on appreciation for this scholar's careful thought and detailed argumentation, recognition of differences between American and European approaches toward the scholarly study of communication, and a desire to see this research indexed in revised form.

We include here a few sentences that we are taking as representative of this author's scholarly argument:

"How intersubjectivity is constituted at the existential and social levels poses a major speculative challenge . . . knowledge is produced and consolidated in the relationship between two agents and between two subjectivities."
"Knowledge is an interactive ecosystem based on the intersubjectivity of the participatory ecosystem."
"Intercommunication, interpersonalization, and intersubjectivity represent the pillars of a three-dimensional model of participatory knowledge production. Participatory knowledge and, in the mirror, participatory governance and collaborative development find participatory, dynamic, pro-active, and adaptive meaning in the functions of intercommunication, interpersonal multi-social systems, and intersubjective cultures."

An impressive network of strands of thought are at play in the essay. The author demonstrates literacy with both psychological approaches (grounded, apparently, in psychoanalysis) and continental philosophy (grounded primarily in Edmund Husserl and Paul Ricoeur). In terms of psychology, the author seems to pin the origin of interpersonal communication study in the development of psychosocial theories. Indeed, from our disciplinary vantage point, psychology is one of the streams of thought that stimulated interest in issues of communication theory in the early years of the 20th century. Third-force psychology, in particular, formed the basis for Carl Rogers's "client-centered therapy" and set the stage for important discussions about the ontological nature of dialogue later in the century (Arnett, 1981). But what seems to be missing from the discussion is a recognition of how communication studies has developed as a standalone discipline in the United States, such that interpersonal communication is no longer the subset of some other field but one of the major research areas in the study of communication in its own right.

In terms of continental philosophy, the article does not seem to acknowledge how Kant and Husserl's phenomenological approaches played into multiple traditions that centralized communication and intersubjectivity as key problematics of understanding the human condition. This recognition is not new. The construct of "philosophy of communication" has been a vital reference point for philosophical and communicative discussions since at least the 1990s. Mancino (2020) identifies five pillars of philosophy of communication, offering multiple points of contact to the continental tradition: existentialism, phenomenology, philosophical hermeneutics, communicology, and semiotics. Philosophers doing work in these areas routinely addressed the "problem" of intersubjectivity, from Maurice Merleau-Ponty to Hans-Georg Gadamer to Hannah Arendt to Edith Stein, and more than we could name here. The point of this review is not to demand that the paper take one or more of these authors' approaches, but merely to note that they exist. In order to advance knowledge of philosophy of communication, this article must begin with a broader foundation of awareness of the multiplicity of philosophers dealing with questions of intersubjectivity in the 20th and 21st centuries.

We recommend Mancino's (2020) work not only as a gloss of philosophy of communication, but also because she deeply explores the relationship between philosophy of communication and the rhetorical tradition. This manuscript's passing references to "rhetoric" seem deserving of greater historical texture. For instance, the author writes, "In the project of happiness, generated by the necessity of consistency and coherence of subjectivation, there must be a significant connection

between the subjective function of self-fictionalization and the intersubjective function of fascination. This is the limit that I would call rhetoric." The statement reads like the author's own observation, but is the author intending to reference the entirety of the rhetorical tradition with its considerations of identity and difference, being and seeming, eloquence and persuasion? Discussions of rhetoric, philosophy of communication, and hermeneutics might assist the author in making this connection more explicit; again, we point to the work of Schrag (1986).

Finally, we return to the construction of interpersonal communication as it relates to these disparate intellectual strands. We are not familiar with the term "interpersonalization" and wonder if this is primarily seen as a psychological, rhetorical, sociocultural, or other phenomenon. Again, the revised article must acknowledge that interpersonal communication represents a major swath of communication scholarship both in the US and internationally; both the National Communication Association and the International Communication Association have Interpersonal Communication divisions. Fritz (2015) surveys the development of interpersonal communication theories from an ethical perspective, and handbooks like Knapp & Daly (2011) and Braithwaite & Schrodt (2022) would be essential in providing a conceptual map of the field. Goals models of interpersonal communication and attachment theory are two particular constructions that seem to resonate with aspects of this article.

We wonder if the notion of dialogue offers one way for the author to unite his interests in psychological themes, interpersonal communication, rhetoric, and the issues of community engagement that are hinted at throughout the article. Arnett and Arneson's (2000) text Dialogic Civility in a Cynical Age: Community, Hope, and Interpersonal Relationships offers an introduction to the major voices that have contributed to the development of this field. Further discussion of the relationship between dialogue and philosophy of communication can be found in Kearney (2025). We note multiple European scholars dealing with related issues of dialogue and interhuman ethics: Susan Petrilli, Luigi Russi, Fr. Jordi Pujol, and others. The Journal of Dialogic Ethics: Interfaith and Interhuman Perspectives is a scholarly home for this ongoing conversation.

In conclusion, we find this article provocative in multiple ways and worthy of publication. We offer these comments in the hope that the disciplinary perspectives of rhetoric, interpersonal communication, and philosophy of communication might find fuller and deeper treatment in a revised manuscript. We wish the author the best in continuing to develop this research.

References

Arnett, R. C. (1981). Toward a phenomenological dialogue. Western Journal of Speech Communication, 45, 201-212.
Arnett, R. C., and Arneson, P. (2000). Dialogic civility in a cynical age: Community, hope, and interpresonal relationships. State University of New York Press.
Benhabib, S. (1992). Situating the self: Gender, community and postmodernism in contemporary ethics. Routledge.
Braithwaite, D. O., & Schrodt, P. (Eds.) (2022). Engaging theories in interpersonal communication: Multiple perspectives. Routledge.
Fritz, J. M. H. (2015). Interpersonal communication ethics. In C. R. Berger & M. E. Roloff (Eds.), The international encyclopedia of interpersonal communication. Wiley.
https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118540190.wbeic227
Kearney, M. R. (2025). A communication ethic of dialogic reformation: Nicholas of Cusa on care for communities in crisis. Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.

Knapp, M. L., & Daly, J. A. (Eds.) (2011). The SAGE handbook of interpersonal communication (4th ed.). SAGE.
Mancino, S. (2020). Doing philosophy and rhetoric historically: A review of the philosophy of communication. Communication Research Trends, 39(2), 5-26.
Schrag, C. O. (1986). Communicative praxis and the space of subjectivity. Indiana University Press.

Is the topic of the essay discussed accurately in the context of the current literature?
Partly

Is the work clearly and cogently presented?
Partly

Is the argument persuasive and supported by appropriate evidence?
Partly

Does the essay contribute to the cultural, historical, social understanding of the field?
Partly

Competing Interests: No competing interests were disclosed.

Reviewer Expertise: Interpersonal communication, communication ethics, dialogue, communication theory, philosophy of communication

We confirm that we have read this submission and believe that we have an appropriate level of expertise to confirm that it is of an acceptable scientific standard, however we have significant reservations, as outlined above.