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COMMON-SENSE AND SCIENTIFIC INTERPRETATION OF HUMAN ACTION

I. INTRODUCTION: CONTENT OF EXPERIENCE AND THOUGHT OBJECTS

(1) *The Constructs of Common-sense and of Scientific Thinking*

"Neither common sense nor science can proceed without departing from the strict consideration of what is actual in experience." This statement by A. N. Whitehead is at the foundation of his analysis of the Organization of Thought.[1] Even the thing perceived in everyday life is more than a simple sense presentation.[2] It is a thought object, a construct of a highly compliplicated nature, involving not only particular forms of time-successions in order to constitute it as an object of one single sense, say of sight,[3] and of space relations in order to constitute it as a sense-object of several senses, say of sight and touch,[4] but also a contribution of imagination of hypothetical sense presentations in order to complete it.[5] According to Whitehead, it is precisely the last-named factor, the imagination of hypothetical sense presentation, "which is the rock upon which the whole structure of common-sense thought is erected"[6] and it is the effort of reflective criticism "to construe our sense presentation as actual realization of the hypothetical thought object of perceptions."[7] In other words, the so-called concrete facts of common-sense perception are not so concrete as it seems. They already involve abstractions of a highly complicated nature, and we have to take account of this situation lest we commit the fallacy of misplaced concreteness.[8]

Science always, according to Whitehead, has a twofold aim: First, the production of a theory which agrees with experience, and second, the

[1] Alfred North Whitehead: *The Organization of Thought* (Williams and Norgate, London, 1917) now partially republished in *The Aims of Education* (Macmillan, New York, 1929), also as "Mentor-Book," New York, 1949. The quotations refer to this edition. For the first quotation see p. 110.

[2] *Ibid.*, Chapter 9, "The Anatomy of Some Scientific Ideas, I Fact, II Objects."

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 128f. and 131.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 131 and 136.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 133.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 134.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 135.

[8] Alfred North Whitehead: *Science and the Modern World* (Macmillan, New York, 1925) reprinted as "Mentor-Book," New York, 1948, p. 52 ff.

explanation of common-sense concepts of nature at least in their outline; this explanation consists in the preservation of these concepts in a scientific theory of harmonized thought.[9] For this purpose physical science (which, in this context, is alone of concern to Whitehead) has to develop devices by which the thought objects of common-sense perception are superseded by the thought objects of science.[10] The latter, such as molecules, atoms, and electrons have shed all qualities capable of direct sense presentation in our consciousness and are known to us only by the series of events in which they are implicated, events, to be sure, which are represented in our consciousness by sense presentations. By this device a bridge is formed between the fluid vagueness of sense and the exact definition of thought.[11]

It is not our concern to follow here step by step the ingenious method by which Whitehead uses the principle briefly outlined for his analysis of the organization of thought, starting from the "anatomy of scientific ideas" and ending with the mathematically formulated theories of modern physics and the procedural rules of symbolic logic.[12] We are, however, highly interested in the basic view which Whitehead shares with many other prominent thinkers of our time such as William James,[13] Dewey,[14] Bergson,[15] and Husserl.[16] This view can be, very roughly, formulated as follows:

All our knowledge of the world, in common-sense as well as in scientific thinking, involves constructs, namely, a set of abstractions, generalizations, formalizations, idealizations specific to the respective level of thought organization. Strictly speaking, there are no such things as facts, pure and simple. All facts are from the outset facts selected from a universal context by the activities of our mind. They are, therefore, always interpreted facts, namely, either facts looked at as detached from their context by an arti-

[9] *The Aims of Education*, p. 126.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 135.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 136.

[12] *Ibid.*, pp. 112–123 and 136–155.

[13] William James, *Principles of Psychology*, I, Chapter IX, "The Stream of Thought," pp. 224ff; especially pp. 289ff.

[14] John Dewey, *Logic, The Theory of Inquiry* (New York, Henry Holt, 1938), especially Ch. III, IV, VII, VIII, XII; See also the essay, "The Objectivism-Subjectivism of Modern Philosphy" (1941) now in the collection *Problems of Men* (Philosophical Library, New York, 1946), pp. 316ff.

[15] Henri Bergson, *Matière et Memoire*, Ch. I, "La Selection des Images par la Representation."

[16] See for instance Edmund Husserl, *Logische Untersuchungen*, II Bd., II, "Die ideale Einheit der Species und die neuen Abstraktions Theorien"; rendered excellently by Marvin Farber, *The Foundation of Phenomenology* (Harvard, 1943), Ch. IX, esp. pp. 251ff; Husserl, *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie*, English translation by Boyce Gibson (London, 1931), First Section; *Formale und Transzendentale Logik* (Halle, 1929), Secs. 82–86, 94–96 (cf. Farber. l.c., p. 501ff.); *Erfahrung und Urteil* (Prag, 1939), Secs. 6–10, 16–24, 41–43, and *passim*.

ficial abstraction or facts considered in their particular setting. In either case they carry along their interpretational inner and outer horizon. This does not mean that, in daily life or in science, we are unable to grasp the reality of the world. It just means that we grasp merely certain aspects of it, namely those which are relevant to us either for carrying on our business of living or from the point of view of a body of accepted rules of procedure of thinking called the method of science.

(2) *Particular Structure of the Constructs of the Social Sciences*

If, according to this view, all scientific constructs are designed to supersede the constructs of common-sense thought, then a principal difference between the natural and the social sciences becomes apparent. It is up to the natural scientists to determine which sector of the universe of nature, which facts and events therein, and which aspects of such facts and events are topically and interpretationally relevant to their specific purpose. These facts and events are neither preselected nor preinterpreted; they do not reveal intrinsic relevance structures. Relevance is not inherent in nature as such, it is the result of the selective and interpretative activity of man within nature or observing nature. The facts, data, and events with which the natural scientist has to deal are just facts, data, and events within his observational field but this field does not "mean" anything to the molecules, atoms, and electrons therein.

Yet the facts, events, and data before the social scientist are of an entirely different structure. His observational field, the social world, is not principally unstructurized. It has a particular meaning and relevance structure for the human beings living, thinking, and acting therein. They have preselected and preinterpreted this world by a series of common-sense constructs of the reality of daily life and it is these thought objects which determine their behavior, define the goal of their action, the means available for attaining them—in brief, which help them to find their bearing within their natural and socio-cultural environment and to come to terms with it. The thought objects constructed by the social scientists refer to and are founded upon the thought objects constructed by the common-sense thought of man living his everyday life among his fellowmen. Thus, the constructs used by the social scientist are, so to speak, constructs of the second degree, namely constructs of the constructs made by the actors on the social scene whose behavior the scientist observes and tries to explain in accordance with the procedural[17] rules of his science.

Modern social sciences find themselves faced with a serious dilemma.

[17] As to the concept of procedural rules, see Felix Kaufmann, *Methodology of the Social Sciences* (Oxford University Press New York, 1944), esp. Ch. III and IV; as to the divergent views of the relationship between the natural and the social sciences, ib., Ch. X.

One school of thought feels that there is a basic difference in the structure of the social world and of the world of nature. This insight leads, however, to the erroneous conclusion that the social sciences are *toto coelo* different from the natural sciences, a view which disregards the fact that certain procedural rules relating to correct thought organization are common to all empirical sciences. The other school of thought tries to look at the behavior of man in the same way in which the natural scientist looks at the "behavior" of his thought objects, taking it for granted that the methods of the natural sciences (above all of mathematical physics) which have achieved such magnificent results, are the only scientific ones. On the other hand, it takes for granted that the very adoption of the methods of the natural sciences for establishing constructs will lead to reliable knowledge of social reality. Yet these two assumptions are incompatible with each other. An ideally refined and fully developed behavioristic system, for example, would lead far away from the constructs in terms of which men in the reality of daily life experience their own and their fellowmen's behavior.

To overcome this difficulty particular methodological devices are required, among them the constructs of patterns of rational action. For the purpose of further analysis of the specific nature of the thought objects of social sciences we have to characterize some of the common-sense constructs used by men in everyday life. It is upon the latter that the former are founded.

II. CONSTRUCTS OF THOUGHT OBJECTS IN COMMON-SENSE THINKING

(1) *The individual's common-sense knowledge of the world is a system of constructs of its typicality*

Let us try to characterize the way in which the wide-awake[18] grown-up man looks at the intersubjective world of daily life within which and upon which he acts as a man amidst his fellowmen. This world existed before our birth, experienced and interpreted by others, our predecessors, as an organized world. Now it is given to our experience and interpretation. All interpretation of this world is based on a stock of previous experiences of it, our own or those handed down to us by parents or teachers, which experiences in the form of "knowledge at hand" function as a scheme of reference.

To this stock of knowledge at hand belongs our knowledge that the world we live in is a world of more or less well circumscribed objects with more or less definite qualities, objects among which we move, which resist

[18] As to the precise meaning of this term, see Alfred Schuetz: "On Multiple Realities," *Philosophy and Phaenomenological Research*, Vol. V, 1945, p. 537f.

us and upon which we may act. Yet none of these objects is perceived as insulated. From the outset it is an object within a horizon of familiarity and pre-acquaintanceship which is, as such, just taken for granted until further notice as the unquestioned, though at any time questionable stock of knowledge at hand. The unquestioned pre-experiences are, however, also from the outset, at hand as *typical* ones, that is, as carrying along open horizons of anticipated similar experiences. For example, the outer world is not experienced as an arrangement of individual unique objects, dispersed in space and time, but as "mountains," "trees," "animals," "fellowmen." I may have never seen an Irish setter but if I see one, I know that it is an animal and in particular a dog, showing all the familiar features and the typical behavior of a dog and not, say of a cat. I may reasonably ask: "What kind of dog is this?" The question presupposes that the dissimilarity of this particular dog from all other kinds of dogs which I know stands out and becomes questionable merely by reference to the similarity it has to my unquestioned experiences of typical dogs. In the more technical language of Husserl, whose analysis of the typicality of the world of daily life we have tried to sum up,[19] what is experienced in the actual perception of an object is apperceptively transferred to any other similar object, perceived merely as to its type. Actual experience will or will not confirm my anticipation of the typical conformity with other objects. If confirmed, the content of the anticipated type will be enlarged; at the same time the type will be split up into sub-types; on the other hand the concrete real object will prove to have its individual characteristics, which, nevertheless, have a form of typicality.

