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# **The Multiple Reality: A Critical Study on Alfred Schutz's Sociology of the Finite Provinces of Meaning**

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A Thesis presented for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

National University of Ireland, Cork  
Department of Sociology

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# Declaration

This work is based on my research carried out at Sociology Department, National University of Ireland, Cork, from 2001 to 2004, as part of the HEAI-supported 'Identity Project.' Parts of the investigations presented in this text have been published in several articles of which I am the sole author and which are listed in the Bibliography. No part of this thesis has been submitted elsewhere for any other degree or qualification, and it is all my own work unless referenced to the contrary in the text.



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# Abstract

This work is a critical introduction to Alfred Schutz's sociology of the multiple reality and an enterprise that seeks to reassess and reconstruct the Schutzian project. In the first part of the study, I inquire into Schutz's biographical context that surrounds the germination of this conception and I analyse the main texts of Schutz where he has dealt directly with 'finite provinces of meaning.' On the basis of this analysis, I suggest and discuss, in Part II, several solutions to the shortcomings of the theoretical system that Schutz drew upon the sociological problem of multiple reality. Specifically, I discuss problems related to the structure, the dynamics, and the interrelationing of finite provinces of meaning as well as the way they relate to the questions of narrativity, experience, space, time, and identity.



# List of acronyms

**FPM** Finite Province of Meaning

**EDL** Everyday Life

**NAE** Natural Attitude *Epochè*



# Introduction: realities just 'real enough'

*Toto, I've got a feeling we're not in  
Kansas anymore.*

(L. Frank Baum, *The Wizard of Oz*)

Do we ever have a feeling that the conversations we have by e-mail or on Facebook, our Internet banking transactions, or our daily intakes of smartphone apps are not real or not relevant for our existence as human beings? Most often, we feel that they *are* real, they *are* relevant to our lives, and they *do* affect ourselves and those around us. Photo and video cameras, television sets, scanners, printers, sound systems, smart phones, tablets – a plethora of devices that come up with various offers: some of them promise to help us depart our everyday world and enter different realities with no pain, no shock and, most importantly, no fear that 'the other realm' could be experienced as a *fake* reality; others promise, on the contrary, to invade, enrich, and *augment* the reality of our daily life by preserving, again, the authenticity of our sense of reality. We are invited to admit that, ultimately, it makes no difference whether the things we see and hear are real or just *appear* to be real as long as our experience of them is *real enough*. In other words, we have an invitation to ontological neutrality.

Was this plurality of human experience an invention of our contemporary society? Did it land into our world on the wings of our marvelous technologies or

was it just emphasised and problematised<sup>1</sup> by them?

A closer look at the question shows us immediately that, regardless of their cultural, geographical, or historical context, humans have *always* lived in a *multiple reality*. Even the simplest 'primitive' societies have experienced the world as plural, for their world of hunting had its own rules and structure different from the rules and the structure that dominated their daily life or the world of their myths and magical practices. This fact makes the 'discovery' of the multiple character of the human world important for the social sciences, for it points out that the multiple reality must be seen not as a contextual phenomenon of modernity but a universal anthropological condition of social life.

Unquestionably, the alternative realities created with new technologies and new media can provide researchers in the fields of sociology, anthropology, or psychology with a thematic richness that calls for both theoretical and methodological innovations. The main objective of the present work is not a contribution to the sociology or anthropology of virtual experience in a hypertechnologised world. The amount of scholarly research that has been produced in connection with the subject<sup>2</sup> would make it an impossible task within the narrow scope assumed here. The large interest in such topics must be an argument for the idea that a solid theoretical foundation is needed for the understanding of human ex-

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<sup>1</sup>One cannot fail to acknowledge the recurrent themes of multiple reality, everyday life as dream or illusion, dream-within-dream, or shifting identity in recent, large-budget Hollywood productions, such as Christopher Nolan's *Inception* (2012), James Cameron's *Avatar* (2009), or the already classics *The Truman Show* (1998) by Peter Weir and *The Matrix* (1999, 2003) by Andy and Lana Wachowsky, to mention just a few.

<sup>2</sup>See, for example, Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London/ New York: Verso, 2006 (1983); Jae-Jin Kim, ed. *Virtual Reality*. Rijeka: InTech, 2011; Edward Castronova. *Synthetic Worlds*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2004; DeNel Rehberg Sedo, ed. *Reading Communities from Salons to Cyberspace*. London/ New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011; Thomas Ploug. *Ethics in Cyberspace: How Cyberspace May Influence Interpersonal Interaction*. Dordrecht/ Heidelberg/ London/ New York: Springer, 2009; Mark Poster. *The Second Media Age*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 1995; Thomas M. Malaby. *Making Virtual Worlds: Linden Lab and Second Life*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009; Mark W. Bell. 'Toward a Definition of Virtual Worlds'. In: *Virtual Worlds Research 1.1* (2008), pp. 1–5; Christine Hine. *Virtual Ethnography*. London/ Thousand Oaks/ New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2000; Tom Boellstorff et al. *Ethnography and Virtual Worlds: A Handbook of Method*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012; Anne Friedberg. *The Virtual Window: From Alberti to Microsoft*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009; Barrie Sherman and Phil Judkins. *Glimpses of Heaven, Visions of Hell: Virtual Reality and its Implications*. London/ Sydney/ Auckland: Hodder & Stoughton, 1992.

perience in a world that is irrevocably plural.

This fundamental problem has been approached indeed by many scholars using various theoretical tools. In sociology, the most famous theory is Alfred Schutz's conception of the finite provinces of meaning, which makes the object of the present work. Others thinkers, such as William James,<sup>3</sup> Herbert Nichols,<sup>4</sup> David Unruh,<sup>5</sup> or Nelson Goodman<sup>6</sup> have studied the multiplicity of the life-world experience, and concepts dealing with tangent socio-philosophical questions can also be identified in Max Weber ('value sphere,' *Wertsphäre*),<sup>7</sup> Edmund Husserl (*Lebenswelt* and *Phantasie*),<sup>8</sup> Michel Foucault (*heterotopias* and *heterochronies*),<sup>9</sup> Jean Baudrillard ('simulacra'),<sup>10</sup> MacDonald et al. ('portalling'),<sup>11</sup> Eugen Fink (the 'windowing' character of pictures),<sup>12</sup> Eugenio Barba ('daily' and 'extra-daily' body techniques),<sup>13</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin ('acts' and 'values'),<sup>14</sup> or thinkers who studied the diversity of religious and magical experience, such as Béla Hamvas<sup>15</sup>

<sup>3</sup>William James. *Principles of Psychology*. New York: Holt, 1890.

<sup>4</sup>Herbert Nichols. 'The Cosmology of William James'. In: *The Journal of Philosophy* 19.25 (1922), pp. 673–683.

<sup>5</sup>David R. Unruh. 'The Nature of Social Worlds'. In: *Pacific Sociological Review* 23.3 (July 1980), pp. 271–296.

<sup>6</sup>Nelson Goodman. *Ways of Worldmaking*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1978.

<sup>7</sup>See Max Weber. *The Methodology of the Social Sciences*. Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1949, pp. 15–18.

<sup>8</sup>See Edmund Husserl. *Phantasie, Bildbewusstsein, Erinnerung: Zur Phänomenologie der anschaulichen Vergegenwärtigungen. Texte aus dem Nachlass (1898–1925)*. Ed. by Eduard Marbach. The Hague/ Boston/ London: Martinus Nijhoff, 1980; Edmund Husserl. *Ideas. General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology. First Book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*. The Hague/ Boston/ Lancaster: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1983 (1913).

<sup>9</sup>Michel Foucault. 'Des espaces autres'. In: *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuité* 5 (1984), pp. 46–49.

<sup>10</sup>Jean Baudrillard. *Simulacra and Simulation*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994 (1985).

<sup>11</sup>George F. MacDonald et al. 'Mirrors, Portals, and Multiple Realities'. In: *Zygon. Journal of Religion and Science* 24.1 (Mar. 1989), pp. 39–64.

<sup>12</sup>Eugen Fink. 'Vergegenwärtigung und Bild. Beiträge zur Phänomenologie der Unwirklichkeit'. In: *Studien zur Phänomenologie. 1930–1939*. Vol. 21. *Phaenomenologica*. Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966, pp. 74–78.

<sup>13</sup>Eugenio Barba. *The Paper Canoe: A Guide to Theatre Anthropology*. London/ New York: Routledge, 2005 (1993), p. 15.

<sup>14</sup>Mikhail M. Bakhtin. *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*. Ed. by Vadim Liapunov and Michael Holquist. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1993 (1935).

<sup>15</sup>Béla Hamvas. *Scientia sacra*. Vol. I–III. Budapest: Medio Kiadó, 2006.



or Mircea Eliade.<sup>16</sup> Richard Gerrig has studied the phenomenon that he called 'transportation,' namely the way a reader becomes immersed in a narrative,<sup>17</sup> while Kwan Min Lee opened up the field of study of 'presence'<sup>18</sup> as people's experience of virtual environments. Logical and philosophical frameworks related to this question are provided by such theorists of the 'possible worlds' as David Lewis,<sup>19</sup> while applications of the possible-worlds semantics to the study of the reality/fiction opposition have been investigated by Lubomír Doležel,<sup>20</sup> Thomas Pavel,<sup>21</sup> and others. Inspired by the works of Benjamin Lee Whorf and M.A.K. Halliday, semioticians have investigated the concept of *modality* as the status of reality attached to a text, which is founded on a pluralist conception of reality.<sup>22</sup> The problem in its generality goes beyond the fields of the social sciences and philosophy and reaches such diverse disciplines as theology, mathematics, or physics with, say, the many-worlds interpretation of quantum mechanics.<sup>23</sup> While a comparative study on this highly interdisciplinary topic would be extremely interesting, I cannot embark upon such a task here either.

The present work is dedicated to Alfred Schutz and has a double objective. First, it is intended to be a critical introduction to his sociology of the multiple reality, which he founded upon the concept of 'finite province of meaning' and developed as part of an unfinished project of 'a phenomenology of the natural attitude.' Second, it attempts to initiate a reconstruction work on the Schutzian theory and to explore its epistemological promise for contemporary social sciences. To the best of my knowledge, nobody has carried out a similar project so

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<sup>16</sup> Mircea Eliade. *Tratat de istoria religiilor [A Treatise in the History of Religions]*. București: Humanitas, 1992.

<sup>17</sup> Richard Gerrig. *Experiencing Narrative Worlds: On the Psychological Activities of Reading*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993.

<sup>18</sup> Kwan Min Lee. 'Presence, Explicated'. In: *Communication Theory* 14 (2004), pp. 27–50.

<sup>19</sup> David K. Lewis. *On the Plurality of Worlds*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1986.

<sup>20</sup> Lubomír Doležel. *Possible Worlds of Fiction and History: The Postmodern Stage*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010.

<sup>21</sup> Thomas Pavel. *Fictional Worlds*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986.

<sup>22</sup> See Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress. *Social Semiotics*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1988, pp. 123-124; Daniel Chandler. *Semiotics: The Basics*. London/ New York: Routledge, 2007 (2002), pp. 64-68.

<sup>23</sup> See Bryce S. DeWitt and Neill Graham. *The Many-Worlds Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1973.

far. Without claiming that Alfred Schutz's interpretive sociology is the best or the only possible framework for a sociology of the multiple reality, I believe that an analysis of his concept of 'finite province of meaning' can give us many clues to a better understanding of the social world in general and modernity in particular. In this approach, I will try to remain rooted in the epistemological ground of the interpretive-sociological school of thought and particularly in the phenomenological sociology that Schutz has founded upon Max Weber and Edmund Husserl, seeking to avoid value-oriented judgements and refraining from making inferences regarding the true existence or nonexistence of the objective world.

Schutz exposed his theory of the finite provinces of meaning in his famous essay 'On Multiple Realities.'<sup>24</sup> The paper starts from the idea of William James that reality is not a unique and noncontradictory sphere of life, but a multiplicity of autonomous and reciprocally irreducible 'finite provinces of meaning,'<sup>25</sup> such as: the world of working, the world of children's play, the world of theatre, the fictional universe, the world of religious experience, etc. Phenomena occurring in a certain province of meaning are compatible among each other but normally incompatible with phenomena and experiences belonging to a different reality. Things that are possible and normal in a fictional world or in a play can be meaningless or hilarious in everyday life; actions and experiences that occur in a religious context can appear irrational to a modern engineer or scientist.

While this concept enjoys a great reputation among scholars familiar with the writings of Schutz – one can find it mentioned in virtually any introductory text to his sociology –, it hasn't known subsequently the development that it deserved, and, with the exception of a few phenomenologically-informed scholars, sociologists tend to be unaware of the epistemological potential of this theory. My own understanding – partial and presumptive – of this misrecognition is related to the

<sup>24</sup> Alfred Schutz. 'On Multiple Realities'. In: *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 5.4 (June 1945), pp. 533–576.

<sup>25</sup> Throughout this work, I will often employ the acronym FPM, never used by Schutz himself. His own terms were 'finite province of meaning,' 'province,' 'world,' 'reality,' 'order of reality,' 'realm of reality,' 'sphere,' and 'subuniverse.' In German, the notion was called *umgrenzte Sinnprovinz*, *Wirklichkeitsbereich*, *geschlossene Sinnbezirk*, *Realitätsbereich*, while the concept was translated as *province finie de sense* in French, *provincia finida de sentido* in Spanish, *yǒuxiàn yù yù* (有限意义域) in Chinese, and *konechnaya oblast' znacheniy* (конечная область значений) in Russian.

way Schutz himself approached the matter: he wrote about finite provinces of meaning in a sketchy and disconnected manner and provided neither an elaborate theory nor a well-defined methodological tool based on this concept. This is not to say that Schutz failed to grasp its true significance; as we will see, he did realise the importance of the matter, but his own multiplicity of projects, the life duties he was bound with, as well as his rather premature death at the age of 60 stopped him from developing his ideas fully into a 'phenomenology of the natural attitude.'<sup>26</sup>

A sociology of the multiple reality, which would, first, reevaluate the Schutzian theory and, second, expand it by integrating various disconnected developments on the topic is yet to be written. The present work is intended as a first step in the first stage of such a project. The second stage – more laborious and extensive – should try to unify the results of the theoretical and empirical research of the past decades on the topic, such as the advances in the sociology of everyday life and the tradition of ethnomethodology inaugurated by Harold Garfinkel,<sup>27</sup> the theory of 'organisation of experience' underlying Erving Goffman's 'frame analysis',<sup>28</sup> the critical assessment of the Schutzian theory by Aron Gurwitsch,<sup>29</sup> the works of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann on humour,<sup>30</sup> religion,<sup>31</sup> and general FPM theory,<sup>32</sup> Maurice Natanson's studies on history<sup>33</sup> and fictional worlds as finite

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<sup>26</sup> See Alfred Schutz. *Collected Papers V: Phenomenology and the Social Sciences*. Ed. by Lester Embree. Phaenomenologica. Dordrecht/ Heidelberg/ London/ New York: Springer, 2011, p. 239.

<sup>27</sup> Michael Lynch and Wes Sharrock. *Ethnomethodology*. Vol. 1-4. London: Sage, 2011.

<sup>28</sup> Erving Goffman. *Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience*. Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 1986 (1974).

<sup>29</sup> Aron Gurwitsch. *The Collected Works of Aron Gurwitsch (1901–1973)*. Ed. by Richard M. Zaner and Lester Embree. Vol. III. Dordrecht/ Heidelberg/ London/ New York: Springer, 2010, pp. 369–402.

<sup>30</sup> Peter Berger. *Redeeming Laughter: The Comic Dimension of Human Experience*. Berlin/ New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1997.

<sup>31</sup> Peter Berger. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. New York: Anchor Books, 1990 (1967).

<sup>32</sup> Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann. *The Social Construction of Reality. A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. London: Penguin Books, 1984 (1966); Peter Berger. 'The Problem of Multiple Realities: Alfred Schutz and Robert Musil'. In: *Phenomenology and Social Reality: Essays in Memory of Alfred Schutz*. Ed. by Maurice Natanson. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970, pp. 213–233; Peter Berger, Brigitte Berger, and Hansfried Kellner. *The Homeless Mind: Modernization and Consciousness*. New York: Vintage Books, 1974.

<sup>33</sup> Maurice Natanson. 'History as a Finite Province of Meaning'. In: *Literature, Philosophy, and*

provinces of meaning,<sup>34</sup> the recent studies of Michael Barber, Jochen Dreher, George Psathas, and other authors on the realities of literature, music, film, and photography,<sup>35</sup> Stephanie Marriott's analysis of television,<sup>36</sup> the studies on the social construction of the sciences by Karin Knorr Cetina<sup>37</sup> or Bettina Heintz,<sup>38</sup> the studies of medical provinces,<sup>39</sup> the various studies on leisure worlds, such as pub drinking and vacation as finite provinces of meaning,<sup>40</sup> the studies on multiple reality experience in traditional societies, such as the work of Annett Oelschlaegel,<sup>41</sup> and so on.

Obviously, Schutz did not 'invent' the finite provinces of meaning, nor did William James. They were just among those who realised that reality *is* plural and that we can never experience it otherwise. Before approaching with quantitative methods the many realities created by the new technologies, scientists need to understand the multiple character of human experience in its simple forms, which are historically older and genetically closer to everyday life. The question is not to prove that our reality is multiple or to find out which of the sub-universes is the 'true reality' but to investigate the conditions, the dynamics, the extent, and

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*the Social Sciences: Essays in Existentialism and Phenomenology*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962, pp. 172–177.

<sup>34</sup>Maurice Natanson. *The Erotic Bird: Phenomenology in Literature*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998, pp. 105–126.

<sup>35</sup>Michael Staudigl and George Berguno, eds. *Schutzian Hermeneutic and Hermeneutic Traditions*. Contributions to Phenomenology 68. Dordrecht/ Heidelberg/ London/ New York: Springer, 2014, pp. 223–236; Michael D. Barber and Jochen Dreher, eds. *The Interrelation of Phenomenology, Social Sciences and the Arts*. Vol. 69. Contributions to Phenomenology. Dordrecht/ Heidelberg/ London/ New York: Springer, 2014.

<sup>36</sup>Stephanie Marriott. *Live Television: Time, Space and the Broadcast Event*. London/ Thousand Oaks/ New Delhi/ Singapore: Sage, 2007.

<sup>37</sup>Karin Knorr Cetina. *The Manufacture of Knowledge: An Essay on the Constructivist and Contextual Nature of Science*. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1981.

<sup>38</sup>Bettina Heintz. *Die Innenwelt der Mathematik: Zur Kultur und Praxis einer beweisenden Disziplin*. Wien/ New York: Springer, 2000.

<sup>39</sup>S. Kay Toombs, ed. *Handbook of Phenomenology and Medicine*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001.

<sup>40</sup>Orvar Löfgren. *On Holiday: A History of Vacationing*. Vol. 6. California Studies in Critical Human Geography. Berkeley/ Los Angeles/ London: University of California Press, 2002 (1999); Craig MacAndrew and Robert B. Edgerton. *Drunken Comportment: A Social Explanation*. Chicago: Aldine, 1969; Joseph R. Gusfield. *The Culture of Public Problems*. Chicago/ London: The University of Chicago Press, 1981.

<sup>41</sup>Anett Oelschlägel. *Plurale Weltinterpretationen: Das Beispiel der Tyva Südsybiens*. Fürstenberg/ Havel: SEC Publications/ Verlag der Kulturstiftung Sibirien, 2013.

the consequences of this multiplicity.

The word 'multiple' is itself a peculiar adjective with multiple meanings. It was borrowed from French and has its etymology in the Latin *multiplex*, which means literally 'manifold' or 'composed of many parts.' The word is a condensed manifestation of the mereologic paradox that makes an object appear as a part or as a whole depending on the perspective from which it is perceived. 'Multiple' can describe either a singular or a plural noun: one can say 'a multiple phenomenon' or 'multiple phenomena,' 'a multiple view' or 'multiple views,' 'a multiple reality' or 'multiple realities.' Is reality a collection of *parts* or a fragmented *whole*? Schutz used both the plural form of the noun 'reality' ('multiple realities') and its singular form ('reality' as 'a multiplicity' of 'finite provinces of meaning'). He emphasised the former and used it in the title of the article mentioned above. For the title of the present work, I prefer the singular form, because social sciences find it more relevant to formulate their objects in singular terms, such as 'social reality,' 'consciousness,' 'identity,' 'action,' or 'power,' and to seek the universal and constant formulas in the *multiplicity* of human experience.

The social world may appear today more fragmented and compartmentalised than ever. While modernity and 'progress' may have led human society to a higher diversity of experience and thus to an increase in the number of the provinces of reality, it is unclear what exactly has remained the same in the constitution of provinces. There is also the question why humans have progressed particularly in the sense of increasing the diversity of experience and not vice-versa. Is diversity of experience good for humans? Is it a source of pleasure? Is it a basic need? Or is it just a consequence of our seeking to fulfil other needs? Such questions cannot be answered without a good understanding of the concept of finite province of meaning.

The topic belongs to interpretive sociology and social theory, but can find empirical and theoretical connections in interdisciplinary fields, such as anthropology, social psychology, media theory, performance theory, drama theory, film theory, or other areas. Every finite province of meaning points, basically, to a different science: the province of fiction to literary studies and discourse analysis, the

province of virtual reality to psychology and human-computer interaction, the province of psychosis to psychology and psychiatry, and so on. For this reason, it is obvious that Schutz's treatment of the subject could not have been but partial and fragmentary, and so is my present work. The theory of finite provinces of meaning can be developed in virtually any area of the social life – and here lies its methodological generosity and profound importance for sociology – and can be linked to other approaches in the social sciences.

Before starting a technical discussion of the concepts and ideas related to the multiple reality, let us have an overview of Alfred Schutz's texts on the topic and the biographical context surrounding them.



# Part I





# Chapter 1

## Methodological preliminaries

*My parents' favourite offspring was my brother. When we were little kids, he was the master of our room, and he'd never permit me to have a playground of my own. The kitchen belonged to mother, and in the hallway we always had people moving in and out. So I settled on the doorsill.*  
(Cristina F.)

### 1.1 A 'residual' discovery

The concept of 'finite province of meaning' enjoys, as we mentioned, a somewhat paradoxical place in the social theory of Alfred Schutz: on the one hand, it stands among the best known<sup>1</sup> productions of his thought; on the other hand, it has never occupied a central position in his system of ideas, and the project of a 'provincial sociology' has never been carried out extensively. In Schutz's

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<sup>1</sup>Lester Embree calls 'On Multiple Realities' *the* most famous essay of Alfred Schutz (see Lester Embree. *Alfred Schutz: Philosopher of Social Science in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*. Retrieved on 14 July 2013. URL: <http://www.lesterembree.net/schutzscript.htm>) and Hisashi Nasu calls Schutz's conception of the multiple reality 'an essential part of his sociology of everyday life' (Hisashi Nasu. 'Alfred Schutz's Conception of Multiple Realities Sociologically Interpreted'. In: *Schutzian Social Science*. Ed. by Lester Embree. Dordrecht/ Boston/ London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999. Chap. IV, p. 80).

theoretical system, the concept of finite province of meaning appears rather as a subordinate term that has never had the opportunity to be seen in its own right: a brick in the epistemological foundation of the social sciences, an appendix to the theory of relevance, or a condition for the sociology of everyday life. Its explanatory potential has never been exploited in full neither by Schutz himself nor by his followers. The most urgent objective in Schutz's lifelong research agenda was the building of a foundation for phenomenological sociology, and that may explain why he has never developed a coherent, operational sociology of the multiple reality, which he nevertheless admitted to be touching on 'one of the most important philosophical problems.'<sup>2</sup> In order to reach an epistemological foundation of the science of sociology, Schutz needed to contrast it with the realm of everyday life and its naïve forms of knowledge. In order to understand the structure of everyday life, he had to understand how everyday life, science, and the other provinces emerged as forms of our fundamentally plural experience of the world. Just like Husserl and other scholars, Schutz had clear destinations in his theoretical investigations, and he used various concepts and theories as doorsteps to the rooms he wanted to visit. The concept of finite province of meaning was one such doorstep.

Schutz's ideas on the multiple reality can be learned from a number of article-length texts, which at times complement each other and at other times seem redundant. 'On Multiple Realities' is the best outline of his theory and will serve as our main source of analysis.<sup>3</sup>

According to Helmut Wagner,<sup>4</sup> the text was originally written in the United States in 1943. Two years later, Schutz published a rewritten version of the article in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* – a journal that Schutz himself founded and edited with Marvin Farber in the United States – under the title 'On Multiple Realities.'

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<sup>2</sup> Alfred Schutz. 'Realities from Daily Life to Theoretical Contemplation'. In: *Collected Papers IV*. ed. by Helmut Wagner and George Psatas. Dordrecht: Springer, 1996. Chap. 3, p. 25.

<sup>3</sup> See 2 (p. 41).

<sup>4</sup> See Editor's Preface to Schutz, 'Realities from Daily Life to Theoretical Contemplation', op. cit., p. 25.

The paper was reprinted over the years in several versions under various titles. In 1962, Maurice Natanson included it in the first volume of Schutz's *Collected Papers*.<sup>5</sup> Helmut Wagner published in 1970 an adapted version of it in a *Selected Writings* volume of Schutz under the title 'Realms of Experience: Transcendences and Multiple Realities.'<sup>6</sup> An adapted version of the initial 1943 draft was included by Wagner in 1996 in the *Collected Papers IV* as 'Realities from Daily Life to Theoretical Contemplation.'

The text's main ideas can also be found, from a slightly different perspective, in the beginning of the book co-authored with Thomas Luckmann and published 14 years after Schutz's death, *The Structures of the Life-World*. Here, the section was called 'Provinces of Reality with Finite Meaning-Structure.'<sup>7</sup>

In the book draft<sup>8</sup> that Schutz wrote between 1947 and 1951 on the problem of relevance, an intention of revising and moving forward the ideas of the core 1945 theory can be discerned. 'On Multiple Realities' was intended as the fourth out of a total of five chapters of a book<sup>9</sup> that was supposed to be 'a phenomenology of the natural attitude,' as Schutz explained in a letter to Gurwitsch,<sup>10</sup> where the theory of relevance was supposed to be of crucial importance to the project. Schutz never finished the project, and one cannot guess whether or not the FPM theory would have played a great part in the final theoretical construction. It is interesting to note that those developments in FPM theory were not included by Luckmann in *The Structures of the Life-World*,<sup>11</sup> a book that was supposed to be a detailed overview of the Schutzian thought.

<sup>5</sup> Alfred Schutz. *Collected Papers I: The Problem of Social Reality*. Ed. by Maurice Natanson. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973, pp. 207-259.

<sup>6</sup> Alfred Schutz. 'Realms of Experience: Transcendences and Multiple Realities'. In: *On Phenomenology and Social Relations: Selected Writings*. Ed. by Helmut R. Wagner. Chicago/ London: University of Chicago Press, 1973 (1970), pp. 245-264.

<sup>7</sup> Alfred Schutz and Thomas Luckmann. *The Structures of the Life-World*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973, pp. 21-34.

<sup>8</sup> Alfred Schutz. *Reflections on the Problem of Relevance*. Ed. by R. M. Zaner. New Haven/ London: Yale University Press, 1970.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Helmut R. Wagner. *Alfred Schutz: An Intellectual Biography*. Chicago/ London: The University of Chicago Press, 1983, p. 95.

<sup>10</sup> Schutz, *Collected Papers V: Phenomenology and the Social Sciences*, op. cit., p. 239.

<sup>11</sup> Schutz and Luckmann, *The Structures of the Life-World*, op. cit., pp. 21-34.

'On Multiple Realities' directly underpinned the ideas of several subsequent articles of Schutz. In these papers, Schutz brought new insights on his theory of the finite provinces of meaning, although it is obvious that his intention was not to perfect the theory but to make use of it as a tool for his literary analyses on Goethe and Cervantes and for a philosophical investigation of the fundamental experience of symbolisation respectively. One of these texts is an interpretation of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship and Journeyman Years*, a handwritten draft that remained unpublished until 2013 when it was included in both the German and the English editions of Schutz's *Collected Papers*.<sup>12</sup> The text is somewhat difficult to read, and Schutz himself found it 'unpublishable'.<sup>13</sup> The second was called 'Don Quixote and the problem of reality' and was initially presented in December 1953 before the General Seminar of the Graduate Faculty of the New School for Social Research. It was published the following year in Mexico in Spanish version, according to Arvid Brodersen,<sup>14</sup> and in English in 1964 in *Collected Papers II*. The third, published in 1955,<sup>15</sup> addressed the problem of symbolic transcendences, a question that had not been addressed in 'On Multiple Realities.'