Now, and this seems to be of special importance, I *may* take the typically apperceived object as an *exemplar* of the general type and allow myself to be led to this concept of the type, but I do not *need* by any means to think of the concrete dog as an exemplar of the general concept of "dog." "In general" my Irish setter Rover shows all the characteristics which the type "dog" according to my previous experience implies. Yet exactly what he has in common with other dogs is of no concern to me. I look at him as my friend and companion Rover, as such being distinguished from all the other Irish setters with which he shares certain typical characteristics of appearance and behavior. I am, without a special motive, not induced to look at Rover as a mammal, an animal, an object of the outer world, although I know that he is all this too.

Thus, in the natural attitude of daily life we are concerned merely with certain objects standing out over against the unquestioned field of pre-

[19] Edmund Husserl, *Erfahrung und Urteil*, Secs. 18–21 and 82–85; cf. also Alfred Schuetz: "Language, Language Disturbances and the Texture of Consciousness," *Social Research*, Vol. 17, September 1950, esp. pp. 384–390.

experienced other objects, and it is the outcome of the selecting activity of our mind to determine which particular characteristics of such an object are individual and which typical ones. More generally, we are merely concerned with some aspects of this particular typified object. Asserting of this object S that it has the characteristic property p in the form "S is p" is an elliptical statement. For S, taken without any question as it appears to me, is not merely p but also q and r and many other things. The full statement should read: "S is, among many other things, such as q and r, also p." If I assert with respect to an element of the world as taken for granted: "S is p," I do so because under the prevailing circumstances I am interested in the p-being of S, disregarding as not relevant its being also q and r.[20]

The terms "interest" and "relevant" just used are, however, merely headings for a series of complicated problems which cannot be elaborated within the frame of the present paper. We have to restrict ourselves to a few much too condensed remarks.

Man finds himself at any moment of his daily life in a biographically determined situation, that is, in a physical and socio-cultural environment as defined by him,[21] within which he has his position, not merely his position in terms of physical space and outer time or of his status and role within the social system but also his moral and ideological position.[22] To say that this definition of the situation is biographically determined means to say that it has its history; it is the sedimentation of all of man's previous experiences, organized in the habitual possessions of his stock of knowledge. at hand, and as such his unique possession, given to him and to him alone This biographically determined situation includes certain possibilities of future practical or theoretical activities which shall be briefly called the "purpose at hand." It is this purpose at hand which defines those elements among all the others contained in such a situation which are relevant for this purpose. This system of relevances in turn determines what elements have to be made a substratum of generalizing typification, what traits of these have to be selected as characteristically typical and what others as unique and individual, that is, how far we have to penetrate into the open horizon of typicality. To return to our previous example: A change in my purpose at hand and the system of relevances attached thereto, the shifting of the "context" within which S is interesting to me may induce me to

[20] See literature referred to in Footnote 19.

[21] As to the concept of "Defining the Situation," see the various pertinent papers of W. I. Thomas, now collected in the volume, *Social Behavior and Personality, Contributions of W. I. Thomas to Theory and Social Research*, ed. by Edmund H. Volkart (Social Science Research Council, New York, 1951). Consult index and the valuable introductory essay by the editor.

[22] Cf. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phénoménologie de la Perception* (Paris, 1945), p. 158.

become concerned with the q-being of S, its being also p having become irrelevant to me.

(2) *The intersubjective character of common-sense knowledge and its implication*

In analyzing the first constructs of common-sense thinking of everyday life we proceeded, however, as if the world were my private world and as if we were entitled to disregard the fact that it is from the outset an intersubjective world of culture. It is intersubjective because we live in it as men among other men, bound to them through common influence and work, understanding others and being understood by them. It is a world of culture because, from the outset, the world of everyday life is a universe of significance to us, that is a texture of meaning which we have to interpret in order to find our bearings within it and to come to terms with it. This texture of meaning, however—and this distinguishes the realm of culture from that of nature—originates in and has been instituted by human actions, our own and our fellowmen's, contemporaries and predecessors. All cultural objects—tools, symbols, language systems, works of art, social institutions, etc.—point back by their very origin and meaning to the activities of human subjects. For this reason we are always conscious of the historicity of culture which we encounter in traditions and customs. This historicity is capable of being examined in its reference to human activities of which it is the sediment. For the same reason I cannot understand a cultural object without referring it to the human activity from which it originates. For example, I do not understand a tool, without knowing the purpose for which it was designed, a sign or symbol, without knowing for what it stands in the mind of the person who uses it, an institution, without understanding what it means for the individuals who orient their behavior on its existence. Here is the origin of the so-called postulate of subjective interpretation of the social sciences which will call for our attention later on.

Our next task is, however, to examine the additional constructs which emerge in common-sense thinking if we take into account that this world is not my private world but an intersubjective one and that, therefore, my knowledge of it is not my private affair but from the outset intersubjective or socialized. For our purpose we have briefly to consider three aspects of the problem of the socialization of knowledge, namely:

(a) The reciprocity of perspectives or the structural socialization of knowledge;
(b) The social origin of knowledge or the genetic socialization of knowledge;
(c) The social distribution of knowledge.

(a) *The reciprocity of perspectives*

In the natural attitude of common-sense thinking of daily life I take it for granted that intelligent fellowmen exist. This implies that the objects of the world are, as a matter of principle, accessible to their knowledge, namely, either known to them or knowable by them. This I know and take for granted beyond question. But I know also and take for granted that, strictly speaking, the "same" object must mean something different to me and to any of my fellowmen. This is so because

(i) I, being "here," am at another distance from and experience other aspects as being typical of the objects than he, who is "there." For the same reason, certain objects are out of my reach (of my seeing, hearing, my manipulatory sphere, etc.) but within his and vice versa.

(ii) My and my fellowman's biographically determined situations, and therewith my and his purpose at hand and my and his system of relevances originating in such purposes, must needs differ, at least to a certain extent.

Common sense thinking overcomes the differences in individual perspectives resulting from these factors by two basic idealizations:

(i) The idealization of the interchangeability of the standpoints: I take it for granted—and assume my fellowman does the same—that if I change places with him so that his "here" becomes mine, I would be at the same distance from things and see them in the same typicality as he actually does; moreover, the same things would be in my reach which are actually in his. (All this vice versa.)

(ii) The idealization of the congruency of the system of relevances: Until counter-evidence I take it for granted—and assume my fellowman does the same—that the differences in perspectives originating in my and his unique biographical situations are irrelevant for the purpose at hand of either of us and that he and I, that "We" assume that both of us have selected and interpreted the actually or potentially common objects and their features in an identical manner or at least an "empirically identical" manner, namely, sufficient for all practical purposes.

It is obvious that both idealizations, that of the interchangeability of the standpoints and that of the congruency of relevances—both together constituting the *general thesis of reciprocal perspectives*—are typifying constructs of objects of thought which supersede the thought objects of my and my fellowman's private experience. By the operation of these constructs of common-sense thinking it is assumed that the sector of the world taken for granted by me is also taken for granted by you, my individual fellowman, even more, that it is taken for granted by "Us," but this "We" does not merely include you and me but "everyone who belongs to us," namely

everyone whose system of relevances is substantially (sufficiently) in conformity with yours and mine. Thus, the general thesis of reciprocal perspectives leads to the apprehension of objects and their aspects actually known by me and potentially known by you as everyone's knowledge. Such knowledge is conceived to be objective and anonymous, namely detached from and independent of my and my fellowman's definition of the situation, my and his unique biographical circumstances and the actual and potential purposes at hand therein involved.

The terms "objects" and "aspect of objects" have to be interpreted in the broadest possible sense as objects of knowledge taken for granted. If we do so, we will discover the importance of the constructs of intersubjective thought objects originating in the structural socialization of knowledge just described, for many problems investigated, but not thoroughly analyzed, by eminent social scientists. What is supposed to be known in conformity by everyone who shares our system of relevances is the way of life considered to be the natural, the good, the right one by the members of the in-group";[23] as such it is at the origin of the many recipes for handling things and men in order to come to terms with typified situations, of the folkways and mores, of "traditional behavior," in the sense of Max Weber,[24] of the "of-course statements" believed to be valid by the in-group in spite of their inconsistencies,[25] briefly of the "relative natural aspect of the world."[26] All these terms refer to constructs of a typified knowledge of a highly socialized structure which supersede the thought objects of my and my fellowman's private knowledge of the world as taken for granted. Yet this knowledge has its history, it is a part of our "social heritage," and this brings us to the second aspect of the problem of socialization of knowledge, namely, its genetic structure.

(b) *The social origin of knowledge*

Only a very small part of my knowledge of the world originates within my personal experience. The greater part is socially derived, handed down to me by my friends, my parents, my teachers and the teachers of my

[23] William Graham Summer, *Folkways, A Study of the Sociological Importance of Manners, Customs, Mores and Morals* (New York, Ginn, 1906).

[24] Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, translated by A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons (Oxford University Press, New York, 1947), pp. 115ff; see also Talcott Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action* (McGraw-Hill, New York, 1937), Ch. XVI.

[25] Robert S. Lynd, *Middletown in Transition* (New York, 1937), Ch. XII, and *Knowledge for What?* (Princeton, 1939), pp. 38–63.

[26] Max Scheler, *Die Wissensformen und die Gesellschaft, Probleme einer Soziologie des Wissens* (Leipzig, 1926), pp. 58ff. Cf. Howard Becker and Hellmuth Dahlke, "Max Scheler's Sociology of Knowledge," *Philosophy and Phen. Research*, II, 1942, p. 310–22, esp. 315.

teachers. I am not only taught how to define the environment (that is, the typical features of the relative natural aspect of the world prevailing in the in-group as the unquestioned but always questionable sum total of things taken for granted until further notice,) but also how typical constructs have to be formed in accordance with the system of relevances accepted from the anonymous unified point of view of the in-group. This includes ways of life, how to come to terms with the environment, efficient recipes for the use of typical means for bringing about typical ends in typical situations. The typifying medium *par excellence* by which socially derived knowledge is transmitted is the vocabulary and the syntax of everyday language. The vernacular of everyday life is primarily a language of named things and events, and any name includes a typification and generalization referring to the relevance system prevailing in the linguistic in-group which found the named thing significant enough to provide a separate term for it. The pre-scientific vernacular can be interpreted as a treasure house of ready made pre-constituted types and characteristics, all socially derived and carrying along an open horizon of unexplored content.[27]

(c) *The social distribution of knowledge*

Knowledge is socially distributed. The general thesis of reciprocal perspectives, to be sure, overcomes the difficulty that my actual knowledge is merely the potential knowledge of my fellowmen and vice versa. But the stock of *actual* knowledge at hand differs from individual to individual, and common-sense thinking takes this fact into account. Not only *what* an individual knows differs from what his neighbor knows, but also *how* both know the "same" facts. Knowledge has manifold degrees of clarity, distinctness, precision, and familiarity. To take as an example William James'[28] well known distinction between "knowledge of acquaintance" and "knowledge-about" it is obvious that many things are known to me just in the dumb way of mere acquaintance, whereas *you* have knowledge "about" what makes them what they are and vice versa. I am an "expert" in a small field and "layman" in many others and so are you.[29] Any individual's stock of knowledge at hand is at any moment of his life structurized in zones of various degrees of clarity, distinctness and precision. This structurization originates in the system of prevailing relevances and is, thus, biographically determined. The knowledge of these individual differences is itself an element of common-sense experience: I know whom and

[27] See my paper mentioned in footnote 19, pp. 392f.

[28] William James, l.c., Vol. I, p. 221f.

[29] Alfred Schuetz, "The Well-Informed Citizen, an Essay on the Social Distribution of Knowledge," *Social Research*, Vol. 13, Dec. 1946, pp. 463–472.

under what typical circumstances I have to consult as a "competent" doctor or lawyer. In other words, in daily life I construct types of the other's field of acquaintance and of the scope and texture of his knowledge. In doing so I assume that he will be guided by certain relevance structures, expressing themselves in a set of constant motives leading to a particular pattern of action and even co-determining his personality. But this statement anticipates the analysis of the common-sense constructs related to the understanding of our fellowmen which is our next task.[29a]

(3) *The structure of the social world and its typification by common-sense constructs*

I, the human being, born into the social world, and living my daily life in it, experience it as built around my place in it, as open to my interpretation and action, but always referring to my actual biographically determined situation. Only in reference to me does a certain kind of my relations with others obtain the specific meaning which I designate with the word "We"; only with reference to "Us," whose center I am, others stand out as "You" and in reference to "You," who refer back to me, third parties stand out as "They." In the dimension of time there are with reference to me in my actual biographical moment "contemporaries," with whom a mutual interplay of action and reaction can be established; "predecessors," upon whom I cannot act, but whose past actions and their outcome are open to my interpretation and may influence my own actions; and "successors," of whom no experience is possible but toward whom I may orient my actions in a more or less empty anticipation. All these relations show the most manifold forms of intimacy and anonymity, of familiarity and strangeness, of intensity and extensity.[30]

In the present context we are restricting ourselves to the interrelationship prevailing among contemporaries. Still dealing with common-sense experience we may just take for granted that man can understand his fellow-

[29a] With the exception of some economists (i.e. F. A. Hayek, Economics and Knowledge, *Economica*, February 1937, now reprinted in *Individualism and Economic Order*, Chicago 1948) the problem of the social distribution of knowledge has not attracted the attention of the social scientists it merits. It opens a new field for theoretical and empirical research which would truly deserve the name of a sociology of knowledge now reserved to an ill-defined discipline which just takes for granted the social distribution of knowledge, upon which it is founded. It may be hoped that the systematic investigation of this field will yield significant contributions to many problems of the social sciences such as that of the social role, of social stratification, of institutional or organizational behavior, of the sociology of occupations and professions, of prestige and status, etc.

[30] Alfred Schuetz, *Der Sinnhafte Aufbauder Sozialen Welt* (Vienna, 1932). See also Alfred Stonier and Karl Bode, "A New Approach to the Methodology of the Social Sciences," Economica (London, Vol. V, November, 1937), pp. 406-424, esp. pp. 416 ff.

man and his actions and that he can communicate with others because he assumes they understand his actions; also, that this mutual understanding has certain limits but is sufficient for many practical purposes.

Among my contemporaries are some with whom I share, as long as the relation lasts, not only a community of time but also of space. We shall call, for the sake of terminological convenience, such contemporaries "consociates" and the relationship prevailing among them a "face-to-face" relationship, this latter term being understood in a sense other than that used by Cooley[31] and his successors; we designate by it merely a purely formal aspect of social relationship equally applicable to an intimate talk between friends and the co-presence of strangers in a railroad car.

Sharing a community of space implies that a certain sector of the outer world is equally within the reach of each partner, within it objects of common interest and relevance. For each partner the other's body, his gestures, his gait, and facial expressions are immediately observable, not merely as things or events of the outer world but in their physiognomical significance, that is as symptoms of the other's thoughts. Sharing a community of time—and this means not only of outer (chronological) time, but of inner time—implies that each partner participates in the onrolling life of the other, can grasp in a vivid present the other's thoughts as they are built up step by step. They may, thus, share one another's anticipations of the future as plans, or hopes or anxieties. In brief, consociates are mutually involved in one another's biography; they are growing older together; they live, as we may call it, in a pure We-relationship.

In such a relationship, fugitive and superficial as it may be, the other is grasped as a unique individuality (although merely one aspect of his personality becomes apparent) in its unique biographical situation (although revealed merely fragmentarily). In all the other forms of social relationship (and even in the relationship among consociates as far as the unrevealed aspects of the other's self are concerned) the fellowman's self can merely be grasped by a "contribution of imagination of hypothetical meaning presentation" (to allude to Whitehead's statement quoted at the beginning of this paper), that is by forming a construct of a typical way of behavior, a typical pattern of underlying motives, of typical attitudes of a personality type, of which the other and his conduct under scrutiny, both outside of my observational reach, are just instances or exemplars. We cannot here[32] develop a full taxonomy of the structurization of the

[31] Charles H. Cooley, *Social Organization* (New York, Scribner, 1909), Chs. III–V; and Alfred Schuetz, "The Homecomer," *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 50, March 1945, p. 371.

[32] See footnote 30.

social world and of the various forms of constructs of course-of-action types and personality types needed for grasping the other and his behavior. Thinking of my absent friend A, I form an ideal type of his personality and behavior based on my past experience of A as my consociate. Putting a letter in the mailbox, I expect that unknown people, called postmen, will act in a typical way, not quite intelligible to me, to the effect that my letter will reach the addressee within typically reasonable time. Without having ever met a Frenchman or a German I understand "Why France fears the rearmament of Germany." Complying with a rule of English grammar I follow a socially approved behavior pattern of contemporary English-speaking fellowmen to which I have to adjust my own behavior in order to make myself understandable. And finally any artefact or utensil refers to the anonymous fellowman who produced it to be used by other anonymous fellowmen for attaining typical goals by typical means.

These are just a few examples but they are arranged according to the degree of increasing anonymity of the relationship among contemporaries involved and therewith of the construct needed to grasp the other and his behavior. It becomes apparent that an increase in anonymity involves a decrease of fullness of content. The more anonymous the typifying construct is, the more detached is it from the uniqueness of the individual fellowman involved, the fewer aspects also of his personality and behavior pattern enter the typification as being relevant for the purpose at hand, for the sake of which the type has been constructed. If we distinguish between (subjective) personal types and (objective) course-of-action types we may say that increasing anonymization of the construct leads to the superseding of the former by the latter. In complete anonymization the individuals are supposed to be interchangeable and the course-of-action type refers to the behavior of "whomsoever" acting in the way defined as typical by the construct.

Summing up, we may say that, except in the pure We-relation of consociates, we can never grasp the individual uniqueness of our fellowman in his unique biographical situation. In the constructs of common-sense thinking the other appears at best as a partial self, and he enters even the pure We-relation merely with a part of his personality. This insight seems to be important in several respects. It helped Simmel[33] to overcome the dilemma between individual and collective consciousness, so clearly seen

[33] Georg Simmel: "Note on the Problem: How is Society Possible?" translated by Albion W. Small, *The American Journal of Sociology*, XVI, November 1910, pp. 372–391; see also, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, translated, edited and with an introduction by Kurt H. Wolff, (The Free Press, Glencoe, Ill. 1950), and consult Index under "Individual and Group."

by Durkheim;[34] it is at the basis of Cooley's[35] theory of the origin of the Self by a "looking glass effect"; it led George H. Mead[36] to his ingenious concept of the "generalized other"; it is finally decisive for the clarification of such concepts as "social functions," "social role," and, last but not least, "rational action."

But this is merely half the story. My constructing the other as a partial self, as the performer of typical roles or functions has a corollary in the process of self-typification which takes place if I enter into interaction with him. I am not involved in such a relationship with my total personality but merely with certain layers of it. In defining the role of the other I am assuming a role myself. In typifying the other's behavior I am typifying my own, which is interrelated with his, transforming myself into a passenger, consumer, taxpayer, reader, bystander, etc. It is this self-typification which is at the bottom of William James'[37] and of George H. Mead's[38] distinction between the "I" and the "Me" in relation to the social self.

We have, however, to keep in mind that the common-sense constructs used for the typification of the other and of myself are to a considerable extent socially derived and socially approved. Within the in-group the bulk of personal types and course-of-action types is taken for granted until counter-evidence as a set of rules and recipes which have stood the test so far and are expected to stand it in the future. Even more, the pattern of typical constructs is frequently institutionalized as a standard of behavior, warranted by traditional and habitual mores and sometimes by specific means of so-called social control, such as the legal order.

(4) *Course-of-action types and personal types*

We have now briefly to investigate the pattern of action and social interaction which underlies the construction of course-of-action and personal types in common-sense thinking.

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[34] An excellent presentation of Durkheim's view in Georges Gurvitch, *La Vocation Actuelle de la Sociologie* (Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1950), Ch. VI, pp. 351–409; see also Talcott Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action*, Ch. X; Emile Benoit-Smullyan: "The Sociologism of Emile Durkheim and his School," in Harry Elmer Barnes: *An Introduction to the History of Sociology* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1948), pp. 499–537, and Robert K. Merton: *Social Theory and Social Structure* (The Free Press, Glencoe, Ill. 1949), Ch. IV, pp. 125–150.