Schutz was highly interested in music, especially in the technique of collective production of harmony and counterpoint in a choir or an orchestra,<sup>16</sup> which he saw as a powerful metaphor for our experience of society; his 'theoretical contemplations' on the topic materialised in several papers on the phenomenology of music.<sup>17</sup> These articles could have been a good opportunity for him to apply the

<sup>12</sup> Alfred Schütz. 'Zu Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahren'. In: *Schriften zur Literatur, Alfred Schütz Werkausgabe*. Ed. by Jochen Dreher and Michael D. Barber. Vol. 8. Konstanz: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2013 (1948), pp. 107–236; Alfred Schutz. 'On Wilhelm Meister's Years of Travel'. In: *Collected Papers VI: Literary Reality and Relationships*. Ed. by Michael D. Barber. Phaenomenologica. Dordrecht: Springer, 2013, pp. 331–405.

<sup>13</sup> See Editor's Preface to Alfred Schutz. *Collected Papers IV*. ed. by Helmut Wagner and George Psatas. Phaenomenologica. Dordrecht: Springer, 1996, p. xiii.

<sup>14</sup> Alfred Schutz. 'Don Quixote and the Problem of Reality'. In: *Collected Papers II: Studies in Social Theory*. Ed. by Arvid Brodersen. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964, p. XIII.

<sup>15</sup> Alfred Schutz. 'Symbol, Reality, and Society'. In: *Collected Papers I: The Problem of Social Reality*. Ed. by Maurice Natanson. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973 (1955), pp. 287–356.

<sup>16</sup> Wagner, *Alfred Schutz: An Intellectual Biography*, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>17</sup> Alfred Schutz. 'Making Music Together: A Study in Social Relationship'. In: *Collected Papers II: Studies in Social Theory*. Ed. by Arvid Brodersen. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964, pp. 159–178; Alfred Schutz. 'Mozart and the Philosophers'. In: *Collected Papers II: Studies in Social Theory*. Ed. by Arvid Brodersen. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964, pp. 179–200; Alfred Schutz. 'Frag-

conceptual framework of the finite provinces of meaning to musical performance and dramatic production. However, he merely inserted in these texts contextual references to tangent concepts, such as *durée*, inner time, intersubjectivity, etc.

In 'On Multiple Realities' and the writings on the topic that followed it, Schutz gave due credit, right from the outset, to William James for having pointed out clearly that our social world bore a character of multiplicity. One may hastily understand that Schutz's interest in the topic of the multiple reality was sparked by James. While it is obvious that William James offered Schutz an illuminating frame for his investigations, it is also true that Schutz showed an interest in the question of the multiplicity of the spheres of experience long before 'On Multiple Realities.'

According to his biographers,<sup>18</sup> during the summers of 1936 and 1937, Schutz worked on the draft of a paper<sup>19</sup> where he wanted to take further some of the problems that he had left open in *Der sinnhafte Aufbau* – the only book-length text that Schutz published in his lifetime –, such as the questions of *social relationships*, *relevance*, and *otherness*.<sup>20</sup> There are two versions of this manuscript: one from 1936, the other from 1937; both were called 'The Problem of Personality in the Social World' and were included in *Collected Papers VI*.<sup>21</sup> Both are fragmentary, sketchy, and unfinished: the first one because Schutz saw it as mere laboratory work and the second one because he 'ran out of time to complete the writing of it, perhaps due to the circumstances that affected his life at the time,' as his translators explained.<sup>22</sup>

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ments on the Phenomenology of Music'. In: *Collected Papers IV*. ed. by Helmut R. Wagner, George Psatas, and Fred Kersten. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1996 (1944), pp. 243–275.

<sup>18</sup> Wagner, *Alfred Schutz: An Intellectual Biography*, op. cit., p. 53; Michael D. Barber. *The Participating Citizen: A Biography of Alfred Schutz*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2004, p. 63.

<sup>19</sup> Alfred Schutz. 'The Problem of Personality in the Social World'. In: *Collected Papers VI: Literary Reality and Relationships*. Ed. by Michael D. Barber. Dordrecht: Springer, 2013, pp. 199–240.

<sup>20</sup> See Alfred Schutz. *The Phenomenology of the Social World*. Ed. by John Wild and James M. Edie. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1967 (1932), p. 249.

<sup>21</sup> Idem, 'The Problem of Personality in the Social World', op. cit.; Alfred Schutz. 'The Problem of Personality in the Social World'. In: *Collected Papers VI: Literary Reality and Relationships*. Ed. by Michael D. Barber. Dordrecht: Springer, 2013, pp. 243–309.

<sup>22</sup> See Translators' Preface, idem, 'The Problem of Personality in the Social World', op. cit.,

In the first version, Schutz doesn't talk about 'finite provinces of meaning,' but mentions the 'enclaves' that interrupt the 'unity of consciousness:' sleep, dream, phantasy, children's play, the world of jokes, or mental illness.<sup>23</sup> The second version is actually the text where Schutz uses for the first time the syntagm 'finite provinces of meaning'<sup>24</sup> as well as most of the key concepts of 'On Multiple Realities,' such as 'shock,' *attention à la vie, durée*, 'wide awake,' 'modifications,' 'world of working,' 'archetype,' Don Quixote's 'phantasmas,' 'potestativity,' 'accent of reality,' or 'pragmatic interests.' Moreover, the text follows roughly the same structure as 'On Multiple Realities,' starting from a description of the 'world of working' (which he also called 'world of public life') followed by analyses of the 'world of phantasy,' 'the world of dreams,' and 'the theoretical world of contemplative observation.'

It is obvious that his concern with the multiple reality dates back at least to those years when he was still in Austria, as Wagner remarked:

The pragmatic world of working is not the only reality known to man. However, it is 'paramount reality,' to use William James's term for the identification of the dominant sphere of immediate experience and evidence. In 1937, Schutz knew neither this term nor that of 'multiple realities,' which it implies. Later he would adopt both. But he did work out, within the framework of *The Problem of Personality in the Social World*, the whole theory of what he, in 1945, called the various 'provinces of meaning' and made known in his famous paper 'On Multiple Realities'.<sup>25</sup>

One can step even farther back in time, to the years 1924-1927, when Schutz was seeking a philosophical foundation for Max Weber's interpretive sociology in the writings of Henri Bergson. In the articles he wrote during that time,<sup>26</sup> Schutz

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p. 200.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 213.

<sup>24</sup> Idem, 'The Problem of Personality in the Social World', op. cit., p. 287.

<sup>25</sup> Wagner, *Alfred Schutz: An Intellectual Biography*, op. cit., p. 58.

<sup>26</sup> Helmut R. Wagner has collected Schutz's Bergsonian texts, and published them in 1982 as

addressed the topics of drama, opera, and literature – particularly Goethe – and, again, he mentioned neither 'multiple reality' nor 'finite provinces of meaning,' but did talk about those arts as forms of organisation of the life-world ('life forms,' 'art forms') that come into experience through 'meaning structures' and function like 'closed symbol systems.'<sup>27</sup> These 'forms' need to be seen as anticipations of the future 'finite provinces of meaning' and as an indication that there was in the early Schutz a concern with the multiple character of reality. Bergson's conception of consciousness as multiplicity of 'planes of existence' or his 'theory of the multiple orders,'<sup>28</sup> which Schutz would later use with the meaning of multiple 'finite provinces of meaning,'<sup>29</sup> strongly support this argument. It is difficult to say whether Bergson and Williams, who knew and influenced each other's works, shared their conceptions of the 'multiple orders' or who had the true paternity of the idea. To us, it is important to realise that much of the analyses of Schutz's 1945 paper can be traced back to his Bergsonian texts; one can mention here the problems of temporality and duration, otherness and sociality, FPM transition, or the conception of 'pretension to reality' that he would later call '*epochè* of the natural attitude.'<sup>30</sup>

It is also unclear whether Schutz was aware in his Bergsonian years of James's pluralist ideas. Arguably, it is likely that he was not, given that in those texts Schutz mentioned the name of James only once, when he referred to the 'fringes of the word' in the context of meaning and concept formation.<sup>31</sup> In the 1936-37 manuscript, he made use of obvious Jamesian concepts, such as 'pragma,' but didn't mention James, most likely because the drafts were just early sketches lacking careful referencing. Schutz never failed to evoke James in the texts dedicated

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a book (Alfred Schutz. *Life Forms and Meaning Structure*. Ed. by Helmut R. Wagner. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982).

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 171.

<sup>28</sup> Idem, 'Symbol, Reality, and Society', op. cit., p. 293.

<sup>29</sup> In 'Symbol, Reality, and Society,' Schutz said that there is an 'order of physical Nature,' but also 'an order of our fantasms and an intrinsic order of our dreams which separates them from all the other realms, and constitutes them as a finite province of meaning' (ibid., p. 298).

<sup>30</sup> Schutz said that, in the world of drama, the stage is '*a place beyond all reality which can symbolize reality only because the actor, that is the hero, pretends to experience it as real*' (idem, *Life Forms and Meaning Structure*, op. cit., p. 187).

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 143.



to the finite provinces of meaning that he published during his American years.

One cannot fail to notice that the two authors who inspired Schutz's analyses of literary works from the perspective of the multiple reality, Goethe<sup>32</sup> and Cervantes,<sup>33</sup> were the same figures that dominated his youth literary experiences, as his biographers noted. Accordingly, at the age of fifteen, Schutz seemed fascinated by the contrast between Sancho Panza's everyday life (*Alltagsleben*) and Don Quixote's cloudy world of idealism.

In short, the 'poiesis' of the theme of the 'multiple reality' in Schutz shows the emergence of an intriguing question in his childhood, a vague approach during his Bergsonian period, a clear shape for the first time in 1936-1937 with 'The Problem of Personality,' a full development in 1945 with 'On Multiple Realities,' and a number of disconnected sequels in subsequent texts.

To understand the life-context in which the *germination* of these ideas took place, we need to cast a glance at the biography of Alfred Schutz<sup>34</sup> and to perform a brief reflexive sociological exercise in the sense used by Arpad Szakolczai.<sup>35</sup>

## 1.2 A liminal time

Alfred Schutz was born in 1899 in Austria and did his studies in Vienna. At the age of 17, he fought for his country on the Italian front in World War I. At university, he studied Law, social science, and business with Hans Kelsen, Ludwig von Mises, Max Weber, and other important scholars of the time and received a degree in Law. In Vienna, he actively took part in the meetings of von Mises's *Privatseminar*, an exclusivist circle of enthusiast young scholars and erudites who must have deeply influenced Schutz's personal and intellectual life course. In

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<sup>32</sup> Wagner, *Alfred Schutz: An Intellectual Biography*, op. cit., p. 5.

<sup>33</sup> Barber, *The Participating Citizen: A Biography of Alfred Schutz*, op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>34</sup> Idem, *The Participating Citizen: A Biography of Alfred Schutz*, op. cit.; Wagner, *Alfred Schutz: An Intellectual Biography*, op. cit.

<sup>35</sup> Professor Szakolczai applied a framework based on Victor Turner and Arnold van Gennep to perform an innovative analysis of the writings of a number of social thinkers by interpreting their life-works in the light of the key liminal periods of their biographies (see Arpad Szakolczai, *Reflexive Historical Sociology*. London/New York: Routledge, 2000).

the *Privatseminar*, he met such thinkers as Eric Voegelin, Friedrich Hayek, or Felix Kaufmann – the later became a close friend of Schutz and was the one who encouraged him to read Husserl. Schutz lived and worked in Austria until the age of 39, when, because of World War II, he emigrated through France to the United States. Unlike other social scientists, he pursued a professional career that had no connection with his scholarly interests: he worked nearly all his life as an international law consultant with Reitler and Company, a major Austrian banking firm. As a secondary activity and a part-time collaboration initially, he gave courses in various philosophical and sociological disciplines with the New School for Social Research in New York. In fact, he delivered his very first course to the New School in 1943,<sup>36</sup> the year when he wrote ‘On Multiple Realities.’ The event marked the end of his adaptation period in the United States<sup>37</sup> when the struggles and uncertainties of a long period of time were finally melting away, allowing him to reach recognition and stability in the United States and to enter a time of ‘peace and productivity after the war,’ as Michael Barber called it.<sup>38</sup> The following year, Schutz had his American citizenship ceremony,<sup>39</sup> and eight years later, in 1952, he became full professor at the New School, then chair of the Philosophy Department.<sup>40</sup>

His shadowy period had started a few years before on the other side of the Atlantic with the rising insecurity and instability in his homeland Austria caused by Hitler’s preparations for war in 1936 and the *Anschluss*<sup>41</sup> in 1938. As a Jew, Schutz experienced the collapse of the reality that used to provide him with security and the natural recognition of his identity; in the new reality, he was no longer considered an Austrian who had proved his patriotism and loyalty by serving his country in the war,<sup>42</sup> but an intruder and a *stranger*. The period culminated with

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Wagner, *Alfred Schutz: An Intellectual Biography*, op. cit., p. 87.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>38</sup> Barber, *The Participating Citizen: A Biography of Alfred Schutz*, op. cit., p. 131.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

<sup>41</sup> Ilse Schutz recalled that the *Anschluss* had a ‘catastrophic’ impact on their family (cf. *ibid.*, p. 73).

<sup>42</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 5.

Schutz's emigration in the summer of 1939 and his efforts to building a new life in his adoptive country, an experience that was deeply painful to him and his family. The cultural shock must have been amplified by the memory of his unhappy initial encounter with the country in 1937<sup>43</sup> when he disliked it mostly because of its anti-Semitism to the point that he thought he would never allow his children to grow there. The experience was worsened by the fact that his family had to be separated for fifteen months<sup>44</sup> as it was impossible for them to travel together,<sup>45</sup> by the inherent difficulties of living in a time of war, and by the effort to adapt socially, professionally, and intellectually to an environment that was new and unwelcoming to him in many respects.

Those years also came with upheavals in Schutz's intellectual life in terms of 'significant others,' as an old epoch was vanishing away and a new one was being born. In April 1938, his mentor Edmund Husserl died; Schutz used to pay him visits 'every year three or four times in Freiburg, Vienna, and Prague for shorter or longer periods' even when the old philosopher was on his deathbed.<sup>46</sup> The war put an end to the meetings of the *Privatseminar* along with their fervent exchange of ideas. Schutz's emigration to the United States paralleled a serious deterioration of his relationship with his best friend Felix Kaufmann.<sup>47</sup> Yet, Schutz had new significant encounters and found new intellectual environments in his adoptive country: in 1939, he started his correspondence with Aron Gurwitsch, which was to span over 20 years and count 278 letters altogether;<sup>48</sup> 1939 was also the year when the International Phenomenological Society was founded, Schutz

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<sup>43</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 67-72.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 84.

<sup>45</sup> His son George Schutz recalled that, in 1938, '[t]he quota for Austrians to come to America actually broke off in the middle of our family' so that Ilse Schutz went to the US a year earlier than her husband; cf. Embree, *Alfred Schutz: Philosopher of Social Science in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*, *op. cit.*

<sup>46</sup> Alfred Schutz. 'Husserl and His Influence on Me'. In: *Collected Papers V: Phenomenology and the Social Sciences*. Ed. by Lester Embree. Phaenomenologica. Dordrecht/ Heidelberg/ London/ New York: Springer, 2011, p. 3.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Barber, *The Participating Citizen: A Biography of Alfred Schutz*, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

<sup>48</sup> Alfred Schutz and Aron Gurwitsch. *Philosophers in Exile: The Correspondence of Alfred Schutz and Aron Gurwitsch, 1939-1959*. Ed. by R. Grathoff. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1989.

being among the 24 founding members.<sup>49</sup>

An overhead view of these events shows with no doubt that the episode of Schutz's emigration took place during *the major liminal time* of his life. The period roughly approximates the interval between his writing of 'The Problem of Personality' (1936-1937) and 'On Multiple Realities' (1943), that is, it overlaps the *germinal stage* of the 'finite province of meaning' idea that concerns us here. These seven years of exile from normality, when the rules of ordinary existence and peaceful activities were suspended, produced Schutz's moments of 'theoretical contemplation' on the question of the multiple reality. The publication of these ideas in the paper 'On Multiple Realities' in 1945 was, in Wagner's words, a 'landmark' and a shift of perspective in the series of Schutz's American writings.<sup>50</sup> Schutz himself felt that the concept may have deserved a more extensive treatment. In a letter to Voegelin written four months after the paper was published, he confessed that, after seven years of working 'on a single thing,' he found it difficult to confine himself within the limits of a mere essay, because the problem gave rise to numerous implications and wider dimensions.<sup>51</sup> Many aspects of his theory of the multiple reality that one might identify as shortcomings<sup>52</sup> can be explained by Schutz's difficulties in restricting himself to the confines of a narrow treatment of the matter. Unfortunately, Schutz never managed to write a full account of the topic as he saw it.

Other writings dating from the same period show that this was a time that was inviting Schutz to profound self-reflection. Liminal periods stimulate reflexivity and anamnestic exercises and deeply affect one's identity,<sup>53</sup> but also, in anthropological reading, have an illuminating power on the 'initiand,' who is 'granted insight into the basic values' and sacred knowledge.<sup>54</sup>

In 1943, Schutz gave his first talk to the Department of Sociology of the New

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Wagner, *Alfred Schutz: An Intellectual Biography*, op. cit., pp. 79-80.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 90.

<sup>51</sup> Schutz, *Collected Papers V: Phenomenology and the Social Sciences*, op. cit., p. 216.

<sup>52</sup> See 4.1 (p. 109).

<sup>53</sup> Szokolczai, *Reflexive Historical Sociology*, op. cit.

<sup>54</sup> Arpad Szokolczai. 'Identity Formation Mechanisms: A Conceptual and Genealogical Analysis'. In: *EUI Working Papers SPS 98/2* (1998), p. 6.

School for Social Research.<sup>55</sup> The presentation had the title ‘The Strange and the Stranger’ and reflected his coming to terms with his own experience as an immigrant but also his problem of dealing with the European and American flavours of anti-Semitism. The paper was published<sup>56</sup> the following year and, just like the subsequent articles ‘The Homecomer’<sup>57</sup> and ‘On Multiple Realities,’<sup>58</sup> constituted a meditation on the life-experiences that had affected Schutz’s existence and identity.

‘The Homecomer’ was sparked by his youth experience of the war, which must have been Schutz’s first liminal stage – his unexpected *rite de passage* into adulthood –, and which coincided with another unexpected, identity-shaping event: his accidental discovery that his biological father had died before his birth and that Otto Schutz, whom he considered his father, was in fact his uncle.<sup>59</sup> The strong contrast between the civilian lifestyle of Vienna and the Italian front where the young Schutz had been confronted to many atrocities, as Wagner says,<sup>60</sup> must have hit him like a powerful *shock*.<sup>61</sup>

Another text written under the halo of his meditation on the dramatic experience of ‘loss,’ ‘fracture,’ and ‘displacement,’ as Michael Barber put it, is the manuscript on Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meister’s Journeyman Years*, which was published in 2013.<sup>62</sup> Barber explains that Schutz wrote this text ‘in 1948, when he was returning on business to Europe after the war and the full extent of the devastation suffered by his friends and colleagues was becoming clear.’

While the inspiration sources of ‘The Stranger’ and ‘The Homecomer’ can be

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Wagner, *Alfred Schutz: An Intellectual Biography*, op. cit., p. 86.

<sup>56</sup> Alfred Schutz. ‘The Stranger: An Essay in Social Psychology’. In: *The American Journal of Sociology* 49.6 (May 1944), pp. 499–507.

<sup>57</sup> Alfred Schutz. ‘The Homecomer’. In: *The American Journal of Sociology* 50.5 (Mar. 1945), pp. 369–376.

<sup>58</sup> Schutz, ‘On Multiple Realities’, op. cit.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Barber, *The Participating Citizen: A Biography of Alfred Schutz*, op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>60</sup> ‘Exchanging the schoolroom for the boot camp had been the first and deepest shock experience of Schutz’s young life; the second shock followed eighteen months later: The return from life in war to a civilian existence.’ (Wagner, *Alfred Schutz: An Intellectual Biography*, op. cit., p. 6)

<sup>61</sup> ‘Shock’ is an important concept in Schutz’s theory of the finite provinces of meaning; see 3.2.1 (p. 81).

<sup>62</sup> Schutz, ‘On Wilhelm Meister’s Years of Travel’, op. cit.

easily identified in Alfred Schutz's life history as his own experiences of immigration and war, which is the exact biographical source of the essay that interests us here most, 'On Multiple Realities'? When did he experience his life as fundamentally plural? The answer is not to be sought in some particular event or period of Schutz's life; rather, it becomes apparent in his *way of life*, in the 'multiplicity of the roles' he had to play, as Mary Rogers has put it.<sup>63</sup> Either in Europe or in the US, Schutz had to live nearly every day of his life in a 'split existence' as 'a banker by day and a phenomenologist by night.'<sup>64</sup> His writings on the topic of the multiple reality may have stemmed out of his need of coming to terms with his own condition:

The meaning that he sought as an inner justification of his human existence was to be found outside the compulsory roles of citizen, salaried, employee, and breadwinner. The life of meaning, if it could be had, would begin after the imposed duties had been done, that is, in the cultural spheres of volitional interests and chosen relevances. From the outset, Schutz settled for a split existence.<sup>65</sup>

Helmut Wagner says<sup>66</sup> that Schutz's personal 'system of relevances' was dominated by four 'life spheres,' which all competed for his time and energy, and his struggles to 'secure some time slots' for those activities that he found meaningful: first, it was its dedication to his family life and loyalty towards his friends; second, his professional and business duties; third, his theoretical and academic interests; fourth, his artistic passions, mostly music. To Schutz himself, these spheres of life were autonomous, and he did not permit his aesthetic personality of the fourth sphere to interfere with, say, the industry and earnestness of the banking counsellor: 'Schutz was a living demonstration of his theory of the separation of "multiple realities" by their typical "style" and other criteria.'<sup>67</sup>

<sup>63</sup>Mary Rogers. 'Alfred Schutz'. In: *The Blackwell Companion to Major Classical Social Theorists*. Ed. by G. Ritzer. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2003, p. 356.

<sup>64</sup>See Barber, *The Participating Citizen: A Biography of Alfred Schutz*, op. cit., p. 248.

<sup>65</sup>Wagner, *Alfred Schutz: An Intellectual Biography*, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., pp. 16-19.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

One can [...] wonder whether Schutz's interest in autonomous and irreducible spheres of activity and the conflicts possible between them may not reflect his own life, in which he sought to juggle often to the point of exhaustion the worlds of business, philosophy, music, and family.<sup>68</sup>

We see thus the picture of a conception that was sketched across several texts, and bears this peculiar double dimension: it is *residual* in respect with his system of thought and *liminal* in the historicity of his life-work. The association of these terms, which is by no means fortuitous, can explain the apparent paradox mentioned in the previous section. Schutz's conception of the multiple reality works as an articulation element in his sociological system: it is a junction piece, not a heavy piece. Such a conception, which could only be developed during a liminal time, has all the chances of being underestimated when one seeks to grasp the large picture, because it is like the threshold that we don't pay heed to when we step from one room to another.

The enterprise of the present thesis seeks to settle precisely on *this doorsill*. My purpose is to present and analyse without taking for granted Schutz's conception of the multiple reality – and yet to remain committed to his fundamental epistemological ground – as well as to take a step further towards a more coherent, consistent, and up-to-date sociology of the finite provinces of meaning. As the title of the work says it, I have in view a critical approach to the Schutzian theory but also a reconstructive goal. The word 'critical' is not meant here in the sense of critical theory or other Neo-Marxian viewpoints, but in its primary meaning, in which Schutz himself approached Weber and Husserl, namely a fair assessment of the solidity of the theoretical construction of Schutz's conception of the finite provinces of meaning.

In the following two chapters, we will review briefly Schutz's *parcours* through the main philosophical traditions from which stemmed his theory of the 'finite provinces of meaning,' and we will have an overview of the Schutzian FPM the-

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<sup>68</sup> Barber, *The Participating Citizen: A Biography of Alfred Schutz*, op. cit., p. 67.

ory as he presented it in his own writings. The texts where Schutz approached the theme of the multiple reality had different theoretical motivations, and altogether they present the image of a permanent work-in-progress. For a systematic view of the FPM theory, one needs to take these texts under scrutiny, and one faces the choice between a logical and a chronological approach. While our short reflexive sociological analysis was historical, in Chapters 2 and 3, we will follow a thematic-logical path, and we will follow Schutz's conception of the FPM theory along his 1945 paper 'On Multiple Realities,' which we will treat as *core text*, and refer to the other papers<sup>69</sup> in terms of differences from the core text. In Part II, we will reassess and redraw the structure of the Schutzian theory of the multiple reality and we will study some particular implications of this theory for the social sciences.

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<sup>69</sup>Schutz, 'Realities from Daily Life to Theoretical Contemplation', op. cit.; Schutz, 'The Problem of Personality in the Social World', op. cit.; Schutz, *Reflections on the Problem of Relevance*, op. cit.; Schutz, 'Symbol, Reality, and Society', op. cit.; idem, *Life Forms and Meaning Structure*, op. cit.; Schutz and Luckmann, *The Structures of the Life-World*, op. cit., pp. 21-98; Schutz, 'Don Quixote and the Problem of Reality', op. cit.; idem, 'On Wilhelm Meister's Years of Travel', op. cit.





# Chapter 2

## Schutz's methodological journey

*Mon Dieu, mais qu'est-ce que je fais ici,  
moi? Je ne connais pas le texte!*<sup>1</sup>  
(Luis Buñuel, *Le charme discret de  
la bourgeoisie*)

### 2.1 Theoretical roots

The four main roots of Schutz's theory of the multiple reality – Max Weber, Henri Bergson, Edmund Husserl, and William James – belong to different, though not incompatible, philosophical traditions: Weber's sociology of the 'spirit' had a certain convergence with Husserl's phenomenology 'not only in the thematic investigation of modernity as a particular kind of experience, but also critically in grasping the enigmatic character of that experience as the central historical problem of intersubjectivity,' as Harvie Ferguson wrote;<sup>2</sup> the philosophies of Husserl and Bergson reveal both intersection points and debate positions throughout the traditions that these thinkers have founded, which point to a reciprocal relevance of their systems and call for dialogue rather than confrontation; Bergson and

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<sup>1</sup> *My God, but what am I doing here? I don't know the script!* (In French)

<sup>2</sup> Harvie Ferguson. *Phenomenological Sociology: Insight and Experience in Modern Society*. London/ Thousand Oaks/ New Delhi: Sage, 2006, p. 90.

James were good friends, and they influenced and stimulated each other's works and shared common thematic interests; Husserl, too, was an admirer of James's 'Principles of Psychology,' which he had studied carefully, as Schutz mentioned in a comparative study on the two authors.<sup>3</sup>

Schutz became acquainted with the works of these thinkers at various stages of his intellectual life. He confessed that, since his early days as a student, his 'foremost interest was in the philosophical foundations of the social sciences, especially sociology.'<sup>4</sup>

He attended Weber's lectures at the University of Vienna in the summer of 1918,<sup>5</sup> and fell 'under the spell' of his 'work, especially of his methodological writings.'<sup>6</sup> He found particularly convincing Weber's appeal for axiological neutrality and his concern for establishing the science of sociology upon the fundamental concepts of meaning, understanding, otherness, and social action. To Weber, action required by definition a meaningful charge on the part of the acting individual, while social action required orientation towards otherness.<sup>7</sup>

However, Schutz felt that Weber's social theory 'was based on a series of tacit presuppositions,'<sup>8</sup> and that these fundamental concepts deserved closer scrutiny. His friend Felix Kaufmann encouraged him to read Husserl, and suggested that he would find in phenomenology the theoretical basis that he was seeking. Schutz followed the advice and read two of Husserl's books,<sup>9</sup> but felt that this was not what he was looking for, so he turned towards Bergson's philosophy and tried to find a solid framework in his conception of consciousness and inner time.

From 1924 to 1928, Schutz's thought was dominated by Bergson, and, during these years, he worked on a manuscript that anticipated, as Helmut R. Wagner

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<sup>3</sup> Alfred Schutz. 'William James' Concept of the Stream of Thought Phenomenologically Interpreted'. In: *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 1.4 (June 1941), p. 442.