[35] Charles H. Cooley, *Human Nature and the Social Order* (rev. ed., New York, 1922), p. 184.

[36] George H. Mead: *Mind, Self, and Society* (Chicago, 1934), pp. 152–163.

[37] William James, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, Ch. X.

[38] George H. Mead, *op. cit.*, pp. 173–175, 196–198, 203; "The Genesis of the Self," reprinted in *The Philosophy of the Present* (Chicago, 1932), pp. 176–195; "What Social Objects Must Psychology Presuppose?" *Journal of Philosophy*, Vol. X, 1913, pp. 374–380.

(a) *Action, project, motive*

The term "action" as used in this paper shall designate human conduct devised by the actor in advance, that is, conduct based upon a preconceived project. The term "act" shall designate the outcome of this ongoing process, that is, the accomplished action. Action may be covert (for example, the attempt to solve a scientific problem mentally) or overt, gearing into the outer world; it may take place by commission or omission, purposive abstention from acting being considered an action in itself.

All projecting consists in anticipation of future conduct by way of phantasying, yet it is not the ongoing process of action but the phantasied act as having been accomplished which is the starting point of all 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 such 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. Thus I have to place myself in my phantasy at a future time when this action *will* already *have been* accomplished. Only then may I reconstruct in phantasy the single steps which *will have* brought forth this future act. In the terminology suggested, it is not the future action but the future act that is anticipated in the project, and it is anticipated in the Future Perfect Tense, *modo futuri exacti*. This time perspective peculiar to the project has rather important consequences.

(i) All projects of my forthcoming acts are based upon my knowledge at hand at the time of projecting. To this knowledge belongs my experience of previously performed acts which are typically similar to the projected one. Consequently all projecting involves a particular idealization, called by Husserl the idealization of "I-can-do-it-again,"[39] namely, the assumption that I may under typically similar circumstances act in a typically similar way as I did before in order to bring about a typically similar state of affairs. It is clear that this idealization involves a construction of a specific kind. My knowledge at hand at the time of projecting must, strictly speaking, be different from my knowledge at hand after having performed the projected act, if for no other reason than because I "grew older" and at least the experiences I had while carrying out my project have modified by biographical circumstances and enlarged my stock of experience. Thus, the "repeated" action will be something else than a mere re-performance. The first action A' started within a set of circumstances C' and indeed brought about the state of

[39] Edmund Husserl, *Formale und Transzendentale Logik, Versuch einer Kritik der Logischen Vernunft* (Halle 1929), Sec. 74, p. 167; *Erfahrung und Urteil*, Sec. 24, Sec. 51b.

affairs S'; the repeated action A'' starts in a set of circumstances C'' and is expected to bring about the state of affairs S''. By necessity C'' will differ from C' because the experience that A' succeeded in bringing about S' belongs to my stock of knowledge, which is an element of C'', whereas to my stock of knowledge, which was an element of C', belonged merely the empty anticipation that this would be the case. Similarly S'' will differ from S' as A'' will from A'. This is so because all the terms—C', C'', A', A'', S', S''—are as such unique and irretrievable events. Yet exactly those features which make them unique and irretrievable in the strict sense are—to my common-sense thinking—eliminated as being irrelevant for my purpose at hand. When making the idealization of "I-can-do-it-again" I am merely interested in the typicality of A, C, and S, all of them without primes. The construction consists, figuratively speaking, in the suppression of the primes as being irrelevant, and this, incidentally, is characteristic of typifications of all kinds.

This point will become especially important for the analysis of the concept of so-called rational action. It is obvious that in the habitual and routine actions of daily life we apply the construction just described in following recipes and rules of thumb which have stood the test so far and in frequently stringing together means and ends without clear knowledge "about" their real connections. Even in common-sense thinking we construct a world of supposedly interrelated facts containing exclusively elements deemed to be relevant for our purpose at hand.

(ii) The particular time perspective of the project sheds some light on the relationship between project and motive. In ordinary speech the term "motive" covers two different sets of concepts which have to be distinguished.

(a) We may say that the motive of a murderer was to obtain the money of the victim. Here "motive" means the state of affairs, the end, which to bring about the action has been undertaken. 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 the future. The state of affairs to be brought about by the future action, prephantasied in its project, is the in-order-to motive for carrying out the action.

(b) We may say that the murderer has been motivated to commit his deed because he grew up in this and that environment, had these and those childhood experiences, etc. This class of motives, which we shall call "(genuine)[39a] because-motives" refers from

[39a] Linguistically in-order-to motives may be expressed in modern languages also by "because"-*sentences*. Genuine because-motives, however, cannot be expressed by

the point of view of the actor to his past experiences which 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 (for instance to satisfy his need for money by killing a man).

We cannot enter here[40] into a more detailed analysis of the theory of motives. It has merely to be pointed out that the actor who lives in his ongoing process of acting has merely the in-order-to motive of his ongoing action in view, that is, the projected state of affairs to be brought about. Only by turning back to his accomplished act or to the past initial phases of his still ongoing action or to the once established project which anticipates the act *modo futuri exacti* can the actor grasp retrospectively the because-motive that determined him to do what he did or what he projected to do. But then the actor is not acting any more; he is an observer of himself.

The distinction between the two kinds of motives becomes of vital importance for the analysis of human interaction to which we now turn.

(b) *Social interaction*

Any form of social interaction is founded upon the constructs described herein before relating to the understanding of the other and the action pattern in general. Take as an example the interaction of consociates involved in questioning and answering. In projecting my question I anticipate that the other will understand my action (for instance my uttering an interrogative sentence) as a question and that this understanding will induce him to act in such a way that I may understand his behavior as an adequate response. (I: "Where is the ink?" The other points at a table.) The in-order-to motive of my action is to obtain adequate information which, in this particular situation, presupposes that the understanding of my in-order-to motive will become the other's because-motive to perform an action in-order-to furnish me this information—provided he is able and willing to do so, which I assume he is. I anticipate that he understands English, that he knows where the ink is, that he will tell me if he knows, etc. In more general terms I anticipate that he will be guided by the same types of motives by which in the past, according to my stock of knowledge at hand, I myself and many others were guided under typically similar circumstances. Our example shows that even the simplest interaction in common life presupposes a series of common-sense constructs—in this case

"in-order-to" *sentences*. This distinction between the two possibilities of linguistic expressions relating to the in-order-to motive, important as it is in another context, will be disregarded in the following and the term "because-motive" or "because-sentence" will be exclusively reserved for the genuine because-motive and its linguistic expression.

[40] See footnote 30.

constructs of the other's anticipated behavior—all of them based on the idealization that the actor's in-order-to motives will become because-motives of his partner and vice-versa. We shall call this *idealization* that *of the reciprocity of motives*. It is obvious that this idealization depends upon the general thesis of the reciprocity of perspectives since it implies that the motives imputed to the other are typically the same as my own or that of others in typically similar circumstances; all this in accordance with my genuine or socially derived knowledge at hand.

Suppose now that I want to find some ink in order to refill my fountain pen so that I can write this application to the fellowship committee which, if granted, will change my entire way of life. I, the actor (questioner), and I alone know of this plan of mine to obtain the fellowship which is the ultimate in-order-to motive of my actual action, the state of affairs to be brought about. Of course, this can be done merely by a series of steps (writing an application, bringing writing tools within my reach, etc.) each of them to be materialized by an "action" with its particular project and its particular in-order-to motive. Yet all these "sub-actions" are merely phases of the total action and all intermediary steps to be materialized by them are merely means for attaining my final goal as defined by my original project. It is the span of this original project which welds together the chain of sub-projects into a unit. This becomes entirely clear if we consider that in this chain of interrelated partial actions, designed to materialize states of affairs which are merely "means" for attaining the projected end, certain links can be replaced by others or even drop out without any change in the original project. If I cannot find some ink I may turn to the typewriter in order to prepare my application.

In other words, only the actor knows "when his action starts and where it ends," that is wherefore it will have been performed. It is the span of his projects which determines the unit of his action. His partner has neither knowledge of the projecting preceding the actor's action nor of the context of a higher unit in which it stands. He knows merely that fragment of the actor's action which has become manifest to him, namely, the performed act observed by him or the past phases of the still ongoing action. If the addressee of my question were asked later on by a third person what I wanted from him he would answer that I wanted to know where to find some ink. That is all he knows of my projecting and its context and he has to look at it as a self-contained unit action. In order to "understand" what I, the actor, meant by my action he would have to start from the observed act and to construct from there my underlying in-order-to motive for the sake of which I did what he observed.

It is by now clear that the meaning of an action is by necessity a different one (a) for the actor; (b) for his partner involved with him in interaction

and having, thus, with him a set of relevances and purposes in common; and (c) for the observer not involved in such relationship. This fact leads to two important consequences: First, that in common-sense thinking we have merely a *chance* to understand the other's action sufficiently for our purpose at hand; secondly that to increase this chance we have to search for the meaning the action has for the actor. Thus, the postulate of the "subjective interpretation of meaning," as the unfortunate term goes, is not a particularity of Max Weber's[41] sociology or of the methodology of the social sciences in general but a principle of constructing course-of-action types in common-sense experience.

But subjective interpretation of meaning is merely possible by revealing the motives which determine a given course of action. By referring a course-of-action type to the underlying typical motives of the actor we arrive at the construction of a personal type. The latter may be more or less anonymous and, therewith, more or less empty of content. In the We-relationship among consociates the other's course of action, its motives (insofar as they become manifest) and his person (insofar as it is involved in the manifest action) can be shared in immediacy and the constructed types, just described, will show a very low degree of anonymity and a high degree of fullness. In constructing course-of-action types of contemporaries other than consociates we impute to the more or less anonymous actor a set of supposedly invariant motives which govern their actions. This set is itself a construct of typical expectations of the other's behavior and has been investigated frequently in terms of social role or function or institutional behavior. In common-sense thinking such a construct has a particular significance for projecting actions which are oriented upon my contemporaries' (not my consociates') behavior. Its functions can be described as follows:

(1) I take it for granted that my action (say putting a stamped and duly addressed envelope in a mailbox) will induce anonymous fellowmen (postmen) to perform typical actions (handling the mail) in accordance with typical in-order-to motives (to live up to their occupational duties) with the result that the state of affairs projected by me (delivery of the letter to the addressee within reasonable time) will be achieved. (2) I also take it for granted that my construct of the other's course-of-action type corresponds substantially to his own self-typification and that to the latter

[41] Max Weber, *op. cit.*, pp. 9, 18, 22, 90, esp. p. 88: "In 'action' is included all human behavior when and insofar as the acting individual attaches a subjective meaning to it. . . . Action is social insofar as, by virtue of the subjective meaning attached to it by the acting individual (or individuals), it takes account of the behavior of others and is thereby oriented in its course." See Talcott Parsons, *op. cit.*, esp. pp. 82ff, 345–47, and 484ff; Felix Kaufmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 166f.

belongs a typified construct of my, his anonymous partner's, typical way of behavior based on typical and supposedly invariant motives. ("Whoever puts a duly addressed and stamped envelope in the mailbox is assumed to intend to have it delivered to the addressee in due time.") (3) Even more, in my own self-typification—that is by assuming the role of a customer of the mail service—I have to project my action in such a typical way as I suppose the typical post office employee expects a typical customer to behave. Such a construct of mutually interlocked behavior patterns reveals itself as a construct of mutually interlocked in-order-to and because motives which are supposedly invariant. The more institutionalized or standardized such a behavior pattern is, that is, the more typified it is in a socially approved way by laws, rules, regulations, customs, habits, etc., the greater is the chance that my own self-typifying behavior will bring about the state of affairs aimed at.

(c) *The Observer*

We have still to characterize the special case of the observer who is not a partner in the interaction pattern. His motives are not interlocked with those of the observed person or persons; he is "tuned in" upon them but not they upon him. In other words the observer does not participate in the complicated mirror-reflexes by which in the interaction pattern among contemporaries the actor's in-order-to motives become understandable to the partner as his own because motives and vice versa. Precisely this fact constitutes the so-called "disinterestedness" or detachment of the observer. He is not involved in the actor's hopes and fears whether or not they will understand one another and achieve their end by the interlocking of motives. Thus his system of relevances differs from that of the interested parties and permits him to see at the same time more and less than what is seen by them. But under all circumstances, it is merely the manifested fragments of the actions of *both* partners that are accessible to his observation. In order to understand them the observer has to avail himself of his knowledge of typically similar patterns of interaction in typically similar situational settings and has to construct the motives of the actors from that sector of the course of action which is patent to his observation. The constructs of the observer are, therefore, different ones than those used by the participants in the interaction, if for no other reason than the fact that the purpose of the observer is different from that of the interactors and therewith the systems of relevances attached to such purposes are also different. There is a mere chance, although a chance sufficient for many practical purposes, that the observer in daily life can grasp the subjective meaning of the actor's acts. This chance increases with the degree of anonymity and standardization of the observed behavior. The scientific observer

of human interrelation patterns, the social scientist, has to develop specific methods for the building of his constructs in order to assure their applicability for the interpretation of the subjective meaning the observed acts have for the actors. Among these devices we are here especially concerned with the constructs of models of so-called rational actions. Let us consider first the possible meaning of the term "rational action" within the common-sense experience of everyday life.

III. RATIONAL ACTION WITHIN THE COMMON-SENSE EXPERIENCE

Ordinary language does not sharply distinguish among a sensible, a reasonable, and a rational way of conduct. We may say that a man acted sensibly if the motive and the course of his action is understandable to us, his partners or observers. This will be the case if his action is in accordance with a socially approved set of rules and recipes for the coming to terms with typical problems by applying typical means for achieving typical ends. If I, if We, if "Anybody belonging to us" found himself in typically similar circumstances he would act in a similar way. Sensible behavior, however, does not presuppose that the actor is guided by insight into his motives and the means-ends context. A strong emotional reaction against an offender might be sensible and refraining from it foolish. If an action seems to be sensible to the observer and is, in addition, supposed to spring from a judicious choice among different courses of action, we may call it reasonable even if such action follows traditional or habitual patterns just taken for granted. Rational action, however, presupposes that the actor has clear and distinct insight[41a] into the ends, the means, and the secondary results, which "involves rational consideration of alternative means to the end, of the relations of the end to other prospective results of employment of any given means and, finally, of different possible ends. Determination of

[41a] This postulate of Leibniz obviously underlies the concept of rationality used by many students of this topic. Pareto, distinguishing between logical and non-logical actions, requires that the former have logically to conjoin means to ends not only from the standpoint of the subject performing the action but also from the standpoint of other persons who have a more extensive knowledge, that is, of the scientist. [Vilfredo Pareto, *Trattato de Sociologia Generale*, English translation under the title *The Mind and Society*, ed. by Arthur Livingston (Harcourt Brace & Co., New York 1935 and 1942); see especially Volume I, Secs. 150ff.] Objective and subjective purpose have to be identical. Professor Talcott Parsons (*The Structure of Social Action*, p. 58) develops a similar theory. Pareto admits, however, (l.c., sect. 150) that from the subjective point of view nearly all human actions belong to the logical class. Professor Howard Becker (*Through Values to Social Interpretation*, 1950, Duke University Press), pp. 23–27, is of the opinion that action may be found (expediently) rational where it is completely centered upon means viewed by the actor as adequate for the attainment of ends which he conceives as unambiguous.

action, either in affectual or in traditional terms is thus incompatible with this type."[42]

These very preliminary definitions for sensible, reasonable, and rational actions are stated in terms of common-sense interpretations of other people's actions in daily life but, characteristically, they refer not only to the stock of knowledge taken for granted in the in-group to which the observer of this course of action belongs but also to the subjective point of view of the actor, that is to his stock of knowledge at hand at the time of carrying out the action. This involves several difficulties. First it is, as we have seen, our biographical situation which determines the problem at hand and, therewith, the systems of relevances under which the various aspects of the world are constructed in the form of types. By necessity therefore, the actor's stock of knowledge will differ from that of the observer. Even the general thesis of the reciprocity of perspectives is not sufficient to eliminate this difficulty because it presupposes that both the observed and the observer are sharing a system of relevances sufficiently homogeneous in structure and content for the practical purpose involved. If this is not the case then a course of action which is perfectly rational from the point

[42] The characterization of "rational action" follows Max Weber's definition of one of the two types of rational actions distinguished by him, (*op. cit.*, p. 115) namely the so-called "*weckrationales Handeln*" (rendered in Parsons' translation by "rational orientation to a system of discrete ends"). We disregard here Weber's second type of rational action, the "*wertrationales Handeln*" (rendered by "rational orientation to an absolute value") since the distinction between both types can be reduced in the terms of the present paper to a distinction between two types of "because-motives" leading to the project of an action as such. "Zweckrationales Handeln" implies that within the system of hierarchical projects, called in the present paper the "plans," several courses of action stand to choice and that this choice has to be a rational one; "Wertnationales" Handeln cannot choose among several projects of action equally open to the actor within the system of his plans. The project is taken for granted but there are alternatives open for bringing about the projected state of affairs and they have to be determined by rational selection. Parsons has rightly pointed out (l.c., p. 115, footnote 38) that it is nearly impossible to find English terms for "*Zweckrational*" and "*Wertrational*" but the circumscription chosen by him for their translation implies already an interpretation of Weber's theory and obfuscates an important issue: Neither is, in the case of "*zweckrationalität*," a system of *discrete* ends presupposed nor in the case of "*wertrationalität*" an absolute value. (For Parsons' own theory, see pp. 16ff. of his introduction to the Weber volume.)

Far more important for our problem than the distinction of two types of rational action is the distinction between rational actions of both types on the one hand and traditional and affectual actions on the other. The same holds good for the modifications suggested by Howard Becker, (*op. cit.*, p. 22ff) between 'four types of means" followed by the members of any society in attaining their ends, namely: (1) expedient rationality; (2) sanctioned rationality; (3) traditional non-rationality; (4) affective non-rationality. Whereas Weber and Parsons include in their concept of rationality the ends, Becker speaks of types of means.

of view of the actor may appear as non-rational to the partner or observer and vice versa. Both attempts, to induce rain by performing the rain-dance or by seeding clouds with silver iodine are, subjectively seen, rational actions from the point of view of the Hopi Indian or the modern meteorologist respectively, but both would have been judged as non-rational, say by a meteorologist twenty years ago.

Secondly, even if we restrict our investigation to the subjective point of view we have to ascertain whether there is a difference in the meaning of the term "rational" in the sense of reasonable if applied to my own past acts or to the determination of a future course of my actions. At first glance it seems that the difference is considerable. What I did has been done and cannot be undone, although the state of affairs brought about by my actions might be modified or eliminated by countermoves. I do not have, with respect to past actions, the possibility of choice. Anything anticipated in an empty way in the project which had preceded my past action has been fulfilled or not by the outcome of my action. On the other hand all future action is projected under the idealization of "I can do it again" which may or may not stand the test.

Closer analysis shows, however, that even in judging the reasonableness of our own past action we refer always to our knowledge at hand at the time of projecting such action. If we find, retrospectively, that what we had formerly projected as a reasonable course of action under the then known circumstances proved to be a failure we may accuse ourselves of various mistakes: Of an error in judgment if the then prevailing circumstances were incorrectly or incompletely ascertained; or of a lack of foresight if we failed to anticipate future developments, etc. We will, however, not say that we acted unreasonably.

Thus in both cases, that of the past and of the future action our judgment of reasonableness refers to the project determining the course of action and, still more precisely, to the choice among several projects of action therein involved. As has been shown elsewhere[43] any projecting of future action involves a choice among at least two courses of conduct, namely, to carry out the projected action or to refrain from doing so.

Each of the alternatives standing to choice has, as Dewey says,[44] to be rehearsed in phantasy in order to make choice and decision possible. If this deliberation is to be strictly a rational one then the actor must have a clear and distinct knowledge of the following elements of each projected course-of-action standing to choice:

(a) of the particular state of affairs within which his projected action

[43] Alfred Schuetz, "Choosing Among Projects of Action," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. XII, No. 2, December 1951, pp. 161–184.