<sup>4</sup> Idem, 'Husserl and His Influence on Me', op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>5</sup> Barber, *The Participating Citizen: A Biography of Alfred Schutz*, op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>6</sup> Schutz, 'Husserl and His Influence on Me', op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Max Weber. *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*. Ed. by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich. Berkeley/ Los Angeles/ London: University of California Press, 1978 (1922), p. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Schutz, *The Phenomenology of the Social World*, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> *Logische Untersuchungen and Ideen I*, (cf. idem, 'Husserl and His Influence on Me', op. cit., p. 2).

noted in the introduction to the published version of this unfinished text,<sup>10</sup> his 1932 book *Der sinnhafte Aufbau*. To the theory of the finite provinces of meaning, two Bergsonian concepts are important: duration (*durée*) and attention to life (*attention à la vie*). Duration or inner temporality is the stream of consciousness that unfolds its multiplicity in succession.<sup>11</sup> Duration resists being quantified and mathematised and has several characteristics: continuity, manifoldness, irreversibility, and streaming ('stream as that which streams.'<sup>12</sup>) Duration is contrasted with spatialised temporality or clock time, which implies measure and magnitude. In *Matter and Memory*, Bergson said that mental life is not monotonous, but oscillates between different 'tones,' 'heights,' or intensities, 'according to the degree of our *attention to life*,'<sup>13</sup> and that we live every 'plane of consciousness' with a specific tension, which ranges from the lowest degree when we dream to the highest when we perform an action, that is, when we show our full interest in life.<sup>14</sup>

In 1928, Schutz turned again to Husserl's phenomenology, this time with a sound background in Bergson's philosophy, and 'found immediately Husserl's thought and language understandable' and illuminating to his preoccupations.<sup>15</sup> As a result, Schutz abandoned Bergson's philosophy as main ground, yet did not reject its findings, but continued to use many Bergsonian concepts throughout his works. The result of founding interpretive social theory upon phenomenology is *Der sinnhafte Aufbau*, a book that is fundamentally Weberian.<sup>16</sup>

To our purpose, particularly important are the Husserlian concepts of natural attitude (or natural standpoint) and *epochè* (or phenomenological reduction).

Natural attitude is what characterises our everyday, ordinary existence and

<sup>10</sup> Editor's introduction to idem, *Life Forms and Meaning Structure*, op. cit.

<sup>11</sup> Alfred Schutz. 'Choosing Among Projects of Action'. In: *Collected Papers I: The Problem of Social Reality*. Ed. by Maurice Natanson. Phaenomenologica. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973 (1951), p. 85.

<sup>12</sup> Idem, *Life Forms and Meaning Structure*, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>13</sup> Henri Bergson. *Key Writings*. Ed. by Keith Ansell Pearson and John Mullarkey. London/New York: Continuum, 2002, p. 84.

<sup>14</sup> Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., p. 537.

<sup>15</sup> Schutz, 'Husserl and His Influence on Me', op. cit., p. 2.

<sup>16</sup> Wagner, *Alfred Schutz: An Intellectual Biography*, op. cit., p. 38.

involvement with the life-world. In the natural attitude, we take for granted the surrounding world with its objects and animate beings, which are extended in space and time, and do not question their reality. For Husserl, natural attitude is characteristic not only to everyday existence, but also to the sciences:

To cognize 'the' world merely comprehensively, more reliably, more perfectly in every respect than naive experiential cognizance can, to solve all the problems of scientific cognition which offer themselves within the realm of the world, that is the aim of the *sciences belonging to the natural attitude*.<sup>17</sup>

The Husserlian conception that sees the sciences – including the natural sciences – confined within the walls of the natural attitude does not mean that these sciences are in error or that their results are false, but simply that they lack a solid philosophical foundation.

Husserl proposed a methodological device to studying the *modes of givenness* of the world into consciousness: the phenomenological *epochè*,<sup>18</sup> which requires that 'the general positing which belongs to the essence of the natural attitude' be 'put out of action.'<sup>19</sup> The *epochè* is not a negation of, nor a doubt in, the existence of the world, but rather an exercise executed 'with complete freedom' by refraining 'from any judgement about spatiotemporal factual being.'<sup>20</sup> Given that all the sciences (prior to phenomenology) belong to the natural attitude, the phenomenological bracketing also excludes these and their accomplishments.

In *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, Husserl proposed and described concisely the task of a phenomenological ontology of the life-world:

Even without any transcendental interest – that is, within the 'natural attitude' (in the language of transcendental philosophy the naïve

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<sup>17</sup> Husserl, *Ideas. General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology. First Book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, op. cit., p. 57.

<sup>18</sup> ἐποχή, in Greek: 'suspension,' 'bracketing,' or 'paranthesising'

<sup>19</sup> Husserl, *Ideas. General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology. First Book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, op. cit., p. 61.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

attitude, prior to the epochè) the life-world could have become the subject matter of a science of its own, an ontology of the life-world purely as experiential world (i.e., as the world which is coherently, consistently, harmoniously intuitable in actual and possible experiencing intuition). For our part we, who up to now have constantly carried out systematic reflections within the reorientation of the transcendental epochè, can at any time restore the natural attitude and, within it, inquire after the invariant structures of the life-world.<sup>21</sup>

Schutz programmatically drew his sociology in this Husserlian line as a phenomenological description of the life-world in the natural attitude, that is, a description of reality as experienced and interpreted by the actors themselves before any phenomenological *epochè*. In the natural attitude, people act, interact, and communicate in a world that appears to them indubitably objective, while the sociologist is supposed to refrain from claiming that people are right or wrong in doing so. Interpretive sociology is not called to assess which worldview is false and which worldview is correct, but to understand how people's actions and meanings are born within their own worldviews.

While Schutz assumed this purely Husserlian project, he remained, however, outside of the circle of 'orthodox' phenomenologists. He set himself apart from the mainstream by rejecting the 'second epochè' – essential to the late Husserl's theory of the constitution of intersubjectivity – thus rejecting transcendental phenomenology:

[W]e may say that the empirical social sciences will find their true foundation not in transcendental phenomenology, but in the constitutive phenomenology of the natural attitude. Husserl's signal contribution to the social sciences consists neither in his unsuccessful attempt to solve the problem of the constitution of the transcendental intersubjectivity within the reduced egological sphere, nor in his unclar-

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<sup>21</sup> Edmund Husserl. *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970 (1954), pp. 173-174.

ified notion of empathy as the foundation of understanding, nor, finally, in his interpretation of communities and societies as subjectivities of a higher order the nature of which can be described eidetically; but rather in the wealth of his analyses pertinent to problems of the *Lebenswelt* and designed to be developed into a philosophical anthropology.<sup>22</sup>

It is on this epistemological basis that Schutz drew his sociological investigations, including his theory of the multiple reality. It is on this epistemological basis that I, too, will draw the current work, including Part II, which I intend as an attempt at reconstituting and moving a step forward the Schutzian theory of the finite provinces of meaning. In this line, concepts such as self, space, and time need to be understood as referring to experiential forms of selfness, identity, spatiality, and temporality or, in phenomenological terms, to the modes these phenomena are given to consciousness.

In William James, Schutz found several concepts that eased his way to his American audience and helped him clarify many theoretical problems. First, he found in James a view that was compatible with his phenomenological basis as well as a set of questions adequate to his programme. James maintained that '*[w]hatever things have intimate and continuous connection with my life are things whose reality I cannot doubt*'<sup>23</sup> and that '*[a]ny relation to our mind at all, in the absence of a stronger relation, suffices to make an object real.*'<sup>24</sup> Phenomenologically speaking, this was a way of looking at the modes of givenness – as real or unreal – of objects in the natural attitude.

Second, Schutz encountered in James's writings a pluralist conception based on the notion of 'sub-universe,' which, coupled with the Bergsonian 'attention to life' and the Husserlian 'natural attitude,' produced a strong explanatory power for a set of questions that were important to him, as it assigned the world of science a place in the collection of sub-universes along with other realities, such

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<sup>22</sup> Schutz, *Collected Papers I: The Problem of Social Reality*, op. cit., p. 149.

<sup>23</sup> James, *Principles of Psychology*, op. cit., p. 297.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 298.

as the world of 'idols of the tribe' or the world of 'sheer madness and vagary',<sup>25</sup> examples that Schutz borrowed nearly unchanged from James.

Third, Schutz saw in the American psychologist a counterpart of the Husserlian life-world: the world of 'practical realities'<sup>26</sup> – which Schutz referred to as 'the world of working' – but also the problem of 'reality',<sup>27</sup> equally important to Schutz's theory of the finite provinces of meaning. While Schutz may have imported some of terminology from James and Mead, the claim that there was a true 'pragmatic turn' in Schutz's American writings<sup>28</sup> is debatable, for he never abandoned the epistemological position of the phenomenologist who investigates the world as given in the natural attitude. Joachim Renn criticised Schutz for having 'failed' to reconcile phenomenology and pragmatism,<sup>29</sup> while Michael Barber accused Renn of 'rigid dualism,' because he criticised Schutz 'for not delivering what he never promised.'<sup>30</sup>

## 2.2 The problem

Schutz used James as a starting point to introducing his own conception of the multiple reality and, to some extent, used him as a pretext or an entry gate that would ensure his ideas an easier path to his American audience. In 1943 when he wrote 'On Multiple Realities,' Schutz was teaching his first courses at New School for Social Research, and, unlike other scholars educated in the Central European tradition and relocated to the United States, he pursued his scholarly interests by constantly relying on American references in order to ensure a better reception with his students, as Helmut Wagner said:

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 292.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., pp. 293-298.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp. 299-306.

<sup>28</sup> Ilja Srubar. *Kosmion: Die Genese der pragmatischen Lebenswelttheorie von Alfred Schütz und ihr anthropologischer Hintergrund*. Frankfurt/M: Suhrkamp, 1988.

<sup>29</sup> Joachim Renn. 'Appresentation and Simultaneity: Alfred Schutz on Communication between Phenomenology and Pragmatics'. In: *Human Studies* 29 (2006), pp. 1–19.

<sup>30</sup> Michael D. Barber. 'Phenomenology and Rigid Dualisms: Joachim Renn's Critique of Alfred Schutz'. In: *Human Studies* 29 (2006), p. 31.



The generous insertion of American source materials into Schutz's courses and seminars was welcomed by those of his students who had done their undergraduate work in American colleges; they found in them familiar points of departure. And those who had been educated in Europe learned that their former teachers were not the only ones who had found *geisteswissenschaftliche* insight into social phenomena. Schutz referred to contributions of American social scientists because they confirmed, enhanced, and enriched a respectable number of his own theoretical conceptions.<sup>31</sup>

It is obvious that in America Schutz used this method not only in his courses but in his writings, too. His views on the finite provinces of meaning were 'confirmed, enhanced, and enriched' – to use Wagner's words – by William James, who served as a 'familiar point of departure' and a catalyst for the communication of his ideas to the new academic audience he encountered in America. His theory of the multiple reality is a meeting ground for the Husserlian and Jamesian conceptions of reality, both of which are rooted in the thought of Brentano, as Fred Kersten has noted.<sup>32</sup>

Hence, Alfred Schutz begins his essay 'On Multiple Realities' by giving credit<sup>33</sup> to a text of William James<sup>34</sup> for the conception that the social world is not a unique and coherent reality but a composite structure of sub-realities, such as the worlds of dreams, science, personal opinion, children's play, daily life, 'sheer madness,' or 'vagary.' Schutz believes that James has touched upon 'one of the most important philosophical questions,'<sup>35</sup> and takes in the task of outlining a some of the implications thereof.

Schutz says that 'every object we think of is at least referred to one of these subworlds,'<sup>36</sup> which is to say that there are no world-independent objects and

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<sup>31</sup> Wagner, *Alfred Schutz: An Intellectual Biography*, op. cit., p. 88.

<sup>32</sup> Fred Kersten. 'A Stroll with Alfred Schutz'. In: *Human Studies* 25 (2002), p. 36.

<sup>33</sup> Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., p. 533.

<sup>34</sup> James, *Principles of Psychology*, op. cit., Ch. XXI, pp. 283-322.

<sup>35</sup> Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., p. 533.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 533.

that, consequently, one needs to be aware of the inner structure and regulations of a specific world before one chooses to investigate a particular object of that world. Of these various realms, two are particularly important to Schutz's task: the world of daily life and the world of scientific investigation. His objective is an epistemological one, as he explicitly targets a parallel between these two worlds.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, Schutz devotes the first and largest of the five parts of this study, which counts 42 pages, to an analysis of 'the reality of the world of daily life'<sup>38</sup> and the final part, which comes second in length, to the 'world of scientific theory.'<sup>39</sup> He does not mention the concept of finite province of meaning at all until part II, which is dedicated specifically to it. In parts III and IV, Schutz applies his theoretical model of the general FPM structure to two particular cases: the world of 'phantasms' and the world of dreams.

It becomes obvious, looking at the structure of the essay, that part II is an intermediate step that provides Schutz with a passageway from everyday life to 'theoretical contemplation.' The essay's final goal is not an analysis of the concept announced in its title, but a sociological-phenomenological reading of the reality of the social sciences themselves. 'On Multiple Realities' follows, in fact, the same structure and assumes the same objective as Schutz's 1937 manuscript.<sup>40</sup>

Schutz has certainly reached his goal, but this is not the significant point to our present discussion. Here, we are interested in this particular *residual* accomplishment of Schutz: the fact that, in exploring the epistemological foundation of the social sciences, he has 'discovered' that finite provinces of meaning have their life and their specific structure and that to study the diversity, morphology, dynamics, and constitution of FPMs can be a sociological enterprise in itself.

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<sup>37</sup> This is not the only time when Schutz parallels knowledge formation in everyday life and scientific investigation; see, for example, Alfred Schutz. 'Common Sense and Scientific Interpretation of Human Action'. In: *Collected Papers I: The Problem of Social Reality*. Ed. by Michael D. Barber. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962, pp. 3–47; Alfred Schutz. 'Concept and Theory Formation in the Social Sciences'. In: *The Journal of Philosophy* 51.9 (1954), pp. 257–273.

<sup>38</sup> Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., pp. 533–551.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., pp. 563–575.

<sup>40</sup> Alfred Schutz. 'Genesis of the Social Person in the Solitary Self'. In: *Collected Papers VI: Literary Reality and Relationships*. Ed. by Michael D. Barber. Phaenomenologica. Dordrecht: Springer, 2013. Chap. II, pp. 265–309.

The fact that Schutz was striving to make his text more accessible to an audience that was less familiar with the phenomenological jargon is obvious in his decision to drop from the 1945 version of the text an explanatory note that can be found in the initial 1943 draft concerning the method to be employed in analysing the relationship between science and EDL as finite provinces of meaning:

Although phenomenological methods will be used for this purpose, we do not claim to outline a 'phenomenology of reality' or to make any contributions to 'phenomenological philosophy' in the restricted meaning of the term. To the contrary, our problem will be exclusively posed within the mundane sphere of the natural attitude. Therefore it will belong to the field of phenomenological psychology; that is, it will be restricted to the constitutional analysis of the natural attitude.<sup>41</sup>

The passage is, however, essential in understanding Schutz's position *vis-à-vis* the Husserlian phenomenology. Schutz explains that he is not interested in transcendental phenomenology but in analysing everyday life and the other finite provinces of meaning as they are given to an experiencing subject by maintaining a safe distance from any philosophical or metaphysical interpretations on the part of the observing subject, *i.e.*, the sociologist.

The first part of the study can be seen as a summary of Schutz's sociology of everyday life, which also serves him as a basis for the sociology of knowledge. He gives an account of the temporal, spatial, and social structurations of everyday life<sup>42</sup> and explains briefly such technical concepts as spontaneity, attention to life, *epochè*, relevance, and, of course, everyday life. These concepts are articulated into a formula that he will use throughout the rest of his study as a descriptive and analytic framework for any type of finite provinces of meaning. Schutz's method is to perform first, without explicitly saying it, an analysis of everyday

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<sup>41</sup> Schutz, 'Realities from Daily Life to Theoretical Contemplation', *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26.

<sup>42</sup> I will use interchangeably, along with Schutz, the concepts of 'everyday life,' 'daily life,' 'world of working,' but also the acronym EDL, which he never used. The concept is generally referred to as *Alltagswelt* in German and *quotidien* or *monde de la vie quotidienne* in French.

life *as* a finite province of meaning, then to arrive by induction to the generalised version of the notion of finite province of meaning.

## 2.3 Everyday life

Schutz defines the object of his first analysis as ‘the world of daily life which the wide-awake, grown-up man [sic] who acts in it and upon it amidst his fellow-men experiences with the natural attitude as a reality.’<sup>43</sup> By this, we understand the daily life’s world *as* experienced by a subject defined generally as a healthy, mature human being in a ‘wide awake’ state – not dreaming, not day-dreaming, nor even involved in reading or contemplating an object of art – who acts upon objects and interacts with persons belonging to EDL. The word ‘man’ is used here in its singular form, which might suggest that we have to deal with the world as it is given to the individual consciousness of the subject, not a presumably collective consciousness. However, Schutz explains that the world of daily life is constructed intersubjectively and ‘existed long before our birth, experienced and interpreted by others, our predecessors, as an organized world.’<sup>44</sup> We experience this world as ours (i.e., with a certain sense of both ownership and belonging), but we know we created neither the world nor its meanings. At this stage, Schutz is not interested in the various world-views provided by science, religion, or metaphysics but simply in the spontaneous, prereflexive everyday experience of the ‘man on the street,’ experience that is based on the stock of knowledge formed through the previous experience of the individual and the experience of predecessors.

According to Schutz, the world of daily life is dominated by *practical* interests, because it ‘is something that we have to modify by our actions or that modifies our actions.’<sup>45</sup> It is ‘not an object of thought but a field of domination, of action,’ which is essentially intersubjective and ‘taken for granted until counterproof,’

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<sup>43</sup> Schutz, ‘On Multiple Realities’, op. cit., p. 533.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 533.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., p. 534.

that is, as long as it presents itself without interruptions or self-contradictions to the experiencing subject it stirs no question whether it truly exists or 'is only a coherent system of consistent appearances.'<sup>46</sup> Action is an essential concept here, because it helps the sociologist to discern between provinces and to interpret them.

Before moving on to Schutz's typology of 'action,' let us make three comments at this point.

First, one could ask oneself whether there are interests in daily life other than 'pragmatic motives,' for instance leisure interests. Everyday life is not a world of leisure, religious ritual, or theoretical contemplation, but one can perform in the world of daily life actions whose final purposes are located in the worlds of leisure, religion, or theoretical contemplation.<sup>47</sup> Here lies the main source of the argument according to which Schutz assumed a pragmatist agenda, as mentioned earlier in the context of William James's theoretical influence. Schutz understands the terms 'practical' and 'pragmatic' as related to interventions into the world regardless of their purpose, in a similar way in which he understands the term 'working' as any type of gearing into the outside world. He employs these words in a purely descriptive manner, and shows no intention of abandoning the epistemological grounds of his phenomenology of the natural attitude. Schutz only needs to distinguish the sphere dominated by pragmatic interests from the sphere dominated by theoretical interests (and, consequently, from the specific form of 'interest' of a different finite province of meaning), and it may be imprudent to consider him, for this reason, a pragmatist philosopher, given that he never assumed explicitly the task of *reconciling* the truths of science, everyday life, and religion – but simply of *understanding* the meanings produced in these realms. On the other hand, James may not be the only source of Schutz's concern for the 'practical' specificity of everyday life: Weber also talked of the 'practical rationality' while Husserl, in his description of the world of the natural attitude, saw it 'not only as a world of mere things, but also with the same immediacy as

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<sup>46</sup> Idem, 'Realities from Daily Life to Theoretical Contemplation', op. cit., p. 26.

<sup>47</sup> See 5.2 (p. 151) for a discussion on the relationships between provinces.

*a world of objects with values, a world of goods, a practical world.*<sup>48</sup>

Second, if the world of daily life is essentially intersubjective, one should not understand that it is the only intersubjective world: other finite provinces of meaning (for example, religion) are, or can be, experienced intersubjectively. As important as it can be, the question when a province is purely subjective and when it is purely intersubjective remains outside of Schutz's treatment.

Third, the 'natural attitude,' in which the 'grown-up man' experiences the world of daily life, is not, at first sight, a problematic concept. It is safe to assume that Schutz accepts the same meaning of the concept as it was set up by Husserl, at least when it comes to everyday life. However, things may become confusing when one tries to understand 'natural attitude' *as opposed* to something else. Husserl believes that not only everyday life, but science, too, finds itself confined within the natural attitude, to which he opposes the 'phenomenological attitude.' Schutz is not interested in including the phenomenological attitude in his theory. Yet, he seems to link the natural attitude exclusively to the world of everyday life and to suggest that scientific activities are performed within their specific standpoint, which is to say that every FPM is experienced in its specific form of 'attitude.' The position was later adopted by others, such as Berger and Luckmann, who saw the attitude and the knowledge of the sociologist as distinct from the knowledge of both the philosopher and the 'man in the street.'<sup>49</sup> From the point of view of orthodox phenomenology, the position is ambiguous if not heretic, because, to Husserl, the attitude of the scientist and the (phenomenologist) philosopher are not the same.<sup>50</sup> Schutz's notion of 'attitude' in the context of FPM theory may be rooted not only in Edmund Husserl's phenomenology, but also in the writings of Kurt Goldstein and in the way Bergson, Cassirer, Merleau-Ponty, and Gurwitsch have interpreted Goldstein, as one can understand from a text where Schutz treats the question of language.<sup>51</sup> Specifically, he discusses

<sup>48</sup> Edmund Husserl. *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*. Vol. 1. The Hague/ Boston/ Lancaster: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1983, p. 53.

<sup>49</sup> Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality. A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, op. cit., p. 14.

<sup>50</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>51</sup> Alfred Schutz. 'Language, Language Disturbances, and the Texture of Consciousness'. In:

Goldstein's distinction between the 'concrete attitude,' in which 'we are given over passively and bound to the immediate experience' and the 'categorical or conceptual attitude,' which involves 'taking initiative,' 'making a choice,' and 'detaching the Ego from the outer world.'<sup>52</sup> Schutz points out that these attitudes correspond, in Bergsonian terms, to different degrees of attention to life,<sup>53</sup> and says that they must be understood by reference to the different relevance systems involved.<sup>54</sup>

## 2.4 Action

Everyday life is thus, as Schutz says, a reality fundamentally dominated by practical interests, a world that we constantly change and act upon, and action is the fundamental way we relate to this world. To isolate with precision the form of gearing into the outer world specific to everyday life, Schutz outlines a general typology of action under the heading 'The manifestations of man's spontaneous life in the outer world and some of its forms.'<sup>55</sup> Accordingly, action falls into the more general category of 'spontaneity,' a Leibnizian-Aristotelian term that must be understood as a generalisation of all types of behaviour, action, act, and conduct, including 'manifestations of spontaneity in acts of speech.'<sup>56</sup> In this sense, spontaneity includes all those acts that have their source in the acting ego,<sup>57</sup> *i.e.*, voluntary acts, and exclude those acts that have the cause outside the *ego agens*, such as those resulting from coercion or violence.

Schutz is mainly interested in a particular type of action that he calls 'working' (as at times he refers to EDL as 'the world of working'), and to distinguish it from other manifestations of our spontaneous life. He does that by elimination, in suc-

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*Collected Papers I: The Problem of Social Reality*. Ed. by Maurice Natanson. *Phaenomenologica*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973 (1950), pp. 260–286.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 262.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 275.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 284.

<sup>55</sup> Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', *op. cit.*, pp. 534–537.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 535.

<sup>57</sup> Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. *Confessio philosophi: Papers Concerning the Problem of Evil, 1671–1678*. Ed. by Robert C. Jr. Sleigh. New Haven/ London: Yale University Press, 2005, p. 69.

cessive steps, and makes use of several criteria. Schutz's typology is a refinement of Weber's discussion<sup>58</sup> of social action as a fundamental concept of interpretive sociology, which was defined using the same fundamental tool, *meaning*.

Schutz reminds that 'the problem' he is investigating here is not a behaviouristic description of 'what occurs to man as a psycho-physiological unit,' but 'the subjective meaning man bestows upon certain experiences of his own spontaneous life.'<sup>59</sup> This view is consistent with the treatment of the concept of action he gave in his 1932 book,<sup>60</sup> where he discussed in depth Weber's concept of social action. However, in 'On Multiple Realities,' Schutz makes no reference to that discussion, and 'social action' surprisingly remains outside his typology of action.<sup>61</sup>

In our daily life, we have experiences to which we attach no subjective meaning at all. One must not call them 'meaningless,' but simply non-thematic: as long as we don't turn our attention to these experiences, they remain mere 'physiological reflexes,' 'passive reactions' or, more generally, '*essentially actual experiences*.'<sup>62</sup> Most likely, Schutz includes in this category subconscious and unconscious acts, but refrains from making use of explicit psychoanalytic vocabulary.<sup>63</sup> These 'actual experiences' along with subjectively meaningful experiences, which Schutz refers to as 'conduct,' belong to the larger category of *behaviour*.

He distinguishes further between *overt* conduct – that is, conduct that gears 'into the outer world' – and *covert* conduct, which belongs to inner life.

When conduct is the result of a previous plan, it is called *action*, and this too can be covert or overt. Covert action is called a *phantasm* if it was planned in advance but lacked the intention to be realised as in the case of day-dreams,<sup>64</sup>

<sup>58</sup>See Max Weber. *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*. Ed. by Johannes Winckelmann. Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1988 (1922), pp. 562-565.

<sup>59</sup>Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., p. 535.

<sup>60</sup>Alfred Schütz. *Der sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt: Eine Einleitung in die verstehende Soziologie*. Wien: Julius Springer, 1932.

<sup>61</sup>We will come back to the question of this omission in 2.6.

<sup>62</sup>Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., p. 536.

<sup>63</sup>Schutz was aware of the writings of Freud, whom he mentioned in his discussion of dreams as FPMs (see *ibid.*, pp. 560-561) and even earlier in 1936 (see Schutz, 'The Problem of Personality in the Social World', op. cit., pp. 222, 231, 233).

<sup>64</sup>Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., p. 536.



whereas covert action that was planned in advance with the intention to be carried through into the outer world is called 'purposive action or *performance*.'<sup>65</sup> But the existence of an intention to realisation does not necessarily imply its actual realisation as overt performance, so Schutz comes up with yet another concept: 'working,'<sup>66</sup> which requires a bodily engagement with the outer world:

Working, thus, is action in the outer world, based upon a project and characterized by the intention to bring about the projected state of affairs by bodily movements. Among all the described forms of spontaneity that of working is the most important one for the constitution of the reality of the world of daily life.<sup>67</sup>

Let us have a closer look at this typology and understand its implications. Schutz starts from an initial class of spontaneous experience called behaviour, and defines its subcategories: actual experiences, overt conduct, covert conduct, action, phantasm, performance, and working. He makes use of four criteria to set conceptual frontiers between them: subjective meaning, sense of orientation (towards the inner world vs. towards the outer world), project, and intention to actual realisation (see figure 2.1). The whole reason of his typology is to depict the place of *Wirken* in the multiplicity of forms of behaviour.

Obviously, Schutz's typology is not precise and complete, for some categories remain unmentioned and unlabelled (such as the unprojected covert conduct) and others are not distinguished (such as the actual experience), because he is interested in an operational typology of behaviour relevant to his theory, not in a mathematical description of its subdivisions.

This typology of behaviour reflects the basic structure of spontaneity in the world of everyday life of the acting self. If one studies this typology in the light of

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 536.

<sup>66</sup> By 'working' (*Wirken*, in German) Schutz refers not to 'labour' (*Werk, Arbeit*) in particular, but to a general type of action understood as any form of physical involvement with the outside world.

<sup>67</sup> Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., p. 537.

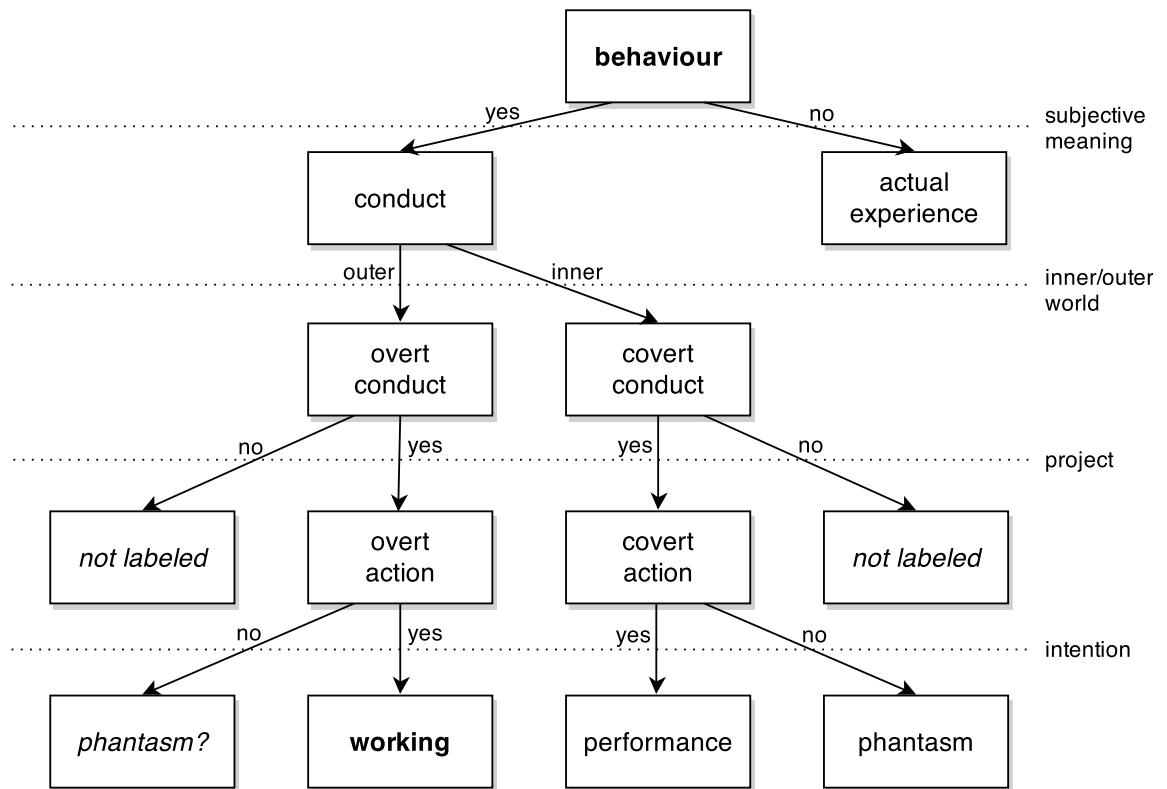


Figure 2.1: The ten relevant types of behaviour across four criteria.

the multiplicity of life-world's provinces, one realises that some forms of 'spontaneity' automatically transport the subject out of everyday life into a specific FPM, as is the case of 'phantasm,' which is performed by definition in the 'world of phantasms.' For this reason, one may be wrong to consider this typology of behaviour as specific to everyday life. The problem becomes clearer, however, in the light of Schutz's argument that every FPM is characterised by a *dominant* form of spontaneity, not an *exclusive* form of spontaneity.