[44] John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (Modern Library edition, p. 190).

has to start. This involves a sufficiently precise definition of his biographical situation in the physical and socio-cultural environment;

(b) of the state of affairs to be brought about by his projected action, that is, its end. Yet since there is no such thing as an isolated project or end, (all my projects, present to my mind at a given time, being integrated into systems of projects, called my plans and all my plans being integrated into my plan of life), there are also no isolated ends. They are interconnected in a hierarchical order and the attaining of one might have repercussions on the other. I have, therefore, to have clear and distinct knowledge of the place of my project within the hierarchical order of my plans (or the interrelationship of the end to be achieved with other ends), the compatibility of one with the other, and the possible repercussions of one upon another, briefly: of the secondary results of my future action, as Max Weber calls it.[45]

(c) of the various means necessary for attaining the established end, of the possibility of bringing them within my reach, of the degree of the expediency of their application, of the possible employment of these same means for the attainment of other potential ends, and of the compatibility of the selected means with other means needed for the materialization of other projects.

The complication increases considerably if the actor's project of a rational action involves the rational action or reaction of a fellowman, say of a consociate. Projecting rationally such a kind of action involves sufficiently clear and distinct knowledge of the situation of departure not only as defined by me but also as defined by the other. Moreover there has to be sufficient likelihood that the other will be tuned in upon me and consider my action as relevant enough to be motivated in the way of because by my in-order-to motive. If this is the case, then there has to be a sufficient chance that the other will understand me, and this means in the case of a rational interrelationship, that he will interpret my action rationally as being a rational one and that he will react in a rational way. To assume that the other will do so implies, however, on the one hand, that he will have sufficiently clear and distinct knowledge of my project and of its place in the hierarchy of my plans (at least as far as my overt actions makes them manifest to him) and of my system of relevances attached thereto; and, on the other hand, that the structure and scope of his stock of knowledge at hand will be in its relevant portion substantially similar with mine and that his and my system of relevances will, if not overlap, be

[45] See quotation from Max Weber on p. 21.

at least partially congruent. If, furthermore, I assume in my projecting that the other's reaction to my projected action will be a rational one I suppose that he, in projecting his response, knows all the aforementioned elements (a), (b), (c) of his reaction in a clear and distinct way. Consequently if I project a rational action which to be carried out requires an interlocking of my and the other's motives of action (e.g., I want the other to do something for me) I must, by a curious mirror-effect, have sufficient knowledge of what he, the other, knows (and knows to be relevant with respect to my purpose at hand) and this knowledge of his is supposed to include sufficient acquaintance with what I know. This is a condition of *ideally* rational interaction because without such mutual knowledge I could not "rationally" project the attainment of my goal by means of the other's cooperation or reaction. Moreover, such mutual knowledge has to be clear and distinct; a mere more or less empty expectation of the other's behavior is not sufficient.

It seems that under these circumstances rational social interaction becomes impracticable even among consociates. And yet we receive reasonable answers to reasonable questions, our commands are carried out, we perform in factories and laboratories and offices highly "rationalized" activities, we play chess together, briefly, we come conveniently to terms with our fellowmen. How is this possible?

Two different answers seem to offer themselves. First, if interaction among consociates is involved we may assume that the mutual participation in the consociate's onrolling life, the sharing of his anticipations so characteristic of the pure We-relation establishes the prerequisites for rational interaction just analyzed. Yet it is precisely this pure We-relation which is the irrational element of any interrelationship among consociates. The second answer refers not only to the interrelationship among consociates but among contemporaries in general. We may explain the rationality of human interaction by the fact that both actors orient their actions on certain standards which are socially approved as rules of conduct by the in-group to which they belong: norms, mores of good behavior, manners, the organizational framework provided for this particular form of division of labor, the rules of the chess game etc. But neither the origin nor the import of the socially approved standard is "rationally" understood. Such standards might be traditionally or habitually accepted as just being taken for granted, and, within the meaning of our previous definitions, behavior of this kind will be sensible or even reasonable but not necessarily rational. At any rate it will not be "ideally" rational, that is, meeting all the requirements worked out in the analysis of this concept.

We come, therefore, to the conclusion that "rational action" on the common-sense level is always action within an unquestioned and undetermined frame of constructs of typicalities of the setting, the motives, the

means and ends, the courses of action and personalities involved and taken for granted. They are, however, not merely taken for granted by the actor but also supposed as being taken for granted by the fellowman. From this frame of constructs, forming their undetermined horizon, merely particular sets of elements stand out which are clearly and distinctly determinable. To these elements refers the common-sense concept of rationality. Thus we may say that on this level actions are at best partially rational and that rationality has many degrees. For instance, our assumption that our fellowman who is involved with us in a pattern of interaction knows its rational elements will never reach "empirical certainty" (namely, certainty "until further notice" or "good until counter-evidence")[46] but will always bear the character of plausibility, that is, of subjective likelihood (in contradistinction to mathematical probability). We have always to "take chances" and to "run risks" and this situation is expressed by our hopes and fears which are merely the subjective corollaries of our basic uncertainty as to the outcome of our projected interaction.

To be sure, the more standardized the prevailing action pattern is, the more anonymous it is, the greater is the subjective chance of conformity and, therewith, of the success of intersubjective behavior. Yet—and this is the paradox of rationality on the common-sense level—the more standardized the pattern is, the less the underlying elements become analyzable for common-sense thought in terms of rational insight.

All this refers to the criterion of rationality as applicable to the thinking of everyday life and its constructs. Only on the level of models of interaction patterns constructed by the social scientist in accordance with certain particular requirements defined by the methods of his science does the concept of rationality obtain its full significance. In order to make this clear we have first to examine the basic character of such scientific constructs and their relationship to the "reality" of the social world, as such reality presents itself to the common-sense thought of everyday life.

IV. CONSTRUCTS OF THOUGHT OBJECTS BY THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

(1) *The postulate of subjective interpretation*

There will be hardly any issue among social scientists that the object of the social sciences is human behavior, its forms, its organization, and its products. There will be, however, different opinions whether this behavior should be studied in the same manner in which the natural scientist studies his object or whether the goal of the social sciences is the explanation of the "social reality" as experienced by man living his everyday life within the social world. The introductory section of the present paper attempted

[46] Edmund Husserl, *Erfahrung und Urteil*, secs. 77, p. 370.

to show that both principles are incompatible with each other. In the following pages we take the position that the social sciences have to deal with human conduct and its common-sense interpretation in the social reality, involving the analysis of the whole system of projects and motives, of relevances and constructs dealt with in the preceding sections. Such an analysis refers by necessity to the subjective point of view, namely, to the interpretation of the action and its settings in terms of the actor. Since this postulate of the subjective interpretation is, as we have seen, a general principle of constructing course-of-action types in common-sense experience, any social science aspiring to grasp "social reality" has to adopt this principle also.

Yet, at first glance, it seems that this statement is in contradiction to the well-established method of even the most advanced social sciences. Take as an example modern economics. Is it not the "behavior of prices" rather than the behavior of men in the market situation which is studied by the economist, the "shape of demand curves" rather than the anticipations of economic subjects symbolized by such curves? Does not the economist investigate successfully subject matters such as "savings," "capital," "business cycle," "wages" and "unemployment," "multipliers" and "monopoly" as if these phenomena were entirely detached from any activity of the economic subjects, even less without entering into the subjective meaning structure such activities may have for them? The achievements of modern economic theories would make it preposterous to deny that an abstract conceptual scheme can be used very successfully for the solution of many problems. And similar examples could be given from the field of almost all the other social sciences. Closer investigation, however, reveals that this abstract conceptual scheme is nothing else than a kind of intellectual shorthand and that the underlying subjective elements of human actions involved are either taken for granted or deemed to be irrelevant with respect to the scientific purpose at hand—the problem under scrutiny—and are, therefore, disregarded. Correctly understood, the postulate of subjective interpretation as applied to economics as well as to all the other social sciences means merely that we always *can*—and for certain purposes *must*—refer to the activities of the subjects within the social world and their interpretation by the actors in terms of systems of projects, available means, motives, relevances and so on.[47]

But if this is true two other questions have to be answered. First we have seen from the previous analyses that the subjective meaning an action has for an actor is unique and individual because originating in the unique and

[47] Ludwig Von Mises calls his "Treatise on Economics" rightly *Human Action* (New Haven, 1949). See also F. A. Hayek, *The Counter-Revolution of Science*, Glencoe 1952, pp. 25–36.

individual biographical situation of the actor. How is it then possible to grasp subjective meaning scientifically? Secondly, the meaning context of any system of scientific knowledge is objective knowledge but accessible equally to all his fellow scientists and open to their control, which means capable of being verified, invalidated, or falsified by them. How is it, then, possible to grasp by a system of objective knowledge subjective meaning structures? Is this not a paradox?

Both questions can be satisfactorily met by a few simple considerations. As to the first question we learned from Whitehead that all sciences have to construct thought objects of their own which supersede the thought objects of common-sense thinking.[48] The thought objects constructed by the social sciences do not refer to unique acts of unique individuals occurring within a unique situation. By particular methodological devices, to be described presently, the social scientist replaces the thought objects of common-sense thought relating to unique events and occurrences by constructing a model of a sector of the social world within which merely those typified events occur that are relevant to the scientist's particular problem under scrutiny. All the other happenings within the social world are considered as being irrelevant, as contingent "data," which have to be put beyond question by appropriate methodological techniques as, for instance, by the assumption "all other things being equal."[49] Nevertheless, it is possible to construct a model of a sector of the social world consisting of typical human interaction and to analyze this typical interaction pattern as to the meaning it might have for the personal types of actors who presumptively originated them.

The second question has to be faced. It is indeed the particular problem of the social sciences to develop methodological devices for attaining objective and verifiable knowledge of a subjective meaning structure. In order to make this clear we have to consider very briefly the particular attitude of the scientist to the social world.

(2) *The social scientist as disinterested observer*

This attitude of the social scientist is that of a mere disinterested observer of the social world. He is not involved in the observed situation, which is to him not of practical but merely of cognitive interest. It is not the theater of his activities but merely the object of his contemplation. He does not act within it, vitally interested in the outcome of his actions, hoping or fearing what their consequences might be but he looks at it with the same detached equanimity with which the natural scientist looks at the occurrences in his laboratory.

[48] See above, p. 3.

[49] On this concept see Felix Kaufmann, *op. cit.*, p. 84ff and 213ff, on the concept "scientific situation" p. 52 and 251 n. 4.

A word of caution is here indicated to prevent possible misunderstandings. Of course, in his daily life the social scientist remains a human being, a man living among his fellowmen, with whom he is interrelated in many ways. And, surely, scientific activity itself occurs within the tradition of socially derived knowledge, is based upon co-operation with other scientists, requires mutual corroboration and criticism and can only be communicated by social interaction. But insofar as scientific activity is socially founded, it is one among all the other activities occurring within the social world. Dealing with science and scientific matters within the social world is one thing, the specific scientific attitude which the scientist has to adopt toward his object is another, and it is merely the latter which we propose to study in the following.

Our analysis of the common-sense interpretation of the social world of everyday life has shown how the biographical situation of man with the natural attitude determines at any given moment his purpose at hand. The system of relevances attached thereto selects particular objects and particular typical aspects of such objects as standing out over against an unquestioned background of things just taken for granted. Man in daily life considers himself as the center of the social world which he groups around himself in layers of various degrees of intimacy and anonymity. By resolving to adopt the disinterested attitude of a scientific observer—in our language: by establishing the life-plan for scientific work—the social scientist detaches himself from his biographical situation within the social world. What is taken for granted in the biographical situation of daily life may become questionable for the scientist and vice versa; what seems to be of highest relevance on one level may become entirely irrelevant on the other. The center of orientation has been radically shifted and so has the hierarchy of plans and projects. By making up his mind to carry out a plan for scientific work governed by the disinterested quest for truth in accordance with pre-established rules, called the scientific method, the scientist has entered a field of pre-organized knowledge, called the corpus of his science.[50] He has either to accept what is considered by his fellow-scientist as established knowledge or to "show cause" why he cannot do so. Merely within this frame he may select his particular scientific problem and make his scientific decisions. This frame constitutes his "being in a scientific situation" which supersedes his biographical situation as a human being within the world. It is henceforth the scientific problem once established which determines alone what is and what is not relevant to its solution, therewith what has to be investigated and what can be taken for granted as a "datum," and, finally, the level of research in the broadest sense, that is, the abstractions, generalizations, formalizations, idealizations, briefly: the

[50] *Ibid.*, pp. 42 and 232.

constructs required and admissible for considering the problem as being solved. In other words, the scientific problem is the "locus" of all possible constructs relevant to its solution, and each construct carries along—to borrow a mathematical term—a subscript referring to the problem for the sake of which it has been established. It follows that any shifting of the problem under scrutiny and the level of research involves a modification of the structures of relevance and of the constructs formed for the solution of another problem or on another level; a great many misunderstandings and controversies especially in the social sciences originate from disregarding this fact.

(3) *Differences between common-sense and scientific constructs of action patterns*

Let us consider very briefly (and very incompletely) some of the more important differences between common-sense constructs and scientific constructs of interaction patterns originating in the transition from the biographically determined to the scientific situation. Common-sense constructs are formed from a "Here" within the world which determines the presupposed reciprocity of perspectives. They take a stock of socially derived and socially approved knowledge for granted. The social distribution of knowledge determines the particular structure of the typifying construct, for instance, as to the assumed degree of anonymity of personal roles, the standardization of course-of-action patterns, and the supposed constancy of motives. Yet this social distribution itself depends upon the heterogeneous composition of the stock of knowledge at hand which itself is an element of common-sense experience. The concepts of "We," "You," "They," of "in-group" and "out-group," of consociates, contemporaries, predecessors, and successors, all of them with their particular structurization of familiarity and anonymity are at least implied in the common-sense typifications or even co-constitutive for them. All this holds good not only for the participants in a social interaction pattern but also for the mere observer of such interaction who still makes his observations from his biographical situation within the social world. The difference between both is merely that the participant in the interaction pattern, guided by the idealization of reciprocity of motives, assumes his own motives as being interlocked with that of his partners, whereas to the observer merely the manifest fragments of the actors' actions are accessible. Yet both, participants and observer, form their common-sense constructs relatively to their biographical situation. In either case these constructs have a particular place within the chain of motives originating in the biographically determined hierarchy of the constructor's plans.

Of an entirely different kind are the constructs formed by the social scientist of human interaction patterns. The social scientist has no "Here"

within the social world or, more precisely, he considers his position within it and the system of relevances attached thereto as irrelevant for his scientific undertaking. His stock of knowledge at hand is the corpus of his science and he has to take it for granted—which means in this context: as scientifically ascertained—unless he makes explicit why he cannot do so. To this corpus of science belong also the rules of procedure which have stood the test, namely, the methods of his science, including the methods of forming constructs in a scientifically sound way. This stock of knowledge is of quite another structure than that which man in everyday life has at hand. To be sure, it will also show manifold degrees of clarity and distinctness. But this structurization will depend upon knowledge of problems solved, of their still hidden implications and open horizons of other still not formulated problems. The scientist takes for granted what he defines to be a datum, and this is independent of the beliefs accepted by any in-group in the world of everyday life.[51] The scientific problem, once established, determines alone the structure of relevances.

Having no "Here" within the social world the social scientist does not organize this world in layers around himself as the center. He can never enter as a consociate in an interaction pattern with one of the actors on the social scene without abandoning, at least temporarily, his scientific attitude. The participant observer or field worker establishes contact with the group studied as a man among fellowmen; only his system of relevances which serves as the scheme of his selection and interpretation is determined by the scientific attitude, temporarily dropped in order to be resumed again.

Thus, adopting the scientific attitude, the social scientist observes human interaction patterns or their results insofar as they are accessible to his observation and open to his interpretation. These interaction patterns, however, he has to interpret in terms of their subjective meaning structure lest he abandon any hope of grasping "social reality."

In order to comply with this postulate the scientific observer proceeds in a similar way as the observer of a social interaction pattern in the world of everyday life, although guided by an entirely different system of relevances.

(4) *The scientific model of the social world*[52]

He begins to construct typical course-of-action patterns corresponding to the observed events. Thereupon he co-ordinates to these typical course-of-action patterns a personal type, namely, a model of an actor whom he

[51] We intentionally disregard the problems of the so-called sociology of knowledge here involved.

[52] To this section cf. in addition to the literature mentioned in footnotes 30 and 43, Alfred Schuetz: "The Problem of Rationality in the Social World," *Economica*, Vol. X, May, 1943, pp. 130–149.

imagines as being gifted with consciousness. Yet it is a consciousness restricted to containing nothing but all the elements relevant to the performance of the course-of-action patterns under observation and relevant, therewith, to the scientist's problem under scrutiny. He ascribes, thus, to this fictitious consciousness a set of typical in-order-to motives corresponding to the goals of the observed course-of-action patterns and typical because-motives upon which the in-order-to motives are founded. Both types of motives are assumed to be invariant in the mind of the imaginary actor-model.

Yet these models of actors are not human beings living within their biographical situation in the social world of everyday life. Strictly speaking, they do not have any biography or any history, and the situation into which they are placed is not a situation defined by them but defined by their creator, the social scientist. He has created these puppets or homunculi to manipulate them for his purpose. A merely specious consciousness is imputed to them by the scientist which is constructed in such a way that its presupposed stock of knowledge at hand, (including the ascribed set of invariant motives) would make actions originating therefrom subjectively understandable, provided that these actions were performed by real actors within the social world. But the puppet and his artificial consciousness is not subjected to the ontological conditions of human beings. The homunculus was not born, he does not grow up, and he will not die. He has no hopes and no fears; he does not know anxiety as the chief motive of all his deeds. He is not free in the sense that his acting could transgress the limits his creator, the social scientist, has predetermined. He cannot, therefore, have other conflicts of interests and motives than those the social scientist has imputed to him. He cannot err, if to err is not his typical destiny. He cannot choose, except among the alternatives the social scientist has put before him as standing to his choice. Whereas man, as Simmel has clearly seen,[53] enters any social relationship merely with a part of his self and is, at the same time, always within and outside of such a relationship, the homunculus, placed into a social relationship, is involved therein in his totality. He is nothing else but the originator of his typical functions because the artificial consciousness imputed to him contains merely those elements which are necessary to make such function subjectively meaningful.

Let us very briefly examine some of the implications of this general characterization. The homunculus is invested with a system of relevances originating in the scientific problem of his constructor and not in the particular biographically determined situation of an actor within the world. It is the scientist who defines what is to his puppet a Here and a There,

[53] See footnote 33 above.

what is within his reach, what is to him a We and a You or a They. The scientist determines the stock of knowledge his model has supposedly at hand. This stock of knowledge is not socially derived and, unless especially designed to be so, without reference to social approval. The relevance system pertinent to the scientific problem under scrutiny alone determines its intrinsic structure, namely, the elements "about" which the homunculus is supposed to have knowledge, those of which he has a mere knowledge of acquaintance and those others which he just takes for granted. Therewith is determined what is supposed to be familiar and what anonymous to him and on what level the typification of the experiences of the world imputed to him takes place.

If such a model of an actor is conceived as interrelated and interacting with others—they, too, being homunculi—then the general thesis of reciprocal perspectives, their interlocking, and, therewith, the correspondence of motives is determined by the constructor. The course-of-action and personal types supposedly formed by the puppet of his partners, including the definition of their systems of relevances, roles, motives, have not the character of a mere chance which will or will not be fulfilled by the supervening events. The homunculus is free from empty anticipations of the other's reactions to his own actions and also from self-typifications. He does not assume a role other than that attributed to him by the director of the puppet show, called the model of the social world. It is he, the social scientist, who sets the stage, who distributes the roles, who gives the cues, who defines when an "action" starts and when it ends and who determines, thus, the "span of projects" involved. All standards and institutions governing the behaviorial pattern of the model are supplied from the outset by the constructs of the scientific oberver.

In such a simplified model of the social world pure rational acts, rational choices from rational motives are possible because all the difficulties encumbering the real actor in the everyday life world have been eliminated. Thus, the concept of rationality in the strict sense defined herein before does not refer to actions within the common-sense experience of everyday life in the social world; it is the expression for a *particular* type of constructs of *certain specific* models of the social world made by the social scientist for certain specific methodological purposes.