Several translations or generalisations of this structure are possible.<sup>68</sup> First, one can apply it to collective behaviour and outline the structure of the intersubjective manifestations of spontaneity. The only modification that needs to be operated in this respect refers to the terms of the opposition inner world intention vs. outer world intention, which must be replaced by in-group intention vs. out-group intention. Such an exercise would be not only interesting, but quite necessary if one wants to study the implications of the intersubjective character

<sup>68</sup> An extension of this typology will be presented in 6.1 (see figure 6.1, p. 171).

of FPMs. Second, given that experience implies a pathic component aside from spontaneity (its active component), a replica of this structure should describe the way we 'suffer' the world according to various criteria. Third, we have noted earlier a striking omission: Schutz's decision to leave out the concept of social action from the typology of behaviour outlined here. Social action, as defined by Weber,<sup>69</sup> requires another criterion besides those employed by Schutz here: otherness, or more exactly the subject's orientation towards the other's subjective meaning. Schutz does mention the concept of social action later in the text in the section dedicated to 'the social structure of the world of daily life,'<sup>70</sup> but does not recall his own interpretation of the Weberian concept from *Der sinnhafte Aufbau*.

Another omission refers to symbolic acts of working, that is, forms of spontaneity that have their outcomes in the symbolic order of the outside world. One can include here performative acts of speech, such as the utterance 'I do' pronounced in any marriage agreement.<sup>71</sup> Schutz will approach the topic ten years later in another article.<sup>72</sup>

The expression 'wide awake,' which Schutz used in describing the subject – or rather the ideal-typical subject – of the world of daily life doesn't mean merely 'not asleep,' but refers to something more complex, specifically the Bergsonian concept of *attention à la vie* that gives the topic of the section that follows in Schutz's argument related to everyday life world.

## 2.5 Attention to life

Our everyday life is different from the experience of other provinces in what concerns the degree of implication of our consciousness, which Schutz describes with the Bergsonian concept of *attention à la vie* :

Our mental life shows various degrees of tension which depend upon

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<sup>69</sup> Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*, op. cit., pp. 562-565.

<sup>70</sup> Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., pp. 542-545.

<sup>71</sup> See John Langshaw Austin. *How to Do Things with Words: The William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955*. London: Oxford University Press, 1962.

<sup>72</sup> Schutz, 'Symbol, Reality, and Society', op. cit.

our attention to reality or, as the philosopher prefers to call it, our attention to life.<sup>73</sup>

This degree ranges from the lowest in the case of dreams to the highest in the case of everyday life, says Schutz:

By the term '*wide-awakeness*' we want to denote a plane of consciousness of highest tension originating in an attitude of full attention to life and its requirements. Only the performing and especially the working self is fully interested in life and, hence, wide-awake.<sup>74</sup>

One should note that wide-awakeness cannot dominate absolutely all daily life's experiences. Different types of action or working in everyday life may take place at different degrees of attention to life, and it would be hasty to assume that EDL has always the highest. Certain situations can trigger tensions of consciousness higher than normal everyday life situations, for example a state of danger, when one's senses jump to a state of alertness higher than ordinary wide awakensness. Also, in the light of the recent advances in neurosciences, one can no longer approach this topic solely by purely theoretical interpretations. Empirical methods, such as electroencephalography, positron emission tomography, or functional magnetic resonance imaging measure precisely the neural activity of the brain and permit detailed analyses of the various states of consciousness, such as sleep, dreaming, or being awake.<sup>75</sup> Different states of consciousness relate indeed to different degrees of activity in the brain. Yet, these techniques of investigation show, surprisingly, that REM sleep – in which most dreaming occurs – is very similar to awake states of consciousness: in 'rapid eye movement sleep (REM sleep) or paradoxical sleep,' 'the EEG is similar to that of an awake person,' but 'sleepers are difficult to arouse and muscle tone is absent.'<sup>76</sup> In other words,

<sup>73</sup> Idem, 'Language, Language Disturbances, and the Texture of Consciousness', op. cit., p. 270.

<sup>74</sup> Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., pp. 537-538.

<sup>75</sup> Mark F. Bear, Barry W. Connors, and Michael A. Paradiso. *Neuroscience: Exploring the Brain*. Philadelphia, PA: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, 2007, pp. 598-607.

<sup>76</sup> Roger A. Barker, Stephen Barasi, and Michael J. Neal. *Neuroscience at a Glance*. 2nd. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2003, p. 96.

the lowest bodily involvement with the outside world must not be equated with the lowest tension of consciousness. Some experiences in EDL may show indeed the highest degree of attention to life, but dreaming may not necessarily take place in the lowest degree of the tension of consciousness, as Schutz believed.

We have noted that one of the criteria employed by Schutz in his typology of action refers to where the act of reflection takes place by respect to the act under scrutiny: *before* (in the form of project) or *after* (in the form of recollection), and this accounts for the temporal condition of the flow of both consciousness and behaviour. Schutz discusses this question in the section 'The time-perspectives of the "ego agens" and their unification.'<sup>77</sup>

## 2.6 Time-Perspective

Schutz makes yet another distinction in the concept of action (and, one can assume, in the more general class 'behaviour,' too), namely between 'action in progress' (*actio*) and 'action as performed act' (*actum*),<sup>78</sup> a distinction that can also be found in *Der sinnhafte Aufbau*.<sup>79</sup> This leads him to three basic modes of experience or modes of givenness of the acts of spontaneity into consciousness: *modo presenti*, *modo praeterito*, and *modo futuri exacti*.<sup>80</sup> Linguistic terminology helps Schutz to see action in terms of speech categories – in this case, to see actions *before*, *after*, or *as* they take place – just as we can talk about verbs using three main tenses: Future Perfect Tense, Past Tense, and Present Tense.<sup>81</sup>

Let us take the act of *cooking* as an example, which Schutz also used in his discussion of the rationality of the social world on a different occasion.<sup>82</sup> Cooking is a typical case of *working*, because it follows Schutz's definition: it is an overt conduct that was carried through according to a project. More precisely:

<sup>77</sup> Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., pp. 538-542.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 538.

<sup>79</sup> See Schutz, *The Phenomenology of the Social World*, op. cit., p. 39.

<sup>80</sup> Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., p. 539.

<sup>81</sup> In 7 (p. 175), we will investigate an extended use of linguistic concepts to the analysis of social action.

<sup>82</sup> Schutz, 'Don Quixote and the Problem of Reality', op. cit., p. 73.

- it is an act that needs thinking (it is unlikely one can imagine unconscious acts of cooking), which means that it is indeed a conduct, not a mere actual experience;
- it is oriented towards the outside world, as it consists of transforming and combining a set of objects of the outside world that we call 'ingredients' into a different object that we call 'meal';
- it is normally based upon a project – either a recipe or just a set of ideas – which makes it an overt action;
- and, finally, it is a case of working presuming that eventually I have prepared the meal indeed, not just simulated the process in a TV show.

One should add that cooking can be a social action too, should it be oriented towards another's subjective meaning (such as cooking *for* someone else). When I plan the meal that I intend to cook, I have an experience in *modo futuri exacti*. If I cook, and reflect upon this *actio* as I perform it, I experience cooking in *modo presenti*. If, at the end of the job, I evaluate the quality of the product of my working, the time and energy I spent, and how close my meal is to my initial project, then I experience cooking as *actum in modo praeterito*.

Let us make two comments at this point. First, these acts of reflection must not be mistaken for scientific reflection, which can take as object the acts of reflection of the cook or the act of cooking itself (and this is precisely what we are doing right now in this sociological-theoretical approach). These three modes of experience mentioned by Schutz refer to experience within the realm of the natural attitude, not the scientific attitude or the phenomenological attitude. Second, it is obvious that we often perform our actions in everyday life without reflecting upon them in all of these three modes of experience. Acts to which we attach no subjective meaning initially (that is, acts that we perform subconsciously) may be integrated with our meaningful stories afterwards after meditating or discussing them with others. Schutz does not seem to be interested in experiences void of subjective meaning, but one might find useful a typology of those 'actual experiences' and their more complex modes of experience.

In *modo praeterito*, the self has the awareness of 'an undivided total self,'<sup>83</sup> the source of its own actions experienced in *vivid present*. This vivid present is, as Schutz explains it, a single temporal flux experienced as the intersection between different temporal references: the inner time – called *durée* since Bergson – and the outer world's 'objective or cosmic time.'<sup>84</sup>

Schutz acknowledges thus a certain psychological relativity of temporal experience. One can assume that different people have different senses of the inner *durée*, yet we live in this world among our fellow people, we communicate, and we are involved together in a complex network of relationships. Schutz says that intersubjective experience is possible because of this posited cosmic objective time.

Phenomenologically, the problem is a conundrum. If these analyses are performed on people's experiences in the natural attitude, must we conclude that both *durée* and cosmic time are *given* and, thus, are correlates of the consciousness before any *epochè*? How can one posit a cosmic, subject-independent temporality as long as one cannot, on phenomenological grounds, speak of a consciousness-independent world? Is cosmic time the intersection of a presumably intersubjective temporality? First, this is not what Schutz suggests; second, 'intersection' is itself but a metaphor that doesn't explain much: is it the correlative of some mathematical type of mean, such as the geometric mean or the arithmetic mean?

Let us pay closer attention to the meaning of the 'natural attitude' and the way time is experienced in it. The natural attitude refers to that set of experiences where we ask ourselves neither metaphysical nor scientific questions about the nature of time. Metaphysical or scientific questions belong in the philosophical or scientific standpoints. The discourse of the natural standpoint contains utterances of such type as 'we met at two o'clock,' 'I am going to leave in five minutes,' 'boil the eggs for seven minutes,' 'my graduation happened nine years ago,' and so on. All these examples are references to an objectively measurable time: the cosmic time posited by Schutz. Inner *durée* is less likely to be *given* in the natural

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<sup>83</sup> Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., p. 540.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 540.

attitude, besides non-measurable, metaphorical expressions as ‘it took me ages to figure out the solution’ or ‘my holiday went by in a flash;’ most often, inner *durée* is present in discourses that are produced outside the natural attitude, such as philosophy, psychology, or sociology.

My understanding is that Schutz has mixed here two different standpoints. The universal time is indeed experienced in the natural attitude, because it is *given* together with the objectivity of the world in general. It is given just like any object – in a context and with certain qualities –, and this givenness occurs in subjectivity. To reconstruct the flow of inner *durée* by adding up the bits and pieces of our subjective temporality is an enterprise that requires a different attitude, say the scientific or the phenomenological attitude.

In our contemporary world, an adult and healthy subject is proficient in managing and interpreting time – the objective, unquestioned temporality – no matter their cultural or educational background. But they might have problems in understanding, expressing, and making use of their inner, subjective forms of time simply because the latter is not given in natural attitude but comes as a ‘secondary product’ of the question, *is time really the same for us all?*

Another clue to understanding the problem of inner temporality comes from other papers of Schutz where he focused on the experience of music. Polyphonic music, he says, ‘has the magic power of realizing by its specific musical means the possibility of living in two or more fluxes of events.’<sup>85</sup> This suggests that our inner temporality is not made of a single *durée*, but is rather pluridimensional: a braiding of several time-threads, some of which are thematic while others are non-thematic.<sup>86</sup>

Schutz performs another distinction between *revocable* and *irrevocable* actions. Working, which means operating upon our world’s objects, is always irrevocable, even though we have sometimes the possibility to restore the initial configuration of the objects. Mental actions (‘covert conduct’) are revocable, says Schutz, and

<sup>85</sup> Schutz, ‘Making Music Together: A Study in Social Relationship’, op. cit., p. 173.

<sup>86</sup> For an extensive treatment of the problems of polychronicity and human multitasking, see Allen C. Bluedorn. *The Human Organization of Time: Temporal Realities and Experience*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002.



this is debatable, of course. Schutz mentions the example of solving a mathematical problem mentally, an act that changes nothing in the outside world and leaves no trace, which means that the action was of the revocable type. But this reasoning is not consistent with Husserl and, indeed, with Schutz's own definition of covert conduct. One can still talk about intentionality in the case of mental objects, as is the case of (ideal) mathematical objects or other abstract concepts. After correctly solving a mathematical problem, I can *imagine* that I have not actually solved it and return to the initial point when I was seeking a solution. But this is not a revocation of the state of affairs, as I am in fact just *pretending* to not know the solution and a new attempt at finding the solution would not be genuine. If, later, I really forgot the correct solution, that might indeed mean a revoking of the situation. One could also argue that my solving the problem would not alter anything in the structure of the ideal object whose reality appears to me as independent of my subjectivity.

Let us imagine a similar example of covert conduct. I am planning to write a science fiction story, and I need to imagine an alien race that inhabits a distant planet. Let us assume I spend a while building a mental portrait of that race and imagining a few characters of that race to whom I give names and a context where they communicate and interact. Then, at this point, I tell myself that I want to *revoke* this covert conduct that I have just performed in my imagination. Obviously, I can repeat the process and imagine a different version of my alien race. But I should find it impossible to revoke my first version, because that would require some self-imposed amnesia, which is basically impossible: the more I try not to think of it, the more it will tend to pop up into my mind. I am not claiming here that Schutz is definitely wrong about the revocable character of the covert conduct, I am just arguing that the question would need closer inspection if one wanted to have a more secure answer and that answer might depend on the metaphors one used to describe and analyse the mental conduct.

There is, however, a correlate of this problem which may be important for the general structure of the finite provinces of meaning: the question of *responsibility*.

'I am responsible for my deeds but not for my thoughts,'<sup>87</sup> Schutz reminds us,<sup>88</sup> saying that the irrevocable character of working should be the reason why it is so.

We may not be responsible for our thoughts, but we are responsible for our words. If I tell someone that the key to my flat is under a certain flower pot and later I regret having said that, I can definitely not undo this action, and I cannot erase their memory of the location of my key. A technical convention is needed here on the revocability of actions or the undoable character of actions in certain FPMs.

In a different, very short paper on the question of responsibility, Schutz thought it important to distinguish between 'being responsible for' and 'being responsible to:' we are responsible *to* other people *for* our deeds.<sup>89</sup> Obviously, the concepts of responsibility and potestativity deserve a more important place in the description of EDL and FPMs. Every province comes with its own structure of responsibility, authorship, and recognition of authorship. Reading a horror novel or watching a thriller movie may compel someone to identify with the aggressor and experience by empathy some of the feelings of a violent act's author. Yet, there is no responsibility attached to this act as long as it is not performed in the province of EDL or with consequences in EDL. All the more so in the case of computer games, such as World Of Warcraft, where the 'sense of reality' and degree of immersion<sup>90</sup> can be even higher given the higher actional freedom of these worlds. Responsibility may or may not be based on reversibility, but it is certainly based on *authorship* and *recognition of authorship*.

<sup>87</sup> Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., p. 541.

<sup>88</sup> In a letter to Voegelin, Schutz admitted that this sentence was exaggerated and regretted having written it, as it was 'the failed result' of his 'aspiration to make more vivid the difficult correlation between the irrevocability of working and the revocability of thinking.' (Alfred Schutz. 'Letters of Schutz to Eric Voegelin'. In: *Collected Papers V: Phenomenology and the Social Sciences*. Ed. by Lester Embree. Phaenomenologica. Dordrecht/ Heidelberg/ London/ New York: Springer, 2011, p. 218)

<sup>89</sup> Alfred Schutz. 'Some Equivocations in the Notion of Responsibility'. In: *Collected Papers II: Studies in Social Theory*. Ed. by Arvid Brodersen. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964, p. 274.

<sup>90</sup> Contemporary psychologists use, in this sense, the term 'presence' (Lee, 'Presence, Explicated', op. cit., p. 37).

## 2.7 Social structure

In his discussion of the social structure in everyday life, Schutz is not interested in such typological distinctions of the concept of action as collaborative vs. conflicting, friendly vs. unfriendly, dominating vs. submissive, constructive vs. destructive, etc. Most of his examples are of collaborative actions and interactions, just as his typology of action leaves out deliberately the forms of coerced action or violence. This may be a symptom of Schutz's personal need for stability, order, and peace, given his own life experience of war, insecurity, and dishonest attitudes in a society that was highly segregated and dominated by excess of power and violence. However, for an effective FPM sociology that takes into account cross-provincial transferences of meaning, it is important to have a more operational system of distinctions of the concept of social action.

Schutz talks about our sense of distance in space and time that regulates our experience of objects and people, and this must be corroborated with the sense of distance in otherness, *i.e.*, degrees of familiarity/anonymity;<sup>91</sup> we will see<sup>92</sup> that these dimensions of the social world – space, time, and sociality – are not 'independent,' but display several symmetries in their internal structure. The objects and the *others* that populate my world can be classified according to their position in time and space and their degrees of familiarity, and Schutz speaks of 'spatial, temporal, and social distance.'<sup>93</sup>

Deployed in space and time, the world of daily life has its own organisation and orderly structure, which is structured on its own 'coordination system.' The centre of coordinates is always the ego's position in space and time, and is marked by corporeality as the point of *hic et nunc*:

The place which my body occupies within the world, my actual Here, is the starting point from which I take my bearing in space, it is, so to speak, the center *O* of my system of coordinates. Relatively to my

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<sup>91</sup> See Schutz and Luckmann, *The Structures of the Life-World*, op. cit., pp. 79-87.

<sup>92</sup> See 4.4 (p. 123).

<sup>93</sup> Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., p. 549.

body I group the elements of my surroundings under the categories of right and left, before and behind, above and below, near and far, and so on. And in a similar way my actual Now is the origin of all the time perspectives under which I organize the events within the world such as the categories of fore and aft, past and future, simultaneity and succession, etc.<sup>94</sup>

The world of everyday life is organised as an I-centred, ambidextrous universe whose objects are located at left or right, in front or behind, of my body, while events are identified temporally by reference to my actual *now*. Around this centre of coordinates, the world is organised in *strata* of reality: closest to the origin is the 'manipulatory area,'<sup>95</sup> which is the 'kernel' of the self's reality system. Schutz also defines 'the world within reach,' which comprises the manipulatory area plus the objects entering the immediate sensory field and the field open to 'potential working.' There are several areas 'around' the kernel of the ego's working world: the world within *potential* reach (as opposed to the world within *actual* reach) and the world within *restorable* reach. The latter refers to Husserl's idealisations of the 'and so on' and the 'I can do it again.'

The various areas of the world are of unequal importance to us, says Schutz. Because of our 'eminently practical interest in it,'<sup>96</sup> the world's strata and zones can be more or less *relevant*<sup>97</sup> to our interests in life. Some of Schutz's ideas related to social structure, notably his conception of 'strata of reality,' can be found in earlier texts of Schutz, such as *Der sinnhafte Aufbau*. However, in this book, Schutz referred to the 'many social realms'<sup>98</sup> not as finite provinces of meaning, but as historically-delimited realms of sociality: the worlds of contemporaries, predecessors, and successors.<sup>99</sup> In his texts on the multiple reality, Schutz does

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 545.

<sup>95</sup> The origin of this concept is, as Helmut Wagner writes, the 'manipulatory sphere' of the American psychologist George Herbert Mead, who, 'next to William James, was potentially the most important American thinker for Schutz' (Wagner, *Alfred Schutz: An Intellectual Biography*, op. cit., p. 73).

<sup>96</sup> Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., p. 549.

<sup>97</sup> See idem, *Reflections on the Problem of Relevance*, op. cit.

<sup>98</sup> Schutz, *The Phenomenology of the Social World*, op. cit., p. 142.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid., p. 143.

not try to exploit these concepts and to integrate them in his FPM theory, even though the section 'The Past as a Dimension of the Social World' suggests that history could be treated as a finite province of meaning.<sup>100</sup>

## 2.8 The fundamental anxiety

Shaped by our previous histories and meaning sedimentations, as well as our expectations of the future, the system of relevances guides our actions in the natural attitude and structures the dimensions of the world – space, time, and sociality – into layers of different importance. According to Schutz, the whole system of relevances is based upon a single, 'fundamental anxiety,' which is linked to our condition as biological beings existing in our everyday life-world:

I know that I shall die and I fear to die. This basic experience we suggest calling the *fundamental anxiety*. It is the primordial anticipation from which all the others originate. From the fundamental anxiety spring the many interrelated systems of hopes and fears, of wants and satisfactions, of chances and risks which incite man in the natural attitude to attempt the mastery of the world, to overcome obstacles, to draft projects, and to realize them.<sup>101</sup>

Many people may live with the feeling of this fundamental anxiety floating more or less consciously over their lives. However, Schutz may have stepped into a hasty generalisation here. Should his overemphasis of the fear-to-die be linked with his own experiences of war and the constant menace of death, it is difficult to know, but it is certainly unsafe to assume that everyday life's projects, fears, hopes, and motivations emanate fundamentally from an anxiety of our finitude in this world. In fact, it is rather puzzling that most of us are able to be happy and to take pleasure in carrying out our projects and dreams *in spite of* the fact

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<sup>100</sup> It was Schutz's student Maurice Natanson who later assumed this task (Natanson, 'History as a Finite Province of Meaning', op. cit.).

<sup>101</sup> Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., p. 550.

that we know that all this is going to end one day. According to Freud, our unconsciousness is unable to conceive death in spite of the fact that we know about it rationally. This is also an *epochè*, namely the *epochè* of the knowledge of our finitude in time (as in space<sup>102</sup>), which manifests itself as an unclear feeling towards death: we know that we will die one day, yet we don't think of death obsessively, but allow ourselves to be happy and pursue our plans. To use a Freudian word, we have an ambivalent attitude towards our own death:

We showed an unmistakable tendency to put death on one side, to eliminate it from life. We tried to hush it up; indeed we even have a saying [in German]: 'to think of something as though it were death'. That is, as though it were our own death, of course. It is indeed impossible to imagine our own death; and whenever we attempt to do so we can perceive that we are in fact still present as spectators. Hence the psycho-analytic school could venture on the assertion that at bottom no one believes in his own death, or, to put the same thing in another way, that in the unconscious every one of us is convinced of his own immortality.<sup>103</sup>

Death anxiety tends to be lower in people who have a strong sense of religion,<sup>104</sup> because most religions conceive death not as a terminus point of human existence but a passage to a different realm. For a person who faces an imminent death, such as an AIDS patient in the final stage of their disease or a death-row convict, the known or estimated number of weeks and days left to them on this earth is experienced as an inescapably approaching frontier, and no project, motivation, hope, or fear can exist for them independently of this end-point. Such

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<sup>102</sup>See 4.4 (p 128).

<sup>103</sup>Sigmund Freud. 'Thoughts for the Times on War and Death'. In: *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Ed. by James Strachey; Anna Freud; Carrie Lee Rothgeb. Vol. 14. London: Hogarth Press, 1974 (1915), p. 289.

<sup>104</sup>Kittikorn Nilmanat and Annette F. Street. 'Karmic Quest: Thai Family Caregivers Promoting a Peaceful Death for People with AIDS'. in: *Contemporary Nurse: a Journal for the Australian Nursing Profession* 27.1 (2007), pp. 94–103; K. Suhail and S. Akram. 'Correlates of Death Anxiety in Pakistan'. In: *Death Studies* 26 (2002), pp. 39–50; R. Clements. 'Intrinsic Religious Motivations and Attitudes Toward Death Among the Elderly'. In: *Current Psychology* 17 (1998), pp. 237–248.

situations are rather exceptional, and fall outside the conditions of the presumed 'healthy adult individual' of the natural attitude. Schutz's 'fundamental anxiety' may be present with varying degrees in people suffering from chronic diseases or the elderly, but one can note the striking *absence* of it in most of us. We don't think of death when we enrol in a university programme, apply for a new job, start writing a book, or marry the one we love.

Natural attitude is governed, I would rather suggest, by a *suspension* of the fundamental anxiety similar to the *epochè* of the natural attitude.<sup>105</sup> Under 'normal' circumstances (*i.e.*, in times of peace, economic stability, and absence of health problems), the ego places between brackets the finitude of the amount of time available and acts as if the resource of time were infinite. Only when this attitude that one might call *the fundamental sense of freedom* is contradicted (*e.g.*, I have a serious accident, I begin fearing the end of the world, etc.), the fundamental anxiety might come into play as a shock that forces us to redraw our plans and motivations and questions our so-far valid system of relevances. Shortly, we don't think of death unless we have to.

We will develop further this idea in the section dedicated to the FPM *horizon*,<sup>106</sup> where we will see that other FPMs can have a tighter sense of temporal freedom (*e.g.*, I have paid for two hours of golf play, Internet café, or concert). For this reason I suggest that, in fact, every time the fundamental sense of freedom is broken, we have to deal with a different FPM and not with EDL.

This does not contradict the existence of a *Thanatos instinct*, a certain inclination towards death manifested with abundance in literature, films, wars, and acts of violence in general, that is, in various FPMs except the world of working.

## 2.9 A paradoxical *epochè*

One of the most important features of everyday life is what Schutz calls the '*epochè* of the natural attitude.' This concept is somewhat paradoxically defined, as it

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<sup>105</sup> See next section and 4.3 (p. 119).

<sup>106</sup> See 4.4 (p. 128).

is supposed to point exactly to the opposite meaning of the phenomenological *epochè* used by Husserl as a methodological device inspired from the Cartesian *doubt*. The Husserlian *epochè* refers to a mental act in which the philosopher temporarily holds within brackets any belief in the reality of the world. Once one has performed this bracketing, one is no longer in the 'natural attitude' but in the 'phenomenological attitude.' This bracketing is executed voluntarily, methodologically, and temporarily and is meant to allow one to perform their philosophical investigations; once the *epochè* is lifted, one steps back into the 'natural attitude' of everyday life.

Schutz seems to find it interesting that we normally *do not* suspend the belief that the world really is as we see it and that it will continue to be so tomorrow. He suggests that life in the natural attitude is governed by its specific form of *epochè*, namely the suspension of *doubt* in its existence:

It is characteristic of the natural attitude that it takes the world and its objects for granted until counterproof imposes itself.<sup>107</sup>

Husserl considered that not only EDL but all activities – including scientific endeavours – are governed by the natural attitude. Schutz's option, as we saw it, was to view *attitude* differently. The attitude of the scientist may not be the same as the attitude of the phenomenologist, but it could not be equated with the attitude of 'the man on the street' either. Consequently, one can talk of a 'scientific attitude,' which should be neither 'natural' nor 'phenomenological.' In fact, there may be as many standpoints as types of finite provinces of meaning, and we could think of the suspension of doubt in the existence of elves and trolls when we read a book by J. R. R. Tolkien, the suspension of doubt in the value of play-money when we are in the world of Monopoly, or the suspension of doubt in the existence of money when we perform an on-line transaction even though we know that no material money is involved but electric signals across computer networks, and so on.

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<sup>107</sup> Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', *op. cit.*, p. 550.



In a letter to Eric Voegelin discussing 'On Multiple Realities,' Schutz admitted that he had learned a lot on the topic of the essay from his little kids:

When my Evi was 5 years old, she answered my question what she wanted for her birthday with the remark: 'An elephant – but a real one.' To my objection that a real elephant could not pass through the door of her nursery she replied: 'I *didn't* mean *such an elephant* – only a "play-real" one. Obviously she had in mind a practicable, three-dimensional toy elephant in opposition to the menagerie of her clipped cardboard elephants which could be brought in a standing position by little wood supports. Similarly [my] boy at the same age differentiated between 'real' and 'non-real' toy cars, whereas the accent of reality was bestowed upon the ones which were driven by clock-work or could be steered in any way.<sup>108</sup>

The story of little Evelyn's elephant suggests that, in their plays, children perceive toys with different accents of reality, which are not only a matter of personal choice – of pretending that such objects were real – but of *mimesis*, too, as if a lower similarity between toy and real object would require a greater imagination effort from the part of the child to fuelling a higher accent of reality. A two-dimensional cardboard elephant is 'less real' than a three-dimensional toy elephant, and, for this reason, the self finds it more difficult to bracket its irreality when the playworld's specific *epochè* is being performed.