Before, however, discussing the particular functions of "rational" models of the social world we have to indicate some principles governing the construction of scientific models of human action in general.

(5) *Postulates for scientific model constructs of the social world*

We said before that it is the main problem of the social sciences to develop a method in order to deal in an objective way with the subjective meaning of human action and that the thought objects of the social sciences

have to remain consistent with the thought objects of common sense, formed by men in everday life in order to come to terms with the social reality. The model constructs as described before fulfill these requirements if they are formed in accordance with the following postulates:

(1) *The postulate of logical consistency*

The system of typical constructs designed by the scientist has to be established with the highest degree of clarity and distinctness of the conceptual framework implied and must be fully compatible with the principles of formal logic. Fulfillment of this postulate warrants the objective validity of the thought objects constructed by the social scientist and their strictly logical character is one of the most important features by which scientific thought objects are distinguished from the thought objects constructed by common-sense thinking in daily life which they have to supersede.

(2) *The postulate of subjective interpretation*

In order to explain human actions the scientist has to ask what model of an individual mind can be constructed and what typical contents must be attributed to it in order to explain the observed facts as the result of the activity of such a mind in an understandable relation. The compliance with this postulate warrants the possibility of referring all kinds of human action or their result to the subjective meaning such action or result of an action had for the actor.

(3) *The postulate of adequacy*

Each term in a scientific model of human action must be constructed in such a way that a human act performed within the life world by an individual actor in the way indicated by the typical construct would be understandable for the actor himself as well as for his fellow-men in terms of common-sense interpretation of everyday life. Compliance with this postulate warrants the consistency of the constructs of the social scientist with the constructs of common-sense experience of the social reality.

V. SCIENTIFIC MODEL CONSTRUCTS OF RATIONAL ACTION PATTERNS

All model constructs of the social world in order to be scientific have to fulfill the requirements of these three postulates. But is not any construct complying with the postulate of logical consistency, is not any scientific activity by definition a rational one?

This is certainly true but here we have to avoid a dangerous misunderstanding. We have to distinguish between rational constructs of models of human actions on the one hand, and constructs of models of rational human actions on the other. Science may construct rational models of irrational behavior, as a glance in any textbook of psychiatry shows. On the other

hand, common-sense thinking frequently constructs irrational models of highly rational behavior, for example, in explaining economic, political, military and even scientific decisions by referring them to sentiments or ideologies presupposed to govern the behavior of the participants. The rationality of the construction of the model is one thing and in this sense all properly constructed models of the sciences—not merely of the social sciences—are rational; the construction of models of rational behavior is quite another thing. It would be a serious misunderstanding to believe that it is the purpose of model constructs in the social sciences or a criterion for their scientific character that irrational behavior patterns be interpreted as if they were rational.

In the following we are mainly interested in the usefulness of scientific—therefore rational—models of rational behavior patterns. It can easily be understood that the scientific construct of a perfect rational course-of-action type, of its corresponding personal type and also of rational interaction patterns is, as a matter of principle, possible. This is so because in constructing a model of a fictitious consciousness the scientist may select as relevant for his problem merely those elements which make rational actions or reactions of his homunculi possible. The postulate of rationality which such a construct would have to meet can be formulated as follows:

The rational course-of-action and personal types have to be constructed in such a way that an actor in the life world would perform the typified action if he had a perfectly clear and distinct knowledge of all the elements, and only of the elements, assumed by the social scientist as being relevant to this action and the constant tendency to use the most appropriate means assumed to be at his disposal for achieving the ends defined by the construct itself.

The advantages of the use of such models of rational behavior in the social sciences can be characterized as follows:

(1) The possibility of constructing patterns of social interaction under the assumption that all participants in such interaction act rationally within a set of conditions, means, ends, motives defined by the social scientist and supposed to be either common to all participants or distributed among them in a specific manner. By this arrangement standardized behavior such as so-called social roles, institutional behavior, etc. can be studied in isolation.

(2) Whereas the behavior of individuals in the social life world is not predictable unless in empty anticipations, the rational behavior of a constructed personal type is by definition supposed to be predictable, namely, within the limits of the elements typified in the construct. The model of rational action can, therefore, be used as a device for ascertaining deviating behavior in the real social world and for referring it to "problem-transcending data," namely, to non-typified elements.

(3) By appropriate variations of some of the elements several models or even sets of models of rational actions can be constructed for solving the same scientific problem and compared with one another.

The last point, however, seems to require some comment. Did we not state earlier that all constructs carry along a "subscript" referring to the problem under scrutiny and have to be revised if a shift in the problem occurs? Is there not a certain contradiction between this insight and the possibility of constructing several competing models for the solution of one and the same scientific problem?

The contradiction disappears if we consider that any problem is merely a locus of implications which can be made explicit or, to use a term of Husserl's,[54] that it carries along its inner horizon of unquestioned but questionable elements.

In order to make the inner horizon of the problem explicit we may vary the conditions within which the fictitious actors are supposed to act, the elements of the world of which they are supposed to have knowledge, their assumed interlocked motives, the degree of familiarity or anonymity in which they are assumed to be interrelated, etc. I may, for example, construct as an economist concerned with the theory of oligopoly,[55] models of a single firm or of an industry or of the economic system as a whole. If restricting myself to the theory of the individual firm (say, if analyzing the effects of a cartel agreement on the output of the commodity concerned), I may construct a model of a producer acting under conditions of unregulated competition, another of a producer with the same cost-conditions acting under the cartel restrictions imposed upon him and with the knowledge of similar restrictions imposed on the other suppliers of the "same" commodity. We can then compare the output of "the" firm in the two models.

All these models are models of rational actions but not of actions performed by living human beings in situations defined by them. They are assumed to be performable by the personal types constructed by the economist within the artificial environment in which he has placed his homunculi.

VI. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The relationship between the social scientist and the puppet he has created reflects to a certain extent an age-old problem of theology and

[54] As to the concept of horizon, see Helmut Kuhn, "The Phenomenological Concept of Horizon" in *Philosophical Essays in Memory of Edmund Husserl*, edited by Marvin Farber (Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1940), pp. 106–124 and Ludwig Landgrebe in Husserl, *Erfahrung und Urteil*, secs. 8–10.

[55] I gratefully acknowledge the permission of my friend, Professor Fritz Machlup, to borrow the following examples from his book *The Economics of Seller's Competition Model Analysis of Seller's Conduct*, Baltimore, 1952, p. 4ff.

metaphysics, namely, that of the relationship between God and his creatures. The puppet exists and acts merely by the grace of the scientist; it cannot act otherwise than according to the purpose which the scientist's wisdom has determined it to carry out. Nevertheless, it is supposed to act as if it were not determined but could determine itself. A total harmony has been pre-established between the determined consciousness bestowed upon the puppet and the pre-constituted environment within which it is supposed to act freely, to make rational choices and decisions. This harmony is possible merely because both, the puppet and its reduced environment, are the creation of the scientist. And by keeping to the principles which guided him, the scientist succeeds, indeed, in discovering within the universe, thus created, the perfect harmony established by himself.

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EXTRACTO

Según Whitehead, lo mismo el pensamiento común que el científico tienen que remontar una estricta consideración de lo dado en la experiencia efectiva, y elaborar objetos de pensamiento. Sin emargo, existe una diferencia principal entre los objetos de pensamiento que emplean las ciencias naturales y los que emplean las ciencias sociales. Las primeras no se fundan en elaboraciones del pensamiento común; las segundas, por el contrario, utilizan elaboraciones de segundo grado, es decir, elaboraciones de elaboraciones hechas ya por los actores de la escena social, cuya conducta observa el hombre de ciencia. Para comprender los especiales recursos metodológicos que se emplean en las ciencias sociales, tenemos que analizar las elaboraciones del sentido común en que se fundan, y que son las que emplean los hombres en su vida cotidiana.

Este análisis muestra que el conocimiento del mundo que tiene el individuo mediante su sentido común constituye un sistema de elaboraciones referentes a lo típico. Este conocimiento es intersubjectivo, o socializado, en varios aspectos. Podemos distinguir la socialización estructural del conocimiento (esto es, la reciprocidad de las perspectivas), su socialización genética (u origen social) y su distribución social. El propio mundo social se experimenta como algo que recibe carácter estructural y típico de las elaboraciones del sentido común. Hay el mundo de los consocios, de los contemporáneos, de los antecesores y sucesores, y todas estas zonas se dan por consabidas y adoptan variados tipos de intimidad o anonimato. En términos de acción y relación social, observamos que el actor, su compañero y el observador (el cual permanece ajeno a la interacción) emplean distintas elaboraciones mentales, referentes a los motivos típicos y al sistema de

valores, cuando tratan de interpretar la acción, su alcance y los fines proyectados. Cada uno de ellos da por descontados ciertos elementos distintos de los ajenos, y entonces la "misma" acción tiene por ende un sentido distinto en la interpretación "subjetiva" que en la "objetiva." Estrictamente hablando, la acción racional en el nivel del sentido común es siempre la acción que se desarrolla dentro del marco indiscutido de unas elaboraciones sobre el dispositivo, sobre los motivos, los medios y los fines, el plan de la acción y los tipos de personalidad implicados.

El hombre de ciencia social construye modelos de interacción coordinando los módulos típicos de procesos de conducta que ha podido observar en los actores implicados. A estos muñecos les atribuye una conciencia ficticia, restringida a los elementos que tienen relevancia dentro del cuadro de los cursos de conducta observados, que son los que el científico ha sometido a escrutinio. Al construir estos modelos, sin embargo, tiene que someterse a ciertos postulados metodológicos: el postulado de la congruencia o concordancia lógica, que asegure la validez objetiva de los objetos de pensamiento que haya elaborado; el postulado de la interpretación subjetiva, que garantiza la posibilidad de referir todo género de acción humana al sentido que esta acción tenga para el actor; el postulado de la adecuación, que garantiza la congruencia de los elaboraciones de la ciencia social con las experiencias comunes de la realidad social; y finalmente, para ciertos fines, el postulado de la racionalidad.