## 2.10 The paramount reality

We saw that Schutz's approach is to describe EDL as a finite province of meaning before delineating the basic features of finite provinces of meaning in general. Such an approach is legitimate under the assumption that any FPM is a 'modification' of EDL, and that EDL is an archetype of all other sub-universes. The word 'modification' bears a certain epistemological ambiguity, but my understanding

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<sup>108</sup> Schutz, 'Letters of Schutz to Eric Voegelin', op. cit., p. 217.

is that EDL must be seen as a *complete* province, and that, by eliminating or altering a number of its features and structural properties, one can 'generate' a different FPM.

EDL enjoys a peculiar place among provinces in two ways. First, because it is 'the paramount reality'<sup>109</sup> that stands above all others in the sense that I always return to it as if I came back home from a trip.<sup>110</sup> As such, one can notice that EDL (or another FPM) can provide the ego with a sense of security, while different FPMs may come with a sense of insecurity. The second characteristic that gives EDL its special position is its 'archetype' or 'matrix' character by respect to the other FPMs. One could say that the first argument points to the *syntagmatic* type of experience of the multiple reality, whereas the second has to do with the *paradigmatic* type of experience.<sup>111</sup>

In 'On Multiple Realities,' Schutz does not give a clear reason why it is the EDL and not another FPM the province that enjoys this peculiar place in the constitution of reality, but he does give a list of four reasons in 'Symbol, Reality, and Society.'<sup>112</sup> All of them are highly debatable. Schutz's first argument is that 'we always participate in EDL, even in our dreams, by means of our bodies, which are themselves things in the outer world.' At first sight, this reason seems strong, given that human existence cannot be conceived outside embodiment. However, this argument may be affected by a fallacy that, as we will see, dominates Schutz's analysis of the world of dreams, namely the assumption that dreaming is fundamentally solitary given that we don't use our bodies to gear into the outside world when we sleep.<sup>113</sup> Schutz's second argument refers to the resistance that the objects of the outer world manifest when we act upon them, limiting thus our freedom, while his third argument is that everyday life 'is that realm into which we can gear by our bodily activities and, hence, which we can change or

<sup>109</sup>The concept has its origin in William James's 'paramount reality of sensations' (see James, *Principles of Psychology*, op. cit., p. 300).

<sup>110</sup>Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., p. 549.

<sup>111</sup>See our discussion of these concepts in 7.2 (p. 181).

<sup>112</sup>Schutz, 'Symbol, Reality, and Society', op. cit., p. 342.

<sup>113</sup>See 3.4 (p. 98).

transform.’ This pair of arguments is also problematic, because both our actional freedom and the limitations thereof manifest themselves in many finite provinces of meaning, not only in everyday life. Let us mention only the FPM of children’s play, where objects show specific resistance and offer a specific freedom of action, even though these specificities may not be the same as in EDL. Schutz’s fourth argument is ‘a corollary to the preceding points,’ and states that ‘within this realm, and only within this realm, we can communicate with our fellow-men and thus establish a “common comprehensive environment” in the sense of Husserl.’ Again, it is rather puzzling why one should consider communication as being possible only in everyday life. Schutz admits that there are finite provinces of meaning that permit socialisation, ‘intersubjective participation,’ and ‘shared phantasms,’ but he claims that communication always involves objects or events from everyday life. However, his argument seems fallacious again, because there can be no doubt that there is otherness and there is communication with others in multiplayer computer games, in web chats, in religious rituals, in children’s play, or in the world of science. Things turn even more complicated when one takes into consideration the fact that communication acts are fundamentally symbolic and thus transcend everyday life.

The problem requires further investigation, and one should seek better arguments supporting the idea that EDL must be the paramount reality. I will mention here only two, which may not be infallible either. First, everyday life has the highest ‘accent of reality,’ and it is only there that our sensuous experience is truly complete and remains, most of the time, uncontradicted. Second, we step into finite provinces of meaning mostly *from* everyday life and rarely from another province, which makes EDL a sort of homebase of our experiences. It is true that we can be immersed in the fictional world of a novel and step directly into the world of dreams by falling asleep or we can step out of the church directly into the world of street theatre. However, most of the time, we have the world of daily life as ‘central station’ in the complex trajectories of our multiple reality journeys. If one mapped a person’s FPM passages of a whole day, one would draw a network of provinces where EDL would score, most likely, the highest

centrality index in the sense of used in social network analysis.<sup>114</sup> Of course, such an empirical study has to be done before one can have a certainty on this matter.

Debatable as it is, the special position of EDL has an important theoretical consequence: the fact that all other realities derive from it constitutionally and genealogically according to their morphological interrelatedness. Theatre preceded film historically, and the techniques of film directing and acting were largely based on the previous experiences in drama, so one may assume that the general FPM of film is a 'modification' of the FPM of theatre,<sup>115</sup> as Anne Friedberg suggested it.<sup>116</sup>

This archetype provides Schutz with a general FPM template, and it is the second of the five parts of his study where he presents this model in a condensed manner. He then uses this theoretical model in parts III, IV, and V for the analysis of several particular types of FPMs: the worlds of 'phantasms,' dreams, and theoretical contemplation.

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<sup>114</sup>See, for example, John Scott. *Social Network Analysis: A Handbook*. London/ Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 2000.

<sup>115</sup>Relationships between these two provinces are, of course, more complex, because contemporary forms of theatre, too, make use heavily of techniques that were invented by film-makers, such as flash-back, transition, *montage*, etc.

<sup>116</sup>Anne Friedberg. 'Urban Mobility and Cinematic Visuality: The Screens of Los Angeles - Endless Cinema or Private Telematics'. In: *Journal of Visual Culture* 1 (2002), pp. 189-190.



# Chapter 3

## The Schutzian FPM model

*Am I sleeping now? Tomorrow, when I wake,  
or think I do, what shall I say of today?*  
(Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*)

### 3.1 Finite provinces of meaning

In part II of 'On Multiple Realities,' which is called 'The many realities and their constitution,'<sup>1</sup> Schutz outlines his general formula of the concept of finite province of meaning. He does not give a strict definition by genus and specific difference, but renames William James's concept of 'sub-universe' as 'finite province of meaning,' turns it into an operational concept for sociology, explains his lexical choice, and mentions several examples: 'the world of dreams, of imageries and phantasms, especially the world of art, the world of religious experience, the world of scientific contemplation, the play world of the child, and the world of the insane.'<sup>2</sup>

Schutz doesn't justify his preference for the word 'province' over the Jamesian 'sub-universe.' This geographical metaphor might be more adequate than an astronomical metaphor to portraying the human experience of multiple reality, as

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<sup>1</sup> Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., pp. 551-555.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 553.

it regards it as a journey through the various regions of a country. It is very likely that Schutz's choice, and even his conception of EDL as constitutional matrix for any other FPM, may have its origin in a certain text of Goethe. As we saw it in Chapter 1, Schutz was familiar with the German author's writings since his childhood, and one of Goethe's texts – *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship and Journeyman Years* – was especially important to his conception of the multiple reality.<sup>3</sup> In this novel, Wilhelm visits the 'Pedagogical Province' or the 'Pedagogic Utopia,' which comprises several districts where children are taught the specific knowledge and skills related to specific subjects, such as languages, music, or poetry:

In the conviction that only one thing can be carried on, taught and communicated with full advantages, several such points of active instruction have been, as it were, sown over a large tract of country. At each of these places thou wilt find a little world, but so complete within its limitation, that it may represent and model any other of these worlds, nay the great busy world itself.<sup>4</sup>

Arguably, one may see these 'little worlds' of Goethe's 'Pedagogical Province,' which are 'limited,' 'complete,' and structurally similar – as prefigurations of the Schutzian finite provinces of meaning not only in the sense of pure lexical source, but also as theoretical root-model.

Let us return now to the definition of the FPM concept in 'On Multiple Realities.' Schutz explains that the word 'meaning' needs to be included in the name of the concept, because reality is constituted not by the ontological structure of its objects, but by our experience of them and by the meanings we attach to them.<sup>5</sup> Meaning is the stamp that validates the constitution of any object as real, and

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<sup>3</sup>Schutz, 'On Wilhelm Meister's Years of Travel', op. cit.

<sup>4</sup>Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship and Travels*. Ed. by Thomas Carlyle. Vol. II. London: Chapman and Hall, 1899 (1821), p. 226.

<sup>5</sup>Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., p. 551.

Schutz notes that William James's notion of reality as a quality<sup>6</sup> meets Husserl's,<sup>7</sup> to whom 'real unities' are 'unities of meaning.'

Also, the word 'finite' refers not to some finiteness or experiential scarcity of the provinces, but to their autonomy and irreducibility in the sense that 'there is no possibility of referring one of these provinces to the other by introducing a formula of transformation.'<sup>8</sup> It is unclear whether Schutz saw 'reduction' through a 'formula of transformation' as (a) a theoretical movement performed by the sociologist in analysing the structures of two different provinces or (b) the particular experience of a social actor who crosses the boundary from one province to another. Case (a) refers to treating a province as if it were a type of another, which requires, somewhat like the structuralist rules of transformations, that some or all of the characteristics of a province (*epochè, attention à la vie*, etc.) be the same in both types of provinces. Indeed, in 'The Problem of Personality,' Schutz sees psychoanalytic interpretation as 'the transformation formula of the dream-world and the waking-world.'<sup>9</sup> Case (b) refers to the impossibility of coherent, smooth transitions between two provinces. For instance, should such a reduction or transition be possible, one's stepping from everyday life into the world of theatre would require the elements of daily life to be translatable into corresponding elements of the world of theatre. One's friends should find their precise counterparts in particular characters from the fictional world of drama and the places and moments of one's daily world should find their precise counterparts in the world of theatre. My understanding is that Schutz's intended meaning was case (b), because he explicitly referred in this context to the concept of cross-provincial 'shock' and also because case (a) would contradict Schutz's conception of the everyday life as 'archetype' of any province, which assumes a structural homology and thus the possibility of certain 'rules of transformation,' as we will see later.

To give a definition more or less in the Schutzian spirit, one can say that a fi-

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<sup>6</sup> Throughout his texts, Schutz uses the word 'reality' both as an adjective – a quality of objects and experiences that equates 'sense of reality,' 'character of reality,' or accent of reality – as well as a noun – to denote a specific world, sub-universe, or FPM.

<sup>7</sup> Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., p. 551.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp. 553-554.

<sup>9</sup> Schutz, 'The Problem of Personality in the Social World', op. cit., p. 231.



nite province of meaning is a section of our experientiable universe that receives a higher or a lower 'accent of reality' from the experiencing subject and is characterised by a number of properties that constitute the specific 'cognitive style' of that province. Schutz identifies<sup>10</sup> a number of six main properties that describe the general paradigm of a finite province of meaning: tension of consciousness, specific *epochè*, form of spontaneity, form of experiencing self, form of sociality, and specific time-perspective. To these add up the already-mentioned 'accent of reality' as well as the two conditions of possibility: consistency and compatibility.

Schutz emphasises that all these properties and conditions are valid only within the boundaries of a particular FPM, hence the 'finite' character. What is compatible with province *x* may not be compatible with province *y*. Conversely, if a person takes *x* to be real, *y* would appear to them as fictional and inconsistent, and vice versa. The truths of science are valid to the scientist, but may appear as fiction to religious people. By 'autonomous' provinces, Schutz does not mean perfectly sealed enclosures: sometimes we can live in two or more provinces at once (for instance, talking with other people in the room while watching a film) and sometimes FPMs manifest gliding or permeable frontiers.<sup>11</sup>

One may wonder whether this list of FPM properties is exhaustive. Schutz admits that the scope of his essay is very restrained, and suggests possible developments, such as the problems of 'enclaves' or provinces enclosed in other provinces or the question of a typology of the provinces,<sup>12</sup> so it is safe to assume that his list is rather a 'work in progress' and that other properties could be included therein. For instance, one might notice that Schutz does not include in his list a specific *code of interaction*, such as language variations, symbolic codes, courtesy rules, etc. The question is important in the thought of Schutz, who seems deeply concerned with the taken-for-granted stocks of knowledge that people employ in various situations and the place of symbols and communication in everyday life. While it is not included in 'On Multiple Realities,' the problem is

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<sup>10</sup> Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., p. 552.

<sup>11</sup> Schutz, 'Don Quixote and the Problem of Reality', op. cit., p. 148.

<sup>12</sup> Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., p. 554.

analysed in a subsequent paper<sup>13</sup> dedicated specifically to these questions. We will rework the Schutzian model into a more complex general structure later.<sup>14</sup>

## 3.2 Experiencing the multiple reality

### 3.2.1 Shocks

If a sociologist can describe the finite provinces of meaning paradigmatically, the way people experience them in their lives is fundamentally syntagmatic.<sup>15</sup> In the course of a single day, the self can ‘leap’ from one province to another passing each time through a specific ‘shock.’ The shock – a concept that has its origin in Kierkegaard’s ‘leap’<sup>16</sup> – marks the shift to a different tension of consciousness and a different *epochè*. Schutz says that a shock does not create a break in the flow of consciousness, because the ego preserves its continuity of identity across these passages. At the same time, he admits that our actual experience of FPMs is not purely linear, but sometimes can occur at several levels at once,<sup>17</sup> and that, ‘[w]ithin a single day, even within a single hour our consciousness may run through most different tensions and adopt most different attentional attitudes to life.’<sup>18</sup>

These shocks cut sharply into the stories that we experience in different FPMs, yet Schutz does not deal with the problem of the ‘lose ends’ thus created and the way meanings articulate as a result. Not only *attention à la vie* and *epochè* are altered in the shock of FPM-frontier crossing, but all the defining properties of the FPM, such as the forms of experiencing self and sociality.<sup>19</sup>

If some authors may use the concepts of everyday life and life-world interchangeably, it is clear that Schutz considers the former a subset of the latter and

<sup>13</sup> Schutz, ‘Symbol, Reality, and Society’, op. cit.

<sup>14</sup> See 4 (p. 109).

<sup>15</sup> See 7.2 (p. 181).

<sup>16</sup> Schutz, ‘On Multiple Realities’, op. cit., p. 553.

<sup>17</sup> This is an idea that Schutz will strengthen in his later book on *relevance*; see idem, *Reflections on the Problem of Relevance*, op. cit.

<sup>18</sup> Idem, ‘On Multiple Realities’, op. cit., p. 554.

<sup>19</sup> See 7 (p. 175).

that the totality of the finite provinces of meaning constitute the life-world.<sup>20</sup> In 'On Multiple Realities,' Schutz depicts the image of a compartmentalised life-world, somehow like the rooms of a building that the ego visits by crossing the doorsill from one chamber to another. In first approximation, rooms are experienced as distinct and autonomous, and the *shocks* of the crossing erases temporarily the experience of the previous province so that FPMs do not affect or contaminate each other. In this metaphor, everyday life is a 'home-base,' a main living room to which we always return from the journeys we have in other provinces.

In later manuscripts, Schutz argues that the autonomy of FPMs can be 'transcended' at the level of temporal, social, and symbolic structures.

In his 1936 manuscript and in his later draft on the theory of relevance, which remained unfinished and was discovered after his death, Schutz presents a more nuanced view of FPM experience, suggesting that 'there are innumerable intermediate strata' in a continuum of realities,<sup>21</sup> and that we often live at the same time in two or several provinces that we experience polythetically:

[T]hese various provinces or realms of reality are interconnected by the unity of my own mind, which may at any time extend or compress its tension by turning to and away from life—by changing, in Bergson's phrase, its attention to life (this term to be understood here as life within paramount reality). Closer inspection, however, shows that I, this psycho-physiological unity, live in several of these realms simultaneously.<sup>22</sup>

Schutz takes the example of writing a text, which is a complex action developed across many provinces, each one with its own temporal structure and tension. When we write, say, a sociological text, we are involved in both the world of working (by the act of writing words on paper) and theoretical contemplation.

The FPM model based on the 'home metaphor' needs thus a refined version: provinces are not only bound by fuzzy frontiers, but in fact are rarely experienced

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<sup>20</sup> See Schutz and Luckmann, *The Structures of the Life-World*, op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>21</sup> Schutz, 'The Problem of Personality in the Social World', op. cit., p. 233.

<sup>22</sup> Schutz, *Reflections on the Problem of Relevance*, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

independently. In the text on relevance, Schutz uses the words 'paramount' and 'home-base' to refer not necessarily to everyday life, but to the *currently thematic province*, as he distinguishes between *thematic* and *horizontal* provinces. At any moment of our experience, he says, we are involved in 'a set of heterogeneous activities, each taking place in its own appropriate medium.'<sup>23</sup> 'Paramount' here means just a temporary home-reality, while the important distinction is between thematic and horizontal activities. If several activities are performed at the same time, one of them will belong to the paramount reality, and all others will have a character of secondary, horizontal, 'ancillary,' or 'derived' reality.<sup>24</sup> In other words, the 'home metaphor' is valid only locally. If right now I find myself in a specific FPM, that province is thematic, which means that it bears temporarily the character of paramount reality. As I constantly switch between different provinces, some of them bear the character of derived realities and the actions thereof are performed in a more or less automated fashion, while others take in turn the place of paramount province keeping my current interest and holding the strongest accent of reality.

In my understanding, Schutz suggested that not any frontier crossing generates a 'shock,' only those that have to do with major frontiers. Small crossings occur quite often at unconscious levels, and Schutz explicitly calls into play Freud's psychoanalytic framework and Leibnitz's theory of 'small perceptions.'<sup>25</sup>

Schutz suggests in his later Goethe texts that autonomy can be violated at the level of social structure, too. The world of the novel is populated with specific characters, while the world of the reader's everyday life is populated with real people. However, these worlds are not socially isolated, as '[t]he building-up of a novel is massive intersubjective construction achieved by characters and readers and author all in relationship with each other and across time,'<sup>26</sup> to use Barber's interpretation.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., pp. 13-15.

<sup>26</sup> Michael Barber's Editorial Introduction to Alfred Schutz. *Collected Papers VI: Literary Reality and Relationships*. Ed. by Michael D. Barber. Phaenomenologica. Dordrecht: Springer, 2013, p. 2.

Moreover, Schutz is aware that the unconscious level of our personality can short-circuit our experience of these realities, and acknowledges the existence of unconscious and symbolic conditionals operating *across* FPMs. He doesn't approach the question of symbolic transcendences in 'On Multiple Realities,' but in a later paper, 'Symbol, Reality, and Society.'

### 3.2.2 Symbols and meaning transcendences

In 'Symbol, Reality, and Society,' Schutz uses, again, the theory of the multiple reality as a doorstep to a particular problem he needs to solve: this time, he wants to address the philosophical question of symbolisation. To our purpose, it is not essential to know 'how it happens that in ordinary language, as well as in philosophical discussion, so many heterogeneous ideas are clustered around a set of terms (sign, symbol, mark, indication, etc.) aimed at denoting the significative or symbolic reference,'<sup>27</sup> which is 'the ground of such state of affairs,' or which are the motives that lead people to use 'significative and symbolic relations,'<sup>28</sup> but to identify those findings of Schutz's investigation on the matter that are relevant to the general theory of the finite provinces of meaning.

The text, which counts 70 pages, is a gradual introduction to the wider problem of symbolisation by observing the theme through the lenses of Husserl's conception of appresentation, Bergson's theory of 'concurring orders,' the theory of 'the world within my reach' and 'the manipulatory sphere' based on Mead and Husserl, Schutz's own conception of intersubjective comprehension and communication, and, finally, his own theory of the multiple reality, which he uses as basis for his own definition of the symbol.

According to Schutz, a symbolic relationship is 'an appresentational relationship between entities belonging to at least two finite provinces of meaning while the appresenting symbol is an element of the paramount reality of everyday life.'<sup>29</sup> A symbol transcends the world of daily life, that is, it works as a gate or a *portal*

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<sup>27</sup> Schutz, 'Symbol, Reality, and Society', op. cit., p. 292.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 293.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 343.

from a province to another so that one of its members, the *signifiant*, is located in EDL whereas its other member, the *signifié*, is located in another FPM, such as the world of art, theatre, religion, science, or dream. Schutz realises that these transcendences can intersect several provinces given the high complexity of symbolic structures in art, religion, or dream, yet he assumes that the appresenting member (the *signifiant*) is *always* located in everyday life. In my understanding, this assumption is both ungrounded and unnecessary. One can find examples in which both the signified and the signifier are located in provinces other than the EDL. In a fictional world, a character can encounter and operate with symbols that transports them into the world of religion or another fictional world, which means that neither of the symbolisation terms is located in the everyday life of the reader.

Symbols can work not only as portals ensuring syntagmatic transitions between different finite provinces of meaning; symbolic systems can create paradigmatic relations between the structures of various worlds, too. Schutz doesn't seem aware of the distinction between the time-bound experience of FPMs and the provincial structure of the life-world – which one could express simply as syntagmatic life-world experiences vs. paradigmatic life-world structures<sup>30</sup> – yet he offers examples of both types without telling them apart. A picture is a symbolic device that opens up a passage to the finite province of meaning represented in it,<sup>31</sup> that is, it works as a syntagmatic device. A complex religious symbol system, such as the Chinese conception of *Yin* and *Yang* regulates the life of various realms of reality, such as everyday life, or the world of heavenly bodies,<sup>32</sup> and this structuration is, obviously, a relationship of paradigmatic nature.

The question of FPM transcendence also rises from the acts of meaning interpretations executed by the 'reader' of everyday life or fiction. In his 1948 Goethe manuscript,<sup>33</sup> Schutz refers to his theory of the finite province of meaning to explain several 'technical problems' found in the 1829 edition of *Wilhelm Meister's*

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<sup>30</sup> See 7.2 (p. 181).

<sup>31</sup> Schutz, 'Symbol, Reality, and Society', op. cit., p. 344.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp. 334-335.

<sup>33</sup> Idem, 'On Wilhelm Meister's Years of Travel', op. cit.

*Journeyman Years*, such as two characters appearing suddenly in the novel's main action, and to defend Goethe against his critics who saw the book as 'a hastily patched together work of an ageing poet.'<sup>34</sup> Actions and events in a fictional world cannot be interpreted through the lens of everyday life, because fictional FPMs are bound by their own conventions and follow the 'logic of the poetic event,' which contradict the logic and the rationality of EDL. But, as the reader understands and interprets the motives of the characters who live in their fictional world as well and, thus, sees meanings not necessarily visible to the characters themselves, isn't there a 'reader' who understands the motivations of our everyday lives and the 'plot' of our lives that we ourselves often fail to see? Barber says that '[l]iterature leaves us wondering whether the self is either as unified as it believes it or as in control of itself as the confident pursuit of its future goals might suggest,' and hence it affects and displaces the peculiar 'pragmatic features of everyday life: the unity of the acting self, its being the center of its world, and its power to bring within reach what was beyond it. These disconcerting dimensions include the passage of time, the instability of eros, unintended consequences, the availability of actions to re-interpretation by others, and the indeterminacy of motivation.'<sup>35</sup>

### 3.2.3 'Polyphonic' experience

The conception of the polythetic mode of FPM experience and the thematic-horizonal opposition problematises all the structural elements of the provinces including 'the form of experiencing self.' Can we experience several temporal flows simultaneously? Can we experience several impressions of space and distance at the same time? How does the self manage to be split across various activities, sometimes simultaneously, sometimes in sequential fragmentation, without losing its sense of unity and harmony?

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<sup>34</sup>Michael D. Barber. 'Literature and the Limits of Pragmatism. Alfred Schutz's Goethe Manuscripts'. In: *Schutzian Hermeneutic and Hermeneutic Traditions*. Ed. by Michael Staudigl and George Berguno. Dordrecht/ Heidelberg/ London/ New York: Springer, 2014, p. 225.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., pp. 233-4.

Schutz had a deep fascination since childhood<sup>36</sup> for the way the various musical instruments can collaborate in an orchestra to producing a flow of different melodies that appears coherent and harmonious to the audience. For an artist, playing in an orchestra requires different skills and efforts compared to playing solo, because one has to be able to bracket one's own voice and to be able to listen to the other instruments and synchronise with them and still keep on playing at the same time. An orchestra or a choir is a good model for any type of collaborative action that takes place in society – from group hunting to modern corporate work – where various persons take each other into account and adjust their behaviour according to the behaviour of others, as Schutz puts it in his paper 'Making music together:' 'the pluridimensionality of time simultaneously lived through by man and fellow-man, occurs in the relationship between two or more individuals making music together...'<sup>37</sup> In Weberian terms, the question is that of understanding the structure of the 'dialogue' of social actions that occurs in collective music-making, wrestling, chess playing, etc., that is, the 'vocabulary,' the 'syntax,' and the interaction code that 'enables either of the participants to anticipate the other's behaviour and to orient his own behaviour by means of such anticipation'<sup>38</sup> and to develop their 'mutual tuning-in relationship.'<sup>39</sup>

This interplay of meaningful, other-oriented actions that unfolds like the different melodic lines of musical instruments in an orchestra take place not only in outer world, but in inner world, too. Polyphony and musical counterpoint provides Schutz not only with a metaphor of intersubjectivity, but with a metaphor of the self, too:

It is the 'counterpointal structure' of our personality and therewith of our stream of consciousness which is the corolary of what has been called in other connections the schizophrenic hypothesis of the ego–

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<sup>36</sup> Schutz played piano, and wanted to become an orchestra conductor, but had to give up his dream because of a medical condition (cf. Wagner, *Alfred Schutz: An Intellectual Biography*, op. cit., p. 8).

<sup>37</sup> Schutz, 'Making Music Together: A Study in Social Relationship', op. cit., p. 175.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p. 160.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 161.



namely the fact that in order to make something thematic and another thing horizontal we have to assume an artificial split of the unity of our personality.<sup>40</sup>

In his 1936 manuscript,<sup>41</sup> Schutz plays with the picture of electrons revolving around the atomic nucleus to describe 'the multiplicity of the social persons' that orbit around the intimate 'nucleus of the self.' In the same text, Schutz mentions a feature of our life-world experience that he drops in his subsequent papers: *rhythm*. The permanent succession of passages from everyday life to other provinces and back, but also the problem of our intersubjective synchronisation in such collective acts as 'dancing together,' 'making music together,' or 'soldiers marching together'<sup>42</sup> makes it relevant to include rhythm as an important feature of FPM experience.

Schutz's back-and-forth revisions and text reworkings highlights the character of work-in-progress of his theory of the multiple reality, which he clearly sees as an open field, suggesting paths for further investigation, such as a possible typology of the FPMs:

It would be an interesting task to try a systematic grouping of these finite provinces of meaning according to their constitutive principle, the diminishing tension of our consciousness founded in a turning away of our attention from everyday life.<sup>43</sup>

Schutz does not forget to insist that he drew the FPM theory not for the sake of the theory itself, but for a different epistemological purpose:

We have to deny ourselves embarking here upon the drafting of a thorough typology of the many realities according to the principles just outlined. We are especially interested in the relations between the

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<sup>40</sup> Schutz, *Reflections on the Problem of Relevance*, op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>41</sup> Schutz, 'The Problem of Personality in the Social World', op. cit., p. 210.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., p. 214.

<sup>43</sup> Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., p. 554.

provinces of the world of daily life and the worlds of the sciences, especially of the social sciences and their reality.<sup>44</sup>

Before proceeding to an FPM analysis of the world of scientific theory in his core text, Schutz takes two other examples: the world of 'phantasms' and the world of dreams.

### 3.3 Fictional worlds

Part III of the study<sup>45</sup> is dedicated to an analysis of what Schutz calls the various worlds of 'phantasms' or 'fantasy worlds,'<sup>46</sup> which he sees as 'what is commonly known as that of fancies or imageries and embraces among many others the realms of day-dreams, of play, of fiction, of fairy-tales, of myths, of jokes,'<sup>47</sup> being experienced either individually or 'collectively, as in the case of children at play or masses in religious extasy, etc.'<sup>48</sup>

Schutz makes use of one of his favourite works of literary fiction, the classical *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes. One might infer that any type of fictional world can fall under this type of FPM, from literary fictions to film or even modern computer games. However, such an assumption meets contradictions in Schutz's explanations related to the form of *epochè* specific to the phantasm worlds. His view only makes sense if it refers to a fictional world *as produced* by its author in a free play of imagination, but not as an already-built world *given* to a reader, spectator, or game player.

Fictional worlds are 'modifications' of the world of working, and their dominant form of spontaneity is not *working*, but *phantasm* – a concept defined earlier in the text as *a covert action lacking an intention to its actual realisation*.<sup>49</sup> The ego

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., p. 555.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., pp. 555-560.

<sup>46</sup> See Schutz and Luckmann, *The Structures of the Life-World*, op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>47</sup> Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., p. 555.

<sup>48</sup> Schutz, 'The Problem of Personality in the Social World', op. cit., p. 230.

<sup>49</sup> Schutz's exact words are: '[i]f an intention to realization is lacking, the projected covert action remains a phantasm, such as a day-dream; if it subsists, we may speak of a purposive action or a performance' (Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., p. 536).

whose life is analysed here is thus the one that imagines the objects, beings, and events of the fictional world, and in the case of the stories from *Don Quixote*, the one who imagined them is their author Miguel de Cervantes.

Schutz warns, however, that it is important to avoid confusing the *content* of a phantasm world – which he calls ‘the imageries imagined’ – and the *act of imagining* or ‘imagining as a manifestation of our spontaneous life.’<sup>50</sup>

He pays much attention in each of these three analyses of phantasm, dream, and science to the motives that govern each FPMs, and whether pragmatic motives, which dominate the world of working, still function in other provinces. In the world of phantasms, the ego has no interest to changing the outside world, and Schutz concludes that pragmatic motives no longer operate there:

Imagining itself is, however, necessarily inefficient and stays under all circumstances outside the hierarchies of plans and purposes valid within the world of working. The imagining self does not transform the outer world.<sup>51</sup>

Schutz emphasises the freedom of the imagining self by respect to content of imageries:

The imagining individual masters, so to speak, his chances: he can fill the empty anticipations of his imageries with any content he pleases; as to the anticipating of imagined future events he has freedom of discretion.<sup>52</sup>

Freedom also affects time perspective. A short passage of the 1943 draft, omitted from the 1945 paper, sheds more light over this concept through the use of what one might call the cinematographic metaphor of ‘film play speed.’

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., p. 556.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., p. 556.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., p. 559.

The imagining self can eliminate all the features of standard time except its irreversibility. It may imagine all occurrences as if viewed, so to speak, through a time retarder or through a time accelerator.<sup>53</sup>

Referring to the novel of Cervantes, Schutz debates whether Don Quixote's fight with the windmills, which the protagonist believes to be giants, can be considered an act of gearing into the outside world, and concludes that the actions of the protagonist do not reach into the world of working. But is Schutz not ignoring the assumption that *real* is any sensory stimulation that presents to us with the appearance of reality?

The main problem here is that Schutz made use of an overly complicated example, which raises a 'double transcendence' of the type generally known as 'fiction in fiction.' Let us count the exact number of worlds – real or fictional – involved in this case. Cervantes, as author of the book, produces (*i.e., imagines*) this fictional world according to his will and freedom. By doing so, he is trespassing the frontier between *his* everyday life of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Spain (let us call it  $FPM_1$ ) to the imaginary world where Don Quixote and Sancho Panza live their adventures ( $FPM_2$ ). In the story, at night, Don Quixote himself leaps from his world  $FPM_2$  into a third one ( $FPM_3$ ), namely the dream-world where he fights terrific giants without doubting that he does so. In the morning, back in  $FPM_2$ , Don Quixote sees the 'real' windmills, and concludes that the giants – whose reality he still refuses to question – must have been turned into windmills by a wizard. We have thus three provinces and two transcendences<sup>54</sup> between them: one performed by Cervantes from  $FPM_1$  to  $FPM_2$  and the other performed by Don Quixote from  $FPM_2$  to  $FPM_3$ .

Schutz does not set a clear distinction between the two transcendences. When talking about the freedom of the ego in imagining its fictional world, Schutz refers to the first transcendence, where indeed Cervantes is free to imagine his charac-

<sup>53</sup> Idem, 'Realities from Daily Life to Theoretical Contemplation', *op. cit.*, p. 40.

<sup>54</sup> There are, in fact, several other transcendences involved here, but it is not necessary to talk about them at this point, because they do not affect our reasoning. We are leaving out the FPMs of the sociologists, to which belong Schutz himself, the author of this thesis, as well as its readers, and so on.

ters and their adventures as he pleases by consciously putting between brackets his everyday life ( $FPM_1$ ). When questioning the involvement with the outer world, Schutz refers to the fight, an action that took place in the mind of Don Quixote in  $FPM_3$ . But the second transcendence is not of the same type as the first, because it is not a case of imagination but rather hallucination (or at least misperception): Don Quixote does not need to perform any conscious *bracketing* to enter  $FPM_3$ , even though in the morning he *realises* that the giants are no longer there in  $FPM_2$ . The structure of  $FPM_2$  is the result of a set of *choices* of Cervantes performed under an *epochè* of imagery. To Don Quixote, both  $FPM_2$  and  $FPM_3$  present themselves with the *epochè* of the natural attitude. Don Quixote does not have to put in brackets any perception, because the entities he is fighting appear to him in full evidence *as* giants.

But the FPM structure of Don Quixote's world is even more complex. In a later article,<sup>55</sup> Schutz focuses exclusively on the multiple reality problem in the novel of Cervantes. In this paper, Schutz equates 'Don Quixote's sub-universe of madness'<sup>56</sup> ( $FPM_3$ ) with 'the world of chivalry' depicted by the Spanish legends and stories of the knights errants, Fierrabras, King Arthur, or King Armory (say,  $FPM_4$ ), which Don Quixote always takes as real and true given that they were 'printed in books.'<sup>57</sup> One can say that the intensity of the 'natural *epochè*' or suspension of doubt is, to Don Quixote, complete, as he attributes to the world of chivalry the highest accent of reality, which places it on the same level as his everyday life and makes it virtually indistinguishable from it. Trying to establish a communication with his fellow-men, Don Quixote enters into problems generated by the conflicts of interpretation that arise when his worldview clashes with the schemes of references of his companions.<sup>58</sup> Just like everyday life, intersubjective realities are subject to negotiation.

The problem has a deeper nature, for it questions any pretension of truth of any finite province of meaning, including modern science:

<sup>55</sup> Schutz, 'Don Quixote and the Problem of Reality', op. cit.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., p. 139.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 141.

Our enlightened age is certainly not prepared to accept the agency of invisible enchanterers as a principle of explanation of the occurrences and facts in the causal structure of the world. To be sure, we acknowledge the existence of invisible viruses, or of neutrinos or of an 'Id' in the sense of psychoanalysis as the causal source of observed phenomena. But who would dare to compare these findings of our scientists with the activities of the enchanterers of the madman Don Quixote?<sup>59</sup>

Schutz finishes his essay with a question related to a presumable absolute, transcendental validity of truth:

What is foolishness, what is wisdom in the whole universe which is the sum total of all of our sub-universes?<sup>60</sup>

For a consistent treatment of the concept of action across different FPMs, as intricate as sometimes they may be, one needs to make sure that one sets clearly the *reference point* of any judgement we formulate on action, *epochè*, attention to life, etc., that is, to avoid the *absolute reference* in any FPM description and always identify the precise *relative standpoint* of discourse. A fictional world is certainly a finite province of meaning, but the way the author sees it is not the same as the way the reader experiences it, given that it is given in distinct forms of *potestativity*.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 140.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., pp. 157-158.

<sup>61</sup> This is a term that Schutz borrowed from the legal jargon. The meaning of the original Latin word *potestativus* is 'invested with power,' while in jurisprudence a potestative condition (*condition potestative*, in French) is one that is in the power of one of the contracting parties, as opposed to a casual condition, which depends upon chance. (*Le Trésor de la Langue Française Informatisé*. Retrieved on 8 October 2013. URL: <http://atilf.atilf.fr>) In a 1937 text, Schutz defined it as 'the possibility of freely calculating probability and freely choosing among probabilities.' (Schutz, 'The Problem of Personality in the Social World', op. cit., p. 271) In the context of the present work, the term is to be understood as the active or emphatic component of experience, i.e., the subject's freedom and ability to act upon the world within a specific FPM. Arguably, potestativity can be equated with one of the fundamental faculties of human being that Brentano called, along with Meldenssohn and Tetens, 'power to act' or 'will' (Franz Brentano. *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*. Ed. by Oskar Kraus. London/ New York: Routledge, 2009 (1874), p. 141); one may also link potestativity to the sociological concept of 'agency,' which has been developed on different epistemological grounds.

In his early analyses of literary art forms, Schutz notes that the reader of a tale has very limited freedom of fantasising,<sup>62</sup> and that it is the author the one who 'directs the reader to accept the content of the story' as an event.<sup>63</sup> To the author, a literary fiction is 'nothing more than a mere pragmatic formula of craftsmanship,'<sup>64</sup> because fiction writing is, in fact, their specific form of 'world of working.' The writer is a craftsman who applies the techniques of style, structure, composition, and character development just like a painter makes use of the laws of colour or perspective or the musician makes use of the laws of harmony,<sup>65</sup> and, one can add, just like any craftsman – pottery maker, book binder, house builder, web designer, or wood carver – who makes use of their tools to transform their raw materials and produce new objects. Do these worlds of 'working' bear the characteristic of everyday life for their craftsmen? Can a certain finite province of meaning (say, the world of fiction) appear as everyday life to a subject (say, the writer) and as pure fantasy world to another subject (say, a reader)? The question of the reciprocability of standpoints, which is of crucial importance, was addressed by Schutz on several occasions when he talked about the 'general thesis of the alter ego,'<sup>66</sup> but not specifically in the case of trans-provincial intersubjectivity. The problem is even more complex when the number of the subjects involved is higher, as in the case of drama. The playwright, the director, the actors, and the spectators experience in their own way an interplay of several finite provinces of meaning. To theatre professionals, drama is their world of daily work, whereas to the spectator who enjoys the show it is a world of fiction experienced as leisure time. In the shared space of performance, there is a common intersubjective experience of one another as living beings: actors and spectators see each other, hear each other, breathe the same air, and speak the same language, as Schutz noted in an early text of his,<sup>67</sup> and yet the spatial, temporal, and social structures

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<sup>62</sup> Schutz, *Life Forms and Meaning Structure*, op. cit., p. 165.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 166.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 168.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 169.

<sup>66</sup> Idem, *The Phenomenology of the Social World*, op. cit., pp. 97-102.

<sup>67</sup> Idem, *Life Forms and Meaning Structure*, op. cit., p. 185.

are not reciprocal for these subjects, because the way professionals perceive each other depends on their previous experience as workmates, the way a spectator perceives the played character and the staged situations depends on their previous encounters with the same actors and the intertextuality of the text, etc. The *shock* that accompanies the passage from one FPM to another is also experienced in different forms by audience and actors. For spectators, curtain rising is a signal that announces the instauration of the world of theatre. For actors, a complex set of techniques is needed to allow them to raise the energy and concentration they need to give during their performance. In some drama schools, students are asked to wash the stage floor themselves before performances or rehearsals and to become aware that, by doing so, they invest the floor with the quality of a sacred space where the laws, the requirements, and the tabus of everyday life are no longer valid.

To the audience or the reader, a fictional world comes with its own social structure and with a potential offer of identification for the ego as pole of discourse production.<sup>68</sup> A fictional world, such as the one built by Cervantes in *Don Quixote* or by Goethe in *Wilhelm Meister's Journeyman Years*, cannot be considered outside the scope of its very nature of literary work written *for others* and experienced *with others*. As Barber notes in his analysis of Schutz's Goethe manuscript,<sup>69</sup> the 'autonomy of literary reality' is privileged by Schutz, 'but, unlike the realities of phantasy and dreams, it is a reality constituted by the *deliberate* activities of author and reader acting in concert.'<sup>70</sup>

The 'freedom of discretion' available to the imagining self does not make sense in all the cases – *i.e.*, to any experiencing subject – that Schutz wanted to include under the term *imagery*, such as fairy tale or myth, where the teller of the story has little or no freedom of choice regarding plot or character development. While the character Don Quixote is given to his author with the free choice of imagi-

<sup>68</sup> This is valid in other provinces as well, such as science; the rhetoric of scientific discourse invites the reader to assume the position of scholar.

<sup>69</sup> Schutz, 'On Wilhelm Meister's Years of Travel', *op. cit.*

<sup>70</sup> Barber, 'Literature and the Limits of Pragmatism. Alfred Schutz's Goethe Manuscripts', *op. cit.*, p. 237.



nation (as in daydreaming), it is not so with the way a fictional world is given to its readers. As a consumer of fiction, I can read Cervantes's book and enter the world that he imagined *for us*. The way this FPM is given to me is different from the way it is given to Cervantes or to Don Quixote. To me, it presents itself with the attribute of novelty in a permanent state of discovery. Its *epochè* may be similar to the one experienced by Cervantes, for I *know* that this is just a fiction, and I voluntarily give myself in to accepting it as if it were a story that happened to real characters, *i.e.*, a *history*. Yet, it presents itself to me in the mode of an immutable presence and with no freedom of choice regarding the agent and the course of action. If the writer is skilful enough and the subject appealing enough, the ego will subconsciously accept the invitation, and will identify (completely or partially, according to the degree of the *epochè* ) with a character of the story – most likely the protagonist. But the result of this identification cannot provide the actional freedom of a computer game, where the ego is indeed able to control the actions of the character it identifies with. Perhaps its closest counterpart situation in everyday life is the 'subordinate identification' in We-relationships, such as child-parent or soldier-officer, where the subordinate ego temporarily brackets their own freedom of action and hands control to the recognised figure of authority without stopping being involved emotionally or physically with the course of events. This is just another component of the natural *epochè* specific to a FPM, namely the bracketing of identity along with the bracketing of space, time, or sociality.

On the question of self perspective in FPM of phantasms, Schutz mentions that our experience of some fictions is solitary, while others takes place in the community of a We-relationship. When entering a province, the self experiences that world with a different perspective by putting up a different role: '[i]n my imageries I may fancy myself in any role I wish to assume.'<sup>71</sup> Of course, this identification is not exactly the result of a free choice, as it takes place at subconscious levels and depends on one's specific structure of personality, biographical situa-

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<sup>71</sup> Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', *op. cit.*, p. 559.

tion, or cultural background. If I read a fiction or watch a play, I don't normally ponder rationally saying, 'let me decide now which character I wish to identify with.' Moreover, it also depends on the author of the fiction who, like a film director, directs the gaze and the attention of the spectator, and, consequently, directs the spectator's identification channel, too.

Using Husserl's distinction between 'predications of existence' and 'predications of reality,'<sup>72</sup> Schutz reflects that phantasm worlds, while not preserving the 'compatibilities of experience which belong to the world of working,' keep nevertheless the validity of internal logical consistency:

I can imagine giants, magicians, winged horses, centaurs, even a *perpetuum mobile*; but not a regular decahedron, unless I stop – as I would have to do in full awakesness – at the blind juxtaposition of empty terms. Put it otherwise: within the realm of imagery merely factual, but not logical incompatibilities can be overcome.<sup>73</sup>

In other words, a fictional FPM can be very different from EDL in its *content* and its *operational rules*, yet those rules must follow the same logical principles as in EDL.

As for the *temporal perspective* of phantasm FPMs, Schutz notes with Husserl that 'phantasms lack any fixed position in the order of objective time'<sup>74</sup> and the only feature that temporality in fictional worlds shares with EDL temporality is *irreversibility*. EDL time and phantasm time are *independent* and neither is *reversible*: '[i]magining, and even dreaming, I continue to grow old.'<sup>75</sup> In a fictional world, certain events benefit of closer attention, being thus experienced over an inflated time span, while others are condensed in a very short time or omitted altogether. On stage, the continuity of the temporal flow is broken by theatrical effects, such as light changes or curtain falls. This is something that does not occur in everyday life, Schutz notes:

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 558.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 558.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 559.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., p. 559.

In the world of our real life, no curtain falls over a scene in order to be lifted for a new one. In our world... the arena of our life does not change suddenly. Our experience of space is continuous.<sup>76</sup>

Of course, such changes do take place in the form of *shocks* the moment we cross the frontier between everyday life and a specific finite province of meaning.

Schutz does not take into consideration those features related to the spatial organisation of phantasm FPMs, such as coordinatisation or strata of reality, and it is difficult to say whether he considered that these features have little importance.

Schutz warns that it is important to avoid confusing the *content* of a phantasm world or 'the imageries imagined' with the *act* of imagination or 'imagining as a manifestation of our spontaneous life.'<sup>77</sup> It is difficult to say which of them should be equated to the proper phantasm FPM – perhaps both of them, as a system – but it is clear that the latter cannot be experienced without the first, while the first is meaningless without the latter. One can assume that both of them are necessary components of any FPM as in the pairs story vs. act of story-telling, film vs. act of movie watching, novel vs. act of novel reading, and so on. We can assume that *any* FPM, including the EDL, requires these two components: the existential conditions of our life and the set of meanings associated to it, whether aggregated in life-stories or not. For instance, in the case dreaming, it is the act of dream-sleeping vs. dream as a story.

Let us see in the following section how Schutz treats *the world of dreams* as a finite province of meaning.

### 3.4 Dream as FPM

Schutz analyses the problem of dreams on three pages in the 1943 draft, which are reduced to two pages in the 1945 paper. As in his analysis of fictional worlds, he bases his discussion on the criterion of involvement with the outside world.

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<sup>76</sup>Schutz, *Life Forms and Meaning Structure*, op. cit., p. 186.

<sup>77</sup>Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., p. 556.

Given that the self is neither interested nor able to modify anything in the outer world but turns 'away from life' in complete relaxation,<sup>78</sup> Schutz concludes that working or acting cannot be performed by the dreaming self, who lacks any feature of *potestativity*.<sup>79</sup> He does not give a name to the specific or dominant form of spontaneity in dreaming (this should be, presumably, *dreaming* itself). The life of dreams has no projects, no pragmatic motives, and no volitions, but only 'recollections, retentions, and reproductions of volitive experiences which originate within the world of awakesness,'<sup>80</sup> and 'the *attention à la vie* of the dreamer is directed to the past of his self.'<sup>81</sup> Schutz says that, in our dreams, we only have 'quasi-projects' and 'quasi-plans.'<sup>82</sup>

Apparently, Schutz treats the world of dreaming from the point of view of everyday life, which is contrary to the method he assumed. If the FPMs of fiction or dream are coherent in themselves, then one should not judge the motives therein according to the motives that dominate EDL. For instance, my experience of the world of drama should not be judged according to my ability to 'gear' into the world of the theatre hall, my interacting with other spectators while we seek our seats, or the dust that fell from my shoes when I entered the theatre. Also, the forms of spontaneity specific to the fictional world of Don Quixote should not be assessed according to Don Quixote's involvement with the 'real' world of the windmills, but with the *other reality* of the giants whose existence he believed in when he fought against them. In the same way, the spontaneity of a dream should not be assessed according to the involvement of the sleeping person in the world around their body, but according to the inner logic of the dream itself. Instead of involvement with the outer world, I suggest a different criterion for assessing the form of spontaneity of a specific FPM: the subjective freedom of involvement given to the experiencing ego in the specific attitude of that FPM, that is, the perceived potestativity. Schutz seems to be inconsistent with his own assump-

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 560.

<sup>79</sup> Idem, 'Realities from Daily Life to Theoretical Contemplation', op. cit., p. 41.

<sup>80</sup> Idem, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., p. 561.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., pp. 561-2.

<sup>82</sup> Idem, 'Realities from Daily Life to Theoretical Contemplation', op. cit., p. 42.

tions, because, according to his reasoning, one's experiences in the virtual world should be considered devoid of pragmatic motives because no involvement with the outside world takes place except for keyboard pressing and mouse movements. However, being involved in a computer-mediated experience is certainly not reducible to moving the mouse and pressing the keyboard. For instance, a Web designer whose work never materialises in the outside world may appear to an outsider observer as doing mere keyboard and mouse work, whereas Web design is a profession that requires highly complex skills and knowledge. Dreams, like any FPM, have their specific specific forms of spontaneity, projects, plans, and intentions, but also their *specific form of inner-outer world transcendence*. That is, the problem can be overcome if one stops confusing an FPM's *outer world* with EDL's *outer world*.

Schutz notes that both dreaming and imagery can become objects of scrutiny only when seen from EDL or from scientific contemplation. It is true that, within a fiction, I can experience another fiction or dream, just as I may experience a dream in a dream. But it is not common for a fictional world to be reflected upon itself, because this requires abandoning, at least partially, the convention of the fiction; also, when a dreamer becomes aware that they are dreaming, the normal conditions of the dreaming change so that they would either wake up or turn into what is commonly referred to as *lucid dreaming*, but that must be seen as a different type of FMP altogether.

This points to a deeper question. If one analyses a fiction or a dream from the FPM of scientific contemplation, how can one be sure that one discourse has more legitimacy over the other? In common acceptance, the FPM of science should bear a stronger accent of reality than the FPM of fiction. But this is not necessarily true at a general level, because, given the high diversity of fictional worlds and scientific worlds, one may find a case where scientific theorising may appear with a lesser character of reality than a particular imagery. Accent of reality, truth, and legitimacy may be different, even conflicting, aspects of an FPM. In fact, in what the 'reality' of dreams is concerned, we have no reason to believe that the discourse of science bears the highest legitimacy:

The poet and the artist are by far closer to an adequate interpretation of the worlds of dreams and phantasms than the scientist and the philosopher, because their categories of communication themselves refer to the realm of imagery. They can, if not overcome, at least make transparent the underlying dialectical conflict.<sup>83</sup>

Schutz also says that dreaming is always and essentially a lonely experience. The *other* whom I dream of 'does not appear in vivid present but in an empty fictitious quasi-We relation,<sup>84</sup> and thus one cannot speak of communication or interaction in the worlds of dreams.<sup>85</sup>

We saw that Schutz places unequal weight on the several features of FPM in the case of fiction and dream compared to EDL. He seems mostly concerned with the projection of pragmatic motives onto these worlds or rather with the absence of these projections. Accent of reality, temporality, and *epochè* are also important to him, but he spends little or no time discussing the corresponding 'strata' of reality, coordinatisation, spatial organisation, and otherness in dreams and fictional worlds.

### 3.5 Science as FPM

Schutz approaches the question of the finite provinces of meaning with epistemological concerns, as he aims at investigating the conditions of possibility of knowledge in the social sciences, that is, at clarifying the relationship between the realm of reality concerned with scientific investigation and the world of daily life, and this concern is congruent with the motivations of late Husserl's analyses of the *Lebenswelt*. Schutz is eager to find out in what way the world of scientific investigation is conditioned by, related to, or based upon, the world of everyday life.

<sup>83</sup> Idem, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., p. 563.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., p. 563.

<sup>85</sup> Schutz and Luckmann, *The Structures of the Life-World*, op. cit., p. 34.

We saw that Schutz's method in 'On Multiple Realities' is to analyse several FPMs (EDL, dream, imagery) *in order to* reach the province of science. Our approach here must be, of course, quite the reverse of his method, given that the central topic of this work is not science, but FPM in general, and we need to read Schutz's treatment of 'scientific theorising' *in order to* reach a better understanding of the concept of FPM in general.

Schutz remains consistent in his mistaken view on what should and what should not be viewed as pragmatically-oriented action. He says that, just like *dream* and *imagery*, *scientific contemplation* does not have direct consequences into the outside world of working:

Scientific theorizing – and in the following the terms theory, theorizing, etc., shall be exclusively used in this restricted sense – does not serve any practical purpose. Its aim is not to master the world but to observe and possibly to understand it.<sup>86</sup>

Schutz's view is obviously different from that of other social scientists, particularly of Marxian orientation, who would see science eminently as a tool for the domination of the world. Schutz emphasises the distinction between scientific theoretical contemplation, which makes the object of his analysis, and the impact of science on the world of working – a distinction that, in other words, one can see as a *projection* of the FPM of scientific contemplation onto the world of working. He explicitly omits from the object of his analysis other types of 'contemplative attitudes,' which include, but are not limited to, scientific contemplation as well as the extensions of this FPM into the world of working, such as the act of communicating scientific results, the institutional and legal organisation of the scientific community, and – one can presume – the empirical component of gathering data about the phenomena that make the object of theoretical contemplation, which he considers as well as belonging to the type of 'working acts,' such as 'measuring, handling instruments, making experiments.'<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., p. 564.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 565.

Schutz notes that *attention à la vie* in theoretical contemplation has its specific intensity:

This attitude of the 'disinterested observer' is based upon a peculiar *attention à la vie* as the prerequisite of all theorizing. It consists in the abandoning of the system of relevances which prevails within the practical sphere of the natural attitude.<sup>88</sup>

One can automatically infer from this observation of Schutz a consequence of general importance to the structure of an FPM, namely the idea that every province is characterised by its specific 'system of relevances.' The concept of 'relevance' was treated by Schutz extensively in a book<sup>89</sup> that remained unpublished in his life-time. Schutz did not use the concept of relevance to help him build his theory of FPMs, but exactly the other way around.

The system of relevances of the world of theoretical contemplation is based on the problem that the scientist investigates and works as a frontier between everything that is relevant to the topic and the other things that are irrelevant.

The *dominating form of spontaneity* in scientific contemplation is neither *working* as in EDL nor *phantasm* as in the worlds of imageries, but simply *action*,<sup>90</sup> which is driven by *in-order-to* and *because* motives and is based on preconceived projects. According to Schutz, the consequence of the fact that theoretical actions imply no gearing into the outside world is that they are revocable. Again, the concept of revocability appears problematic. For instance, theory revision cannot be seen as a revocable action, because revisions are not the result of the scientist's free choice, and, more importantly, they are not without 'traces' in the consciousness of the subject that performs them.

The spatial structure of this FPM is no longer based on the corporeal centre of coordinates or the 'world within reach' but can extend to places which remain

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p. 565.

<sup>89</sup> Idem, *Reflections on the Problem of Relevance*, op. cit.

<sup>90</sup> See 2.4 (p. 54).



fundamentally 'outside of our reach,'<sup>91</sup> such as the world of atoms and molecules, stars, galaxies, black holes, etc.

If the experiencing self in EDL is the 'undivided self,' scientific theorising has only a 'partial self,' a 'Me' that performs just one of the roles of the ego.

Even though the communication of scientific discourse does not belong to the FPM of scientific contemplation itself, its system of relevances is not, however, the result of a solitary enterprise. The scientific world has been built genetically and generatively and remains a shared world:

[T]he scientist enters a preconstituted world of scientific contemplation handed down to him by the historical tradition of his science. Henceforth he will participate in a universe of discourse embracing the results obtained by others, problems stated by others, methods worked out by others.<sup>92</sup>

This finite province of meaning works thus, unlike imagery, according to a *regulative principle* that takes otherness into account and leaves the scientist with a rather limited choice in their research agenda:

Any problem emerging within the scientific field has to partake of the universal style of this field and has to be compatible with the preconstituted problems and their solution by either accepting or refuting them.<sup>93</sup>

The rules of scientific reasoning (consistency, compatibility, and empirical support) are meant to work for what counts as accent of reality in the form of a *guarantee* that the propositions of that discourse are true.

Schutz distinguishes between 'theorizing cogitations' – the actions specific to this FPM – and the 'intentional *cogitata*' – the FPM content, a distinction that parallels the opposition between the act of imagining and the imageries imagined in

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<sup>91</sup> Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., p. 560.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., p. 568.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 568.

the FPMs of phantasms. In EDL, one should distinguish between the world as sum of its objects and the world as sum of its experiences.

This leads Schutz to identifying three different strands in the question of the temporal structure of this type of FPM.

The temporal structure of theoretical contemplation is similar to that of the world of working. Schutz argues that the scientific object, in spite of its character of *ideality*, is founded upon objects that have a clear determination in the objective, 'cosmic' temporality. In other words, FPM *content* displays its own temporal structure anchored in the objective time of the outside world, but is different from the temporal flow of the act of theorizing, which itself differs from the inner *durée* of the person who cogitates.

The acts of theorising, being formed in their own temporality outside the world of working and organised around one's own corporeality, cannot be shared in a We-relationship like EDL experiences, and this makes theoretical contemplation a solitary province: '[t]he theorizing self is solitary; it has no social environment; it stands outside social relationships.'<sup>94</sup> In an earlier text, Schutz was less convinced that theoretical contemplation is a purely solitary enterprise, and seemed rather intrigued by the fact that 'others are given in the theoretical world who can theorize at the same time and together with me, and about the same thing' and particularly by what he called the 'the wonder of *symphilosophiein*' – a word used by Husserl when he first invited Schutz to visit him in Freiburg<sup>95</sup> – as 'the ultimate inclusion of full humanity in the theoretical world.'<sup>96</sup> One cannot fail to acknowledge these two objects of Schutz's *contemplation* – 'making music together'<sup>97</sup> and 'making philosophy together' – as the lead metaphors of his quest to understanding the intersubjective foundation of the human life-world experience.

It is unclear whether this proposition is a finding of Schutz's analysis or just

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 571.

<sup>95</sup> Cf. editors' note, Schutz, 'The Problem of Personality in the Social World', op. cit., p. 232.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 232.

<sup>97</sup> See idem, 'Making Music Together: A Study in Social Relationship', op. cit.; idem, 'Mozart and the Philosophers', op. cit.

a different way of formulating the very assumption that traces the limits of the object of his analysis. Either way, Schutz draws from it the main epistemological problem of science and social science in general: how can the truths of science be transferred legitimately to EDL or other FPMs? That is: (1) how is this transfer possible, and (2) how can this transfer be legitimate? Moreover, in the event of conflicting FPMs, how and why should science prevail over the truths established in another province?

One may argue that the very fact that science moves forward without stumbling upon such dilemmas and without doubting the validity of its transfer of truth is just another form of the *natural epochè*, which should be treated as such. To Husserl, natural attitude dominates everyday life and the worlds of science alike, but his view is not shared by Schutz. One can note, along with Marek Chojnacki,<sup>98</sup> that the various forms of the natural *epochè* and the various types of 'attitude' that correspond to different types of FPMs in Schutz may be thought of as forms of Weberian types of rationality: 'practical rationality' obviously corresponds to the Schutzian 'practical interests' of the everyday life, while 'theoretical rationality' to the specific *epochè* of 'theoretical contemplation.' Schutz notes that the validity of this transference is warranted to the scientist by the *scientific method* and the models on which the method is built.

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<sup>98</sup> Marek Chojnacki. 'Herbert Spiegelberg and Alfred Schutz: Some Affinities'. In: *Human Studies* 27, Kluwer Academic Publishers (2004), p. 170.

## **Part II**



# Chapter 4

## Revisiting the provinces

*whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether  
out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;  
(St. Paul, The Second Letter to the Corinthians)*

### 4.1 Brief critique of the Schutzian model

The Japanese scholar Hisashi Nasu called Schutz's research on the multiple reality a contribution to 'sociological methodology' understood in a wider sense as a meeting ground between sociology and philosophy that deals 'with the relation between knowledge and phenomena'<sup>1</sup> but also as a contribution to social theory in so far as it provides a 'formal description of the social world in terms of temporal and spatial dimensions.'<sup>2</sup>

Given the anthropological universality of the plural experience of reality and the increasing importance of this feature to the contemporary world, Schutz's model of the finite provinces of meaning brings the promise of a powerful interpretive tool with novel explanatory potential in understanding society and modernity in particular and, by treating the various realms of experience as relatively autonomous and self-coherent systems, it can guard against the pitfalls

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<sup>1</sup>Hisashi Nasu. 'A Continuing Dialogue with Alfred Schutz'. In: *Human Studies* 31.2 (June 2008), p. 89.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 90.

that can arise when a province is improperly interpreted from the perspective of another. To applied sociology, a method based on the Schutzian model can be a virtually inexhaustible source of subjects for empirical analysis. To Schutzian sociology, FPM theory can work as an articulation element that can give his thought more unity and coherence by connecting several conceptions of his social theory, such as everyday life, life-world, relevance, embodiment, social structure, typification, self, otherness, knowledge, and so on. This lack of systemic integration with his other writings along with the fragmented development are perhaps the greatest weaknesses of this theory. Schutz was aware of the incompleteness of his theory of the finite provinces of meaning and of the fact that important constitutive elements were missing, such as an account of the problem of embodiment as 'integration in the (social) spatial world,' as he admitted it in a letter to Eric Voegelin.<sup>3</sup>

Let us summarise the the list of concepts that, as we saw in the preceding chapters, remain problematic in the Schutzian framework of the multiple reality; the list is itself incomplete, but it will nevertheless help us redraw a more operational version of FPM sociology.

**Finite province of meaning.** Two unclear aspects float over the very definition of the concept. First, Schutz does not seem to distinguish between a province and its medium, its 'portal.' The world of the novel 'Don Quixote' is a finite province of meaning, and the book – either physical or electronic – is its medium. Theatre, including all dramatic techniques, constitute a medium, while a specific play (more exactly, the spectator's experience of a certain staged play) is a finite province of meaning. The second ambiguous point is the lack of clear distinction between the paradigmatic experience of a province (my experience of everyday life in general) and its syntagmatic experience (my particular EDL experience right now).<sup>4</sup>

**Attitude.** We saw that Schutz prefers to remain silent on the matter of the rela-

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<sup>3</sup>Schutz, *Collected Papers V: Phenomenology and the Social Sciences*, op. cit., p. 216.

<sup>4</sup>See 7.2 (p. 181).

tionship between the various types of 'natural attitude' and the Husserlian 'phenomenological attitude.' While Schutz purposefully kept transcendental phenomenology at bay, he also refrained from tracing a clear demarcation line around his 'phenomenology of the natural attitude.' The main question that emerges out of this problem is whether or not philosophy, and transcendental phenomenology in particular, can be considered finite provinces of meaning. The question is, of course, meaningless from the point of view of orthodox phenomenology, which cannot see the transcendental sphere as included in a wide understanding of the life-world experience, but it is not necessarily meaningless from the point of view of FPM sociology.

**Sociality.** Schutz studies extensively the problems of social structure and intersubjectivity, but does not inquire into the frontier between the subjective and the intersubjective experience of an FPM. Are there provinces that are fundamentally intersubjective, while others are fundamentally solitary? A dream is a solitary experience, Schutz says, but then how do we need to see the feeling of sociality and the feeling of loneliness that we can have in our dreams? Everyday life is an intersubjective province, but don't we sometimes experience it solitarily? How does the concept of identity fit into the structure of a finite province of meaning?

**Experience.** Several aspects are important in respect with the concept of experience in general and those of action and spontaneity in particular. First, as we noted,<sup>5</sup> Schutz's typology of action does not include the criterion of sociality, and does not take into account his own treatment of the Weberian concept of social action from *Der sinnhafte Aufbau*.<sup>6</sup>

We also noticed some inconsistencies related to the irrevocability of action<sup>7</sup> and the question of responsibility, and, given Schutz's commitment to axio-

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<sup>5</sup>See 2.4 (p. 54).

<sup>6</sup>See Schutz, *The Phenomenology of the Social World*, op. cit., pp. 15-20.

<sup>7</sup>p. 63



logical neutrality, a total lack of interest in the 'connotative' aspects of action – constructive or destructive, moral or immoral, etc.<sup>8</sup>

The Leibnizian concept of 'spontaneity,' adopted by Schutz, does not include coercive, violent, reactive, and conflicting forms of action and interaction. As a result, Schutz emphasises the emphatic character of experience, that is, the various forms of behaviour, and pays little attention to its pathic side, of which he is, nevertheless, aware.<sup>9</sup> An FPM is constituted by a multitude of experiences, which include, apart from 'empathic' spontaneity, those experiences that does not originate in the self, and therefore a typology of behaviour should be extended to a typology of experience and should include its pathic forms, such as desire, frustration, attraction, etc.

**Paramount.** Schutz considers everyday life a province of a special status: the paramount reality, the home-base where we always return after visiting other realms. This special status gives everyday life a constitutive ascendancy over other provinces. This point remains, however, unclear,<sup>10</sup> because Schutz later admitted that EDL can lose the character of paramount reality. Therefore, several questions are still open to further investigation, such as: is EDL the constitutive matrix of any province or, rather, is it the paramount reality the one that works as constitutive matrix? The question is complicated further by the fact that both EDL and paramount reality are subject-specific – my EDL can be a non-EDL province to you and vice-versa – which requires the experiential reference point to be always made explicit.

**Attention à la vie.** The paramount reality is also dominated by the highest de-

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<sup>8</sup>Concerning the absence of ethics from Schutz writings, Michael Barber said: 'I went on to investigate the absence of ethics in his thought and discovered an ethics behind that absence of ethics: Schutz was all too aware of how moral codes and ethical theories can be used to bolster an in-group's folkways and further exile out-groups' (Barber, *The Participating Citizen: A Biography of Alfred Schutz*, op. cit., p. xi).

<sup>9</sup>Schutz notes that, while we gear into the world through bodily movements and act upon external objects, these objects, too, 'offer resistance to our acts which we have either to overcome or to which we have to yield.' (Schutz, 'On Multiple Realities', op. cit., p. 534)

<sup>10</sup>A development of this problem is to be found in Thomas Luckmann's 'universal projection;' see 5.1 (p. 149).

gree of attention to life, says Schutz. This may be a hasty conclusion, as the attention to life can vary from low to high intensities in everyday life as in other provinces, including dreams.<sup>11</sup> One may speak, in some cases, of dominant forms of attention to life in a specific FPM, but not of necessary constraints.

**Temporality.** Schutz positions his analysis within the realm of the natural attitude, yet his discussion of time-perspective is affected by presuppositions that go beyond 'what is given' to the consciousness of the subject in the natural attitude.<sup>12</sup> In addition, temporality remains problematic at the large scale as historicity, change, and becoming. The Schutzian model of EDL and FPMs is adequate to describing social reality in times of stability, but does not account for the moments of crisis and liminality when these structures become uncertain and are invalidated. Is history a province in itself? Can one consider both stability time and liminal time as distinct, legitimate FPMs?

**The self.** The problem of the multiple reality is also a problem of the multiple temporality and the multiple self. However, in spite of making use of the Bergsonian *durée*, which is by definition a temporal multiplicity, Schutz does not link explicitly his theory of the finite provinces of meaning with his earlier conception of the counterpointal self and the polyphony of temporal experience.

**Shock.** Schutz notes that every passage from one province to another involves a certain *shock*<sup>13</sup> and that society provides us with devices that help us experience these passages in a more gentle way. Yet, as mentioned in the first point of this list, some provinces cannot be experienced at all without the use of specific technologies (to experience the FPM of television one needs a TV set, to experience a movie one needs a theatre and projection equip-

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<sup>11</sup> See 2.5 (p. 58).

<sup>12</sup> See 2.6 (p. 60).

<sup>13</sup> See 3.2.1 (p. 81).

ment, etc.) and the question of *gate*, *portal*, or *FPM interface* opens up a whole sociological problematic in itself, which needs to be integrated in a future sociology of the multiple reality.

## 4.2 The general FPM structure

Schutz knew the potential for future development of his theory of the finite provinces of meaning, but the project remained on his list of unfinished tasks. We cannot know how a more elaborate theory of Schutz would have looked like, and it would be pointless to try to do guess work on it now, when more than 50 years after his death have passed. Based on our discussion in the previous chapters and the critical points mentioned above, I am advancing here a set of directions for a restructured version of the Schutzian FPM model with the aim of finding more connections with contemporary social theory and recent developments in other disciplines, with the awareness that this project still remains a work-in-progress, and with the hope that it will encourage other scholars from sociology, anthropology, letters, or media studies to investigate further, theoretically and empirically, the abundant field that Schutz has opened up. A general model should be applicable to any type of finite province of meaning, from Schutz's classical examples of everyday life, dream-worlds, children's play, religion, and drama, to the worlds of politics, commercial advertising, tourist experience, leisure, modern medicine, or traditional medicine, to the basic experiences of driving a car and working in a factory, or to the technology-driven provinces of computer gaming, virtual reality, and the likes.

Along with Husserl, Schutz starts most of his descriptions of the natural attitude by evoking the world of daily life that is given as spread in space and time and organised from a centre of coordinates marked by the *hic*, *nunc*, and *ego* point of one's corporality. Our experience and interpretation of the world is based upon our stock of knowledge, which allows us to perceive the world not as a chaotic set of sensations, 'a mere aggregate of colored spots, incoherent noises, centers of warm and cold, but a world of well circumscribed objects with definite qualities,

objects among which I move, which resist me, and upon which I may act.<sup>14</sup> Any finite province of meaning is a 'modification' of everyday life, so any description of an FPM is likewise a 'modified' description. Objects are distributed around the ego's centre of coordinates across specific forms of spatiality, temporality, and sociality, which are different from the forms of the EDL dimensions, but preserve, however, a degree of organisation. To paraphrase Schutz's description, one may note that one's experience of a virtual world mediated by a computer, a tablet, or another technological device allows one to perceive that FPM not as a mere aggregate of coloured pixels on a screen or a noise of incoherent vibrations produced by loud speakers, but a 'world of well circumscribed objects with definite qualities,' which one can bring within one's reach, inspect, transform, and share with others as legitimate carriers of intersubjectivity.

A finite province of meaning can be defined as a set of coherent and consistent experiences given in the temporal flow of consciousness. To investigate an FPM, the sociologist needs to elucidate the paradigmatic inventory of its constitutive elements – *conditions, resources, and methods* of experience – as well as the *connecting network* of provinces to which it belongs as unit of syntagmatic experience.

In the category of *resources* of experience, we count all the life-world's *content* that is subject to experiential methods and is organised across the dimensions of space, time, and sociality in such categories as inner-outer world, familiarity-anonymity, closeness-distance, superior-inferior, and so on. Space is a resource, for it offers us freedom of movement and sites for our bodily presence; time is a resource because every action and every experience implies an effort or a transfer of energies; sociality and the structure of being around us are resources that we need in constructing our identities. By *methods* of experience we mean action, interaction, or any form of spontaneous or experience. By *network* of provinces we mean the set of FPMs that are being experienced by the self as series of passages or Schutzian 'shocks.' Identifying the 'provincial network' is important to FPM analysis, because the environment of provinces may affect the internal structure

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<sup>14</sup>Schutz, 'Symbol, Reality, and Society', op. cit., p. 306.

of a particular province; for instance, one's behaviour in everyday life may be affected by one's daily experience in the FPM of religious prayer or computer game. The *conditions* of experience refer to the metacontextual determinants of a finite province of meaning, such as the epistemic choice of the sociologist in setting the reference point of analysis and the 'qualities' of experience, such as *attention à la vie* or rhythm.

<i>life-world resources:</i>	sociality and identity resources space perspective time perspective inner-outer world
<i>knowledge resources:</i>	stock of knowledge cognitive style relevance structures
<i>methods of experience:</i>	available forms of spontaneity potestativity and constraints forms of pathic experience narrative practices and codes portals and interfaces
<i>conditions of experience:</i>	reference of experiencing self paramount reality tension of consciousness rhythm specific form of natural <i>epochè</i>

Table 4.1: The general structure of a finite province of meaning

These elements are not 'independent variables.' Space, time, and sociality are dimensions of the same world-experience and form the totality of what is given to the experiencing ego as a world that imposes itself and is subject to be affected and modified by the ego's interventions through actions and other spontaneous acts.

An FPM is not restricted to a single form of spontaneity and a single level of tension of consciousness. Schutz says that every FPM has a *dominant* form of spontaneity, and one can understand that its range of spontaneities can be wider or narrower. It is rather potestativity that is more FPM-specific. A change in the tension of consciousness does not necessarily mark the passage from one FPM to another, as one can talk about ranges in the tension of consciousness in the

case of the same province. Of course, potestativity and spontaneity are different aspects of an FPM, but both are components of our ability of gearing into the world. In a specific fictional world, magical actions are possible but not necessarily potestative because they are not given to the readers as choices, given that readers cannot control the characters (they can only love them, hate them, or identify with them), whereas in children's play, magic actions can be both possible and potestative. Potestativity, spontaneity, and codes make up a single category, while action, behaviour, communication, working, etc., are all *forms* of spontaneity; potestativity and tension of consciousness are *qualities* of spontaneity; norms of behaviour, interaction, and communication are *codes* associated to various forms of spontaneity.

The form of the natural *epochè* is the one that sets the limits of all the other components, and the stock of knowledge, too, refers to knowledge about potential experience in a specific province.

The reference point is a choice of the observer – the social scientist – who produces the discourse about a specific FPM or the set of FPMs that they analyse. This choice is not arbitrary, but must be always defined explicitly to avoid confusions.

The form of experiencing self refers first to the limits of identity as present in the oppositions I/You, We/You, We/They, and to the bracketing of all the other potential identities apart from the currently active instance of the self. For instance, the ego is subsumed to a collective agency and the individual will is temporarily put between brackets in such cases when the self becomes a We, as in 'making music together,' dancing together, working in a team, etc. or in subordinate relationships. Coincidentally, the word *epoché* in Ancient Greek also has the meaning of 'position' or 'reference point' besides 'retention' or 'suspension of judgement'<sup>15</sup> that Husserl used. Second, the form of experiencing self refers to the frontiers between *inner* and *outer* worlds. If we set the reference point in the everyday life of Sancho Panza and other contemporaries of Don Quixote, then

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<sup>15</sup>Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott. *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940.

the giants and the sorcerers belong to the *inner* world of Don Quixote, because his *outer* world contains windmills and ‘natural’ phenomena. If we set the reference point in the province of his world of chivalry, that is, inside ‘the world of his madness’ as Schutz called it, then the giants and sorcerers belong to the *outer* world that Don Quixote believes to be gearing into. If we set the reference point in, say, the province of literary analysis, then the giants, the sorcerers, but also the windmills, Don Quixote, and Sancho Panza all belong to the *inner* world of Cervantes and his readers while they allow themselves to be immersed in that fiction, and the only things related to the fiction that stay in the *outer* world is the physical book and any paraphernalia associated with it.

The form of experiencing self also determines the specific limits of the ‘world within reach’ or the ‘manipulatory sphere,’ which defines a more or less blurred area where the *I* can perform acts of gearing into the outside world. In everyday life, it is ‘the region open to my immediate interference which I can modify either directly by movements of my body or with the help of artificial extensions of my body, that is, by tools and instruments in the broadest sense of this term.’<sup>16</sup> Schutz notes that through technologies, such as ‘long range rockets, the manipulatory sphere may be extended beyond the world within my reach,’<sup>17</sup> and, one should mention, this particular ‘spreading’ refers to the specific FPM of military strategy, while different technologies can project different forms of the manipulatory sphere into the spatial dimension. Various FPMs will provide different modes of experiencing the world within reach – *e.g.*, the ‘one-click-away’ area in the experience of Internet browsing. For this reason, an adequate way of defining the limits of the manipulatory area may be the principle of the minimal energy spending action, which determines potential actions as ‘*n*-steps-away’ horizons. Of course, these areas have no well-defined frontiers, but are rather fuzzy halos around the subject.

In the same category of problems can be included the private vs. public distinction of regions of an FPM. In everyday life, a certain space around one’s body

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<sup>16</sup> Schutz, ‘Symbol, Reality, and Society’, *op. cit.*, p. 307.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 307.

is subject to privacy norms of behaviour,<sup>18</sup> and, in fact, the various regions of the world bear the quality of privacy in different degrees: one's locker room, one's plate during lunch, or one's bag in a public area are generally considered private regions, while other regions are accessible to other people, too. The private/public distinction is maintained in other FPMs, though not in all of them, given that some provinces are exclusively private and others are exclusively public. For instance, a personal password can give me access to my private inbox, to my Facebook page, to my bank account, to a newsgroup, to a discussion board, etc. Obviously, along with this distinction comes the set of problem of private space violation, sharing, extending, etc.

### 4.3 The *epochè* of the natural attitude

In his second letter to the Corinthians, Saint Paul the Apostle tells a short but curious story whose protagonist is 'a man in Christ' who had been 'caught up to the Third Heaven.'<sup>19</sup> The narrator is purposefully evasive concerning the true identity of the protagonist, but it is widely believed among theologians that it must have been Saint Paul himself. The character's identity is unimportant, the author suggests, the content of the journey is undisclosed (the man had 'heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter'), and the transportation vehicle uncertain ('whether in the body' or 'out of the body'). One could call this rather a non-story, for all its elements are introduced as equivocal, insignificant, or inaccessible. To the author, the only thing important is that the rapture *did* take place without doubt as a proof of God's grace and a reason to glory.

We don't plan to study here Heaven as a finite province of meaning, although the many accounts of raptures and ecstatic experiences that exist in the literature of Western and Oriental mysticism could be an interesting source for such an enterprise; to our present discussion, another aspect is interesting, namely the author's absolute certainty in the reality of the event. This is a case of 'living

<sup>18</sup>See Edward T. Hall. 'Proxemics'. In: *Current Anthropology* 9.2/3 (Apr. 1968), pp. 83–100.

<sup>19</sup>The King James version of the Bible is being used here for quotation.



myth' in anthropological sense. In traditional societies, whether in Africa, the Americas, or Australia, there was a clear distinction between *myth* and *folktale*, as the historians of religion have observed.<sup>20</sup> For the 'primitive' people, the myth was a true and sacred story about remarkable events of the remote past, such as cosmogonic histories, whereas the folktale was acknowledged as a fiction, a false story. Just like any type of sacred knowledge, myths could only be recited to specific people (typically young males) and only during initiation times. Folktales could be told anytime and to anyone, and were regarded as humorous or anecdotic forms of entertainment, not as transmission of knowledge. While the myth is experienced with total belief by the genuine listener, the folktale is recognised as fictional and is experienced under a different 'degree of reading' that falls somewhere between total belief and total disbelief. In other words, folktales tell fictions, whereas myths tell 'facts.'

Different scholars have used different concepts and approaches to describe this distinction. The fantasy master J. R. R. Tolkien noted that we 'read' every text with a certain suspension of disbelief.<sup>21</sup> Roland Barthes called the case of total belief the 'zero-degree of reading,'<sup>22</sup> while Patrice Pavis described the forms of media and theatre according to their 'fictional status.'<sup>23</sup> Robert Hodge and Gunther Kress have extended to the field of social semiotics the linguistic concept of *modality*, which 'points to the social construction or contestation of knowledge-systems,'<sup>24</sup> and refers, more exactly, to the 'status, authority and reliability of a message, to its ontological status, or to its value as truth or fact.'<sup>25</sup> In cognitivist psychological terms, we experience constructed realities, such as virtual space or Internet, with a certain intensity of *presence*, a concept defined by Kwan Min Lee

<sup>20</sup> See, for example, William Bascom. 'The Forms of Folklore: Prose Narratives'. In: *The Journal of American Folklore* 78.307 (1965), p. 4; Raffaele Pettazzoni. *Essays on the History of Religion*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1954, p. 11; Mircea Eliade. *Aspects du mythe*. Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1963, p. 15.

<sup>21</sup> J.R.R. Tolkien. 'On Fairy-Stories'. In: *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays*. Ed. by Christopher Tolkien. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1983, p. 141.

<sup>22</sup> Roland Barthes. *Le degré zéro de l'écriture*. Paris: Seuil, 1972.

<sup>23</sup> Patrice Pavis. *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture*. London/ New York: Routledge, 2005 (1992), pp. 99, 108.

<sup>24</sup> Hodge and Kress, *Social Semiotics*, op. cit., p. 123.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 124.

as ‘a psychological state in which virtual (para-authentic or artificial) objects are experienced as actual objects in either sensory or nonsensory ways.’<sup>26</sup> Richard Gerrig and other psychologists have studied the ‘transportation’ power of narrative imagery,<sup>27</sup> which is defined as ‘immersion into a text’ or the degree to which readers ‘lose’ themselves in the stories they read. Finally, from the perspective of Alfred Schutz, we experience every province of reality under a certain *accent of reality* determined by the specific form of the ‘*epochè* of the natural attitude’ (in the present text, I will also employ the acronym NAE):

No motive exists for the naïve person to raise the transcendental question concerning the actuality of the world or concerning the reality of the alter ego or to make the jump into the reduced sphere.<sup>28</sup>

Saint Paul was attributing to the rapture event mentioned earlier the highest accent of reality and, to any Christian believer who considers Saint Paul’s text as carrier of Truth, the text preserves the highest accent of reality, the same as the unquestioned reality of everyday life, as Schutz would put it.

When the NAE is at work, I tend to accept the reality around me as it is, and this works like an inner drive of the self, an inertia force that resists questioning. In a narrative fiction, it works as a presumption of credit to the auctorial voice, which is to say that, under normal circumstances, I tend to give credit to the one who produces the discourse and I tend to identify with the main character. This is not to say that ‘accent of reality’ should be mistaken for truth value. A stage play that reenacts, say, the scene of Nativity can offer the spectator a low accent of reality due to bad acting and poor props, but will not affect a Christian audience’s belief that the original, historical events were real.

However, the *epochè* of the natural attitude is something more than that. Either in EDL or in another FPM, there are many forms of NAE at work, and one

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<sup>26</sup>Lee, ‘Presence, Explicated’, op. cit., p. 37.

<sup>27</sup>Gerrig, *Experiencing Narrative Worlds: On the Psychological Activities of Reading*, op. cit.; Melanie C. Green and Timothy C. Brock. ‘In the Mind’s Eye: Transportation-Imagery Model of Narrative Persuasion’. In: *Narrative impact: Social and cognitive foundations*. Ed. by Melanie C. Green, Jeffrey J. Strange, and Timothy C. Brock. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2002.

<sup>28</sup>Schutz, *Collected Papers I: The Problem of Social Reality*, op. cit., p. 135.

cannot be wrong to say that the natural *epochè* is the main tool of constructing our realities, for it works as a knife that the ego uses in making use of various resources available to it. The NAE can bracket a wide variety of attributes of FPM experience, such as:

1. the sphere of identity, by bracketing the I and other instantiations of the self while their sub-summation to an embedding We;
2. the unity of the human life-world, of which everyday life is just a slice;
3. the unity of the self and the thesis of the non-contradictory identity;
4. the forms of experiencing self not active at the current moment;
5. the space that exists outside the current moment's perceptive horizon;
6. the temporal perspectives not belonging to the currently active FPM;
7. the fundamental anxiety;<sup>29</sup>
8. the codes of behaviour, communication, and interaction specific to other provinces;
9. the signifier during the *visée* of a symbolic object;
10. the sphere of will;
11. the sphere of responsibility;
12. the sphere of ownership;
13. the sphere of trust;
14. the sphere of opinion;

Each of these NAE are spontaneous suspensions of doubt in a specific 'thesis.' For instance, during an interview, the journalist assumes a specific NAE by bracketing their own opinions and, often, their own expertise on the topic. In their research, scientists bracket their own EDL opinions or EDL knowledge on the subject and abide to the rules of scientific reasoning. Some of these NAE are assumed consciously and rationally (as is the case of Weber's rational action), while others are unconsciously accepted (such as the identity NAE or the one related to the codes of interaction).

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<sup>29</sup>See 2.7 (p. 66).

We can see that the Schutzian concept of *epochè* of the natural attitude is crucial to his sociology of the multiple reality, and its importance resides not in pointing to some new and hidden phenomenon but in clarifying precisely a bundle of conspicuous, universal attributes of human experience.

## 4.4 Life-World resources

In Schutzian line, one can define the life-world as the sum of all accessible FPMs, including EDL. Any finite province of meaning is experienced as a multitude of objects (i.e., entities that way we can act upon) and agents (i.e., entities that we can interact with) that exist in space and time at a certain distance from the experiencing self and interact among themselves. In this respect, some provinces share with EDL the character of perspectivity: one cannot analyse a province but from the standpoint of an individual or a group of actors. The properties of objects and agents, such as distance and proximity, bear different meanings for the three dimensions of the life-world. Schutz describes the way the social world gives itself to consciousness according to the following basic dimensions: *spatiality* or the world's extension in space, *temporality* or the world's evolution in time, and *sociality* or the world's diversity of things and agents.<sup>30</sup>

If one strives to remain committed to the epistemological line of the Schutzian project of a phenomenology of the natural attitude, one needs to avoid the mathematical, philosophical, or physicalist conceptions of space. We need to use the term 'social space' to denote the significant ground on which a finite province of meaning is experienced, that is, the lived experience of spatiality.<sup>31</sup> Social space is neither real nor fictional, but significantly existing in a specific province or simply non-existing because of its lack of relevance in a specific FPM. The social space of my everyday life includes my home, a few areas of the city where I live, those

<sup>30</sup> Schutz and Luckmann, *The Structures of the Life-World*, op. cit., pp. 35-92.

<sup>31</sup> By 'social space,' we don't mean the particular sociological notion understood as 'set of social statuses' that originates probably in Sorokin's writings, but the way geographical space comes to exist as a lived space, as human experience of a territory (see, for instance, Yi-Fu Tuan. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. London: Edward Arnold, 1977).

areas that I've never visited but carry with me as charges of subjective meaning, such as a city that I dream of visiting one day or an ill-famed street that I always avoid, and so on. An individual may have their subjective geography of a city, and a group, as long as it is aggregated into a community, can experience space as intersubjective geography according to that community's significant places.

Similarly, temporality and sociality as FPM dimensions need not be equated with some scientific or philosophic constructs, but must be taken into consideration only according to the criteria of meaningful givenness to the experiencing self. Either consciously or unconsciously, we constantly apply our *relevance* criteria to select meaningful objects and persons as characters for our life-stories and count out things that we judge as meaningless or non-relevant. So too with the dimension of time: personal and collective histories are constructed through the selection of meaningful and relevant events out of the manifold of experience. The process is subjective or intersubjective and has a 'poetic' nature, as the American playwright Tennessee Williams put it:

Memory takes a lot of poetic licence. It omits some details; others are exaggerated, according to the emotional value of the articles it touches, for memory is seated predominantly in the heart.<sup>32</sup>

The life-world's tridimensional space is not a chaotic mass of content but an organised structure, a *cosmos* displaying its own topologies, chronologies, and typologies. Just like the abstract Euclidian-Newtonian model of the space, it accepts a system of coordinates, which is centred in the *hic, nunc*, and *ego* spot of the experienced world. However, while the mathematical ideality is homogeneous, continuous, isotropic, and without boundaries, the life-world's dimensions are non-homogeneous, fragmented, anisotropic, and horizon-bound.<sup>33</sup> In addition, it features two important qualitative distinctions or transcendences: homeworld vs.

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<sup>32</sup>Tennessee Williams. *The Glass Menagerie*. Oxford: Heinemann Educational Publishers, 1996 (1945), p. 1.

<sup>33</sup>I am expanding in the following subsections an idea introduced in: Marius I. Bența. 'Spații sociale, spații virtuale [Social Spaces, Virtual Spaces]'. In: *Vatra* 2 (1999), pp. 14–17.

alienworld (or, simply, the home-world distinction) and the inner world vs. outer world distinction. Let us pay closer attention to every one of these attributes.

### Coordinatisation

Space is organised only when an operational coordinatisation is associated with it. The coordination system of everyday life is based on a central point represented by my own corporeality.<sup>34</sup>

I cannot experience any object or agent but as an ego-relating being, that is to say, in every moment of my life I find myself in the centre of the world, and there is no 'experiment' I could perform so that I escape being in the centre of the world.

*Hic, nunc, and ego* stand for the origin of our system of coordinates in the everyday life-world. I perceive and judge objects and persons as more or less far away from my body, I always consider them in perspectivity – from a *point de survol* in Merleau-Ponty's terminology –, and I interact with social agents according to the degrees of familiarity and similarity by which they relate to me.

Yet, not only the *I* puts space together in a centripetal manner. To a traditional society, says Eliade, a household always finds itself in a point zero and a capital city is always 'the world's navel.'<sup>35</sup> One can see this 'mirroring' of the centres as a metaphor of the various registers of identity constitution.<sup>36</sup>

The presence of a centre is the essential condition for the emergence of such attributes as position, distance, direction, and size. The coordination system of the social structure is constituted by the degrees of familiarity and anonymity, of which Schutz spoke, but also by the hierarchies of Being that exist in every

<sup>34</sup>In Husserl's words, 'Jede Ich findet sich als Mittelpunkt, sozusagen als Nullpunkt des Koordinatensystems vor, von dem aus es alle Dinge der Welt, die schon erkannten oder nicht erkannten, betrachtet und ordnet und erkennt;' (Edmund Husserl. 'Text Nr. 6: Aus dem Vorlesungen Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie – Wintersemester 1910/1911'. In: *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Texte aus dem Nachlass, Erster Teil*. Ed. by Iso Kern. Vol. 13. Husserliana. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973 (1910-11), p. 116).

<sup>35</sup>Mircea Eliade. *Ocultism, vrăjitorie și mode culturale [Occultism, Witchcraft, and Cultural Fashions]*. București: Humanitas, 1997, pp. 31-46.

<sup>36</sup>Bența, 'Spații sociale, spații virtuale [Social Spaces, Virtual Spaces]', op. cit.

society at every historical moment. Temporality is organised in terms of duration, rhythm, and regulatory systems of timing, such as clocks and calendars.

### Non-Homogeneity

Social space is never homogeneous. In any finite province of meaning, space is always given in varying charges of significance, whatever their source:<sup>37</sup> emotion, sacredness, exchange value, personal significance in biographical context, etc. Things and agents around us also show a non-uniform distribution of significance that is due to the sedimentations of meaning in one's life history. For the 'primitive' peoples, there are sacred places and profane places, sacred time (festivals and holidays) and profane time (everyday life, routine), sacred persons and things and profane beings. Non-homogeneity carries out an ordering function because no one can inhabit a homogeneous, flat, and Euclidian space, as many scholars who have approached the experience of space noted. In the words of Erwin Straus, '[w]e don't live in a homogeneous, isometric, isotropic space – or a geometric space – but a space in which we orient ourselves.'<sup>38</sup> Emile Durkheim says that the order of the experienced world 'would be impossible if the parts of space were qualitatively equivalent, if they really were mutually interchangeable,'<sup>39</sup> and Mircea Eliade argues that in 'primitive' societies the world is created ontologically precisely by 'the manifestation of the sacred.'<sup>40</sup>

By their non-homogeneities, the dimensions of the life-world – space, time and sociality – are intimately related to each other. Space takes meaningful distinctions across finite provinces of meaning (the pub is the place of leisure, whereas the church is the place of religious experience and mystical contemplation), but the same distinctions apply to time (there is a time for the pub and a time for the church) as well as to objects and agents (the bartender is the 'manager of the

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Erwin W. Straus. 'On Anosognosia'. In: *The Phenomenology of Will and Action*. Ed. by Erwin W. Straus and Richard M. Griffith. Duquesne: Duquesne University Press, 1967, p. 117.

<sup>39</sup> Émile Durkheim. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. New York: The Free Press, 1995, p. 10.

<sup>40</sup> Eliade, *Occultism, vrăjitorie și mode culturale [Occultism, Witchcraft, and Cultural Fashions]*, op. cit., p. 33.

drinks,' whereas the priest is the 'manager of the sacred,' to use a metaphor of Roger Caillois<sup>41</sup>). Put shortly, sacred (i.e., highly significant) space goes together with sacred time and objects and persons.

### Fragmentation

Social space is also discontinuous, because places aren't always accessible from all directions. In modernity, 'space takes for us the form of relations among sites' – as Michel Foucault observes,<sup>42</sup> recalling the fear that humankind might one day face a crisis of the spatial resource, a lack of places, and Anthony Giddens talks about the limited 'packing capacity' of objects and beings in time and space.<sup>43</sup> To permanently discover new topologic resources, humans use their symbolic and technical skills to expand, contract, fracture, or de-fragment space using such tools as walls, mirrors, paintings, windows, etc. Sociality is fundamentally a discrete<sup>44</sup> experience, and, in what temporality is concerned, continuity is fractured by what Schutz calls the 'shocks' of FPM-crossing and, at historical scales, by the liminal situations that break the order of ordinary time.

### Anisotropy

While a wall limits my potential movements and blocks my vision of certain objects, bracketing them out of my field of vision, thus placing it out of my currently thematic finite province of meaning, a pictorial representation creates the opposite effect:<sup>45</sup> it opens up a new space and operates as a window, which affects the space's property of isotropy, *i.e.*, uniformity in all directions. One can speak of *anisotropy* when the perception or experience of a path in space depends on its orientation. Human environments rarely provide us with walls lacking symbolic 'covers' at all. But anisotropy isn't linked exclusively to symbolic devices.

<sup>41</sup> Roger Caillois. *L'homme et le sacré*. Paris: Gallimard, 1950.

<sup>42</sup> Foucault, 'Des espaces autres', *op. cit.*, p. 47.

<sup>43</sup> Anthony Giddens. *The Constitution of Society: Outline of a Theory of Structuration*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984, p. 112.

<sup>44</sup> The word is used here in mathematical sense.

<sup>45</sup> Bența, 'Spații sociale, spații virtuale [Social Spaces, Virtual Spaces]', *op. cit.*



Isotropy is lifted every time the experience of moving from one place to another or perceiving one place from another is different from the experience of the reverse movement or perception. For example, my personal experience of going from home to workplace is not the same experience as coming back home, because these journeys imply different informational and emotional exchanges.

Nicola Green, who investigated how modern technologies of urbanisation affect the human experience of space and time, says that modern urban space with its communication infrastructure has changed our experience of 'time-bound social relationships,' which 'have shifted from durable copresent interactions to fragmented and disconnected spatial and temporal connections.'<sup>46</sup> Social life has been 'compartmentalized in a series of fleeting encounters and impressions of little duration,' and the techniques of transport and communication transcend geographical distances and imprint non-Euclidean patterns to the spatial-temporal structure of everyday life-world by 'dislocating,' 'disembedding,' and 'disembodying' individuals from local, collective, and copresent activities in time by 'stretching' social relations.<sup>47</sup> On the other hand, it would be hasty to presume that fragmentation, stretching, and compartmentalisation of space and time are inventions of modernity. It is safer to assume that the techniques of topological warping have been taken to the extreme in this age, while the drive to organise, give structure, destroy, and restructure space and time must be seen as an anthropological invariant.

## Horizon

We can't know what Saint Paul saw and heard during his journey to the Third Heaven, but Saint Gregory calls the visions of the celestial secrets '*incircumscriptum lumen*, light without limit, a sky with no horizon.'<sup>48</sup> While Heaven is a horizonless place, here on earth we can never escape from being surrounded by a

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<sup>46</sup>Nicola Green. 'On the Move: Technology, Mobility, and the Mediation of Social Time and Space'. In: *The Information Society* 18 (2002), p. 282.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., pp. 282-283.

<sup>48</sup>Owen A. Hill. *Psychology and Natural Theology*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921, p. 197.

spatial context that ends up with a horizon. The horizon is made up of walls, landscapes, buildings, trees, people, clouds, the blue sky, or water, and it always circles us from all sides like an eggshell. Most often, we are only partially conscious of it, but, phenomenologically, the horizon is a constitutional condition for the appearance of things.<sup>49</sup> However, if one tries to imagine a horizonless world, as the saints claim Heaven is, imagination doesn't help much. Having the everyday life as constitutional matrix, all the other finite provinces of meaning inherit from it its attributes including the inescapable horizon-enclosing. Whether in EDL or in another FPM, this ontological shell offers us both a sense of freedom and a sense of security.<sup>50</sup> The horizon is normally *far enough* from my body so that I can feel free to perform the actions I want with a sensation of 'indefinity' or, in Schutzian words, a 'freedom of discretion,' which refers to the availability of space as a resource. To the 'normal' self, the shell is indefinitely far away in the sense that space never feels scarce. A prison cell is an artificially created scarcity of space, time, and sociality, for it offers a very limited resource of places, time slots, and social interaction. On the other hand, the horizon is normally *close enough* to me so that I can be defended against any ontological insecurity, which is to say that normally I am able to perceive the shell. When one of these two functions suffers an alteration, mental or social pathologies may appear, such as claustrophobia – when the ego feels the ontological shell excessively close – and fear of open places when the ego lives inside an extremely large ontological shell.

As we have suggested on a different occasion,<sup>51</sup> the ontological horizon may be considered, generatively, a projection of the original amniotic membrane that provides the unborn human being with the same double benefit of freedom and security, given that our experience of the world is a 'modification' of our pre-conceptual experience through the constitution of the self in early childhood and pre-birth life.

<sup>49</sup> Anthony Steinbock. *Home and Beyond: Generative Phenomenology after Husserl*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1995, pp. 106-107.

<sup>50</sup> We have detailed this argument in: Alina Rusu and Marius I. Bența. 'Despre constituirea spațiului personal în dezvoltarea ontogenetică [On the Constitution of Personal Space in Ontogenetic Development]'. In: *Parallaxis* 3 (1999).

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

Our ontological shell is three-dimensional, just like all the attributes of the life-world. As social beings, we are always involved in groups and networks that provide us with freedom of interaction and communication and also with a sense of security and protection. Unlike the social homeworld that we will talk about in the next subsection, the social horizon is contextual and fluctuating.

The temporal component of the ontological shell provides – again, under normal circumstances – the double shielding of actional freedom of discretion and temporal security. This double-shielding takes place in both senses of time, past and future. No individual and no community can live without a history – a coherent chain of meaningful events that safely upholds the present –, and nobody can lead a sane existence without the certainty of a future that is predictable enough to provide safety and unpredictable enough to provide actional freedom of discretion. That is, the future must be felt as oscillating between the acceptable levels of predictability and uncertainty so as to provide an asylum-shell against the angst of excessive uncertainty and the depression of excessive routine. Our plans and projections into the future are meant to give us confidence that the world will go on in its ‘business as usual’ and the ‘I can do it again’ of which Schutz spoke.

For example, when the self faces the consciousness of an imminent death,<sup>52</sup> it finds it difficult to give an acceptable meaning and preserve a sense of security if death is conceived as an absolute terminus-point, as a de-finitive event. People who manage to learn how to live waiting for their death succeed in it only by putting that experience into a coherent life-story and assigning it the meaning of a *passage-event*, eg: ‘I will live in the memory of my beloved ones,’ ‘I will live through my artistic/scientific creations,’ ‘I will continue to live in Heaven’ or, in anthropological words, by seeing death as a rite of passage.

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<sup>52</sup>See our previous discussion of the ‘fundamental anxiety,’ p. 68.

### Home and world

In his famous study on the Mbuti Pygmies of the Ituri forest, Colin Turnbull<sup>53</sup> gives a depiction of how the life of our hunter-gatherer ancestors might have looked like and an account of the originary experience of the settlement and its impact on the human life-world. A great deal of Turnbull's methodology lies upon the comparative description of the Mbuti nomads' world as opposed to the world of the settled Bantu agricultural population that live on the edge of the forest. If it is true that 'ontogeny repeats phylogeny' at the level of social and cultural patterns of experience, then the historical evolution of these patterns should mimic the order of their phenomenological constitution. The main striking feature of the Mbuti Pygmies that emerges from the lecture of Turnbull's book, though never made explicit throughout its pages, is this people's lack of a fundamental home/world distinction.<sup>54</sup> To the Mbuti, their home is the forest and it's everywhere, for the forest-world-home gives them food and protection. This distinction is fundamental to settled societies in everyday life, and is part of the coordinate system that makes the world navigable and experientiable. It is anthropologically universal and penetrates all the three dimensions of the everyday life world.

In its primary meaning, the word *home* refers to space, to the physical area of the everyday life where we, as living beings, have comfort, protection, and where we sleep at night. But the word acquired multiple meanings. *Home* is constructed as a series of concentric spaces of different degrees of intimacy, such as: our bed, our bedroom, our house, our property, our neighbourhood, our town, our region, or our country. Socially, our home is constructed similarly as concentric spheres of kinship that offer us the same comfort and protection. Temporally, our home is that series of events that we associate with being-at-home, family time, and also our meaningful personal histories that support our identities. Given that the

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<sup>53</sup>Colin M. Turnbull. *The Forest People*. New York/ London/ Toronto/ Sydney/ Tokyo/ Singapore: Simon & Schuster, 1968.

<sup>54</sup>Árpád Szakolczai, lecture notes, *Postgraduate Seminar in Social Theory*, University College Cork, 2003

home/world distinction is a fundamental attribute of EDL and given that EDL is a constitutional matrix of any FPM, it follows that any province will naturally tend to inherit this distinction. In any FPM, there is a specific zone of comfort, protection, and stability, such as the headquarters of a company, the capital city of a nation, the homepage of a website, or the desktop screen familiar to all operating systems that have a graphical user interface (on some devices, it is activated by pushing the *Home* button), etc.

### Inner world, outer world

When we close our eyes and evoke in our mind a scene of our past or an imaginary event, do we step into another finite province of meaning, or are we still in everyday life, in its inner side of experience? The question is debatable, and one can find arguments in favour of both answers. My choice is to assume, in virtue of the polythetic character of inner time and the polyphonic character of the self that, most often, we experience in simultaneity both an inner and an outer world, whether in everyday life or another finite province of meaning. Depending on our attention to life, accent of reality, and cognitive style, we experience the inner and outer components of the life-world with different and fluctuating intensities. The temporal dimension of the life-world also implies an inner and an outer distinction in Schutz.<sup>55</sup> As for the dimension of sociality, the inner world refers to 'inner sociality,' that is, the Schutzian counterpointal self and the multiple identity.

### Self and identity

The order of the intersubjective life-world as outer side of the social dimension provides a matrix of identification to the experiencing self, which itself is no less plural than the multiplicity of the reality that accommodates it. Schutz's approach to the problem of intersubjectivity and his conception of the polyphonic self do not meet the Husserlian account of intersubjectivity expressed in his famous Fifth

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<sup>55</sup>See our discussion on *durée* and polychronicity, p. 60.

Meditation:<sup>56</sup> one cannot succeed in attempting to establish a reflexive foundation of otherness upon an already founded ego, because the relationship between ego and alter is co-foundational, not foundational, and the constitution of intersubjectivity holds genealogical precedence over the constitution of the self and not vice-versa. Schutz's conception of the polyphonic self, although unconventional, is not singular or atypical. Several tendencies in sociology and social psychology<sup>57</sup> manifested themselves as the result of an uneasiness with the traditional images of the monolithic self, monadic ego and I-centred, substantialist identity along with a need to focusing on the self as a plural, generatively-constituted entity and examining, as Melucci noted:

The multiple nature of the self forces us to abandon any static view of the idea of identity and examine instead the dynamic processes of identification. The concept of identity is a substantialist notion which refers to a permanent essence as the foundation of identification.<sup>58</sup>

These theories of the self share a common interest in discourse. Human personhood is constituted essentially through narratives,<sup>59</sup> the self holds mainly a dialogic character,<sup>60</sup> and one has to speak in terms of 'polyphonic selves,' 'multiplicity of I-positions,' history of 'recognitions,' coherence in organising life-stories, or parallel selves associated to parallel lives.<sup>61</sup> The self is always 'intertextual and

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<sup>56</sup> Edmund Husserl. *Cartesianische Meditationen und Pariser Vorträge*. Ed. by S. Strasser. Vol. 1. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1950.

<sup>57</sup> Fragments of this section were published in: Marius I. Bența. 'Dolly in the Wonderland of the Identity Constructionism. Or: The Ontological Structure of Space and Being in the Natural Attitude'. In: *Cartografii ale modernității*. Ed. by Ion Copoeru and Ciprian Mihali. Cluj: House of the Book of Science, 2002; Marius I. Bența. 'Identity, from Hospital to Kitchen'. In: *Beyond Identity: Transformations of Identity in a (Post-) Modern World*. Ed. by I. Copoeru and Nicoleta Szabo. Cluj: House of the Book of Science, 2004, pp. 43–52.

<sup>58</sup> Alberto Melucci. *The Playing Self: Person and Meaning in the Planetary Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996, p. 46.

<sup>59</sup> See Alasdair MacIntyre. *After virtue*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984; Theodore R. Sarbin. 'The Narrative as a Root Metaphor for Psychology'. In: *Narrative psychology: The storied nature of human conduct*. Ed. by Theodore R. Sarbin. Westport: Praeger, 1986, pp. 3–21; Paul Ricoeur. *Soi-même comme un autre*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1990.

<sup>60</sup> Hubert J. M. Hermans and Harry J. G. Kempen. *The Dialogical Self. Meaning as Movement*. San Diego/New York/Boston/London: Academic Press, 1993.

<sup>61</sup> See Julia Kristeva. *Proust: questions d'identité*. Oxford: Legenda, 1998; Alessandro Pizzorno. 'Spiegazione come re-identificazione'. In: *Rassegna Italiana di Sociologia* 30.2 (1989), pp. 161–183;

relational,' resting upon a network of 'recognitions,'<sup>62</sup> constituting itself in self-reflection and in permanent dialogue with the others;<sup>63</sup> '[i]t is in interaction, in confrontation with and confirmation by others, and especially in being drawn upon them into language, that a child can begin to deepen awareness and orientation as a self.'<sup>64</sup>

A compelling way of depicting the co-foundational I/Thou relationship comes from Bin Kimura,<sup>65</sup> a Japanese psychiatrist and theoretician of the *Daseinsanalyse*, who has explained a concept that was considered to lay at the foundation of the Zen conception of the self.<sup>66</sup> The word *aïda* in Japanese<sup>67</sup> may be translated as 'in-between,' 'inter-personality,' 'between-ness,' 'among-ness,' or 'context.' Literally, the word means 'between people' or 'world' in the sense of 'human world.' Kimura uses this concept to portray schizophrenia as a pathology of the *aïda* and explains that the Japanese word for 'individual human being' (*ningen*) finds its origin in the expression 'among people' (the same holds for Chinese) and that 'the being of the *aïda* ' stands for the 'essence' of human being, which bears a

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Cornelius Castoriadis. 'The Construction of the World in Psychosis'. In: *Psychoanalytic Review* 83.6 (Dec. 1996), pp. 929–944; Glenn Lerner. 'Through a Glass Darkly. Narrative as Destiny'. In: *Theory & Psychology* 8, Sage (1998), pp. 549–572; Rom Harré. 'The Rediscovery of Human Mind'. In: *Proceedings of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference of the Korean Psychological Association*. Chung-ang University. Seoul, 2000; John Shotter. 'Dialogical Realities: The Ordinary, the Everyday, and Other Strange New Worlds'. In: *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 27 (1997), pp. 345–357; Jon Elster, ed. *The Multiple Self*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

<sup>62</sup> Pizzorno, 'Spiegazione come re-identificazione', op. cit.

<sup>63</sup> Lerner Glenn. 'Through a Glass Darkly. Narrative as Destiny'. In: *Theory and Psychology* 8.4 (1998), pp. 549–572.

<sup>64</sup> Joseph Dunne. 'Beyond Sovereignty and Deconstruction: The Storied Self'. In: *Paul Ricoeur. The Hermeneutics of Action*. Ed. by R. Kearney. London/ Thousand Oaks/ New Delhi: Sage, 1996, p. 144.

<sup>65</sup> See: Bin Kimura. 'Zur wesensfrage der Schizophrenie im Lichte der japanischem Sprache'. In: *Jahrbuch für Psychologie und Psychotherapie und medizinische Anthropologie* 17 (1969), pp. 28–37; Bin Kimura. *Ecrits de psychopathologie phénoménologique*. Psychiatrie ouverte. Paris: Presse Universitaire de France, 1992; Jeanine Chamond. 'Le temps de l'illégitimité dans la schizophrénie. Approche phénoménologique'. In: *Evolutionary Psychiatry* 64, Elsevier (1999), pp. 323–336; Jane M. Bachnik. 'Time, Space and Person in Japanese Relationships'. In: *Interpreting Japanese Society: Anthropological approaches*. Ed. by Joy Hendry. 2nd ed. New York/ London: Routledge, 1998, pp. 91–116.

<sup>66</sup> Steve Odin. *The Social Self in Zen and American Pragmatism*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996, pp. 75–76.

<sup>67</sup> 人間, also pronounced *ningen*

luminous, daylight, quality.<sup>68</sup> In the famous words of Mikhail Bakhtin, '[n]o Nirvana is possible for a *single* consciousness,'<sup>69</sup> because 'the very being' of humans is the 'deepest communion.'<sup>70</sup>

For Kimura, *aïda* is an inhabitable place where I can find myself and where I can meet the other; at the same time *aïda* is a place in my self where I can meet myself. The self is capable to understand otherness just because is able to discriminate 'an absolutely other' inside itself.

The *aïda* with its luminous attribute cannot be just an ethnic-specific phenomenon, but a universally adequate metaphor for the primordial sphere of intersubjectivity from which the self emerges through a generative process. Community is not a higher-order subjectivity, but rather a lower-order subjectivity, a luminous primordial matrix.

In his study of the conditions that normally make possible an encounter, Hubertus Tellenbach employed a concept that reminds of the *aïda*. For Tellenbach, too, an encounter always takes place in a context, in an invisible environing space that encircles both actors like an 'atmosphere.'<sup>71</sup>

Arpad Szakolczai has analysed the etymology of the term 'world' in different European languages, and has discerned several aspects of the experiences that underlie this concept in its multiple versions.<sup>72</sup> Accordingly, in the Germanic-Anglo-Saxon culture, the world is 'the place where a male human being becomes adult;' in the Greek and Latin languages, the 'world' is related to the experience of separation, of the home/alien dualism, and the movement from chaos to cosmos; one can recognise here the same *luminous* quality as in the case of the Japanese 'betweenness:' the world is 'the place where things become cleansed and mea-

<sup>68</sup>The ideogram for 'between' 間 is itself compound as 'sun' 日 and 'gates' 門, that is, 'sunlight seen through gates.'

<sup>69</sup>Mikhail M. Bakhtin. *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics*. Ed. by Caryl Emerson. Vol. 8. Theory and History of Literature. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984, p. 288.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., p. 287.

<sup>71</sup>Hubertus Tellenbach. *Geschmack und Atmosphäre: Medien menschlichen Elementarkontaktes*. Salzburg: Otto Müller Verlag, 1968.

<sup>72</sup>Arpad Szakolczai. 'Communism in between Myth and Reality'. In: *Myth and Democracy in Eastern Europe*. Regensburg, Oct. 2002.



sured publicly; it is the realm of “pure daylight.”’ Moreover, he noted<sup>73</sup> that some languages, such as Hungarian, have the same word for ‘light’ and ‘world.’<sup>74</sup> A detailed comparative etymological analysis might reveal an inventory of examples in support of the ‘light, world’ meaning association; let us note for now that these two words are connected etymologically or even identical in Russian,<sup>75</sup> Romanian,<sup>76</sup> Proto-Celtic,<sup>77</sup> and Sanskrit.<sup>78</sup> This ‘light, world’ meaning connection is difficult to explain by common descent, notably in the case of Hungarian, which does not belong to the Indo-European family as the other languages mentioned.

Light is what the *eyes* are for. It is what enters the optical system of this organ, but also the wave that emanates from it as light of understanding, light of communion, gaze, or, perhaps, *mauvais oeil*. Tellenbach’s ‘encounter’ is Schutz’s *vis-à-vis situation*, and the essence of this interaction is eye-contact; it is the exchange of light that makes possible mutual understanding and trust, the absence of which annihilates any sense of community. Significant on this matter is the biblical idiom ‘under the sun,’ which appears 29 times in the Books of the Ecclesiastes, as theologians have noted.<sup>79</sup> In this form, the expression is understood as ‘above the earth,’ but also ‘in the human world’ as opposed to the divine world. The expression is not to be found in the other books of the Bible, though it appears, rarely, in different forms, such as ‘before the sun’ in The Second Book of Samuel: ‘[f]or thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.’<sup>80</sup> Here, the expression has the meaning ‘in public’ as opposed

<sup>73</sup> Arpad Szakolczai. *The Genesis of Modernity*. London/New York: Routledge, 2003, pp. 229-230.

<sup>74</sup> *világ*

<sup>75</sup> The word *svyet* (свет) means ‘light,’ ‘glow,’ and ‘world;’ the same holds for other slavic languages.

<sup>76</sup> The words *lume* (‘world’) and *lumină* (‘light’) both have their etymology in the Latin word *lumen* (‘light’).

<sup>77</sup> Ranko Matasović parallels the ‘world, light’ development of meaning in Russian with the Proto-Celtic *albiyo-*, which means both ‘world’ and ‘white’ (Ranko Matasović. *Etymological Dictionary of Proto-Celtic*. Leiden/ Boston: E. J. Brill, 2009).

<sup>78</sup> The word *loka* – ‘open space,’ ‘free world,’ ‘sight’ – originates in the root *lewk-*, ‘shine’ (Julius Pokorny. *Proto-Indo-European Etymological Dictionary: A Revised Edition of Julius Pokorny’s Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*. Ed. by George Starostin and A. Lubotsky. Indo-European Language Revival Association, 2007).

<sup>79</sup> Roy B. Zuck. ‘God and Man in Ecclesiastes’. In: *Bibliotheca Sacra* 148 (1991), p. 47.

<sup>80</sup> 2 Samuel 12:12, King James Version.

to 'secretly.' In both cases, it points to the world that is available to humans in full sight. *World* must be congruent with *daylight*, because only pure daylight and clear vision make possible witnessing, recognising, observing, understanding, validating, and sanctioning another's behaviour and also creating the 'atmosphere' that envelops human beings in their encounters.

A different kind of 'in-between,' a meeting-ground located at the halfway of transcendence – but, in this case, not from *I* to *Thou* but from the human being to the divine and thus from temporal finitude to eternity – is highlighted by Eric Voegelin: *metaxy*,<sup>81</sup> a notion that Voegelin took from Plato and articulated into his theory of experience.<sup>82</sup>

These examples support the simple idea that the foundation of the self is to be sought neither in the ego, nor in the alter ego, but in the liminal zone between them and, one could add, during liminal times.

One can legitimately assume that the plural character of the world must have an impact on the way identity is constructed across the 'provincial' nexus of reality, but how does this process take place? Is identity affected by each FPM in particular like an object that casts different shadows on various surfaces?

An important point that emerges from the fluid and FPM-contextual character of identity is that one is forced to abandon another traditional – *i.e.*, essentialist and substantialist – picture of identity. One needs to admit, along with Goldstein, that social sciences can no longer ignore the dynamics and 'contingency' of identity, which must be seen as a social and historical production.<sup>83</sup>

The question results to a paradox when one realises that collective identities, particularly *national* identities, can be used as effective commercial vectors to the benefit of *multinational* corporations.

Let us evoke shortly one such example that used to be aired on Irish TV channels in the beginning of the 2000s decade. The spot begins with a man in his thir-

<sup>81</sup> μεταξύ, in Greek; *zwischen*, in German

<sup>82</sup> Eric Voegelin. *Anamnesis: Zur Theorie der Geschichte und Politik*. Munich: R. Piper & Co., 1966, p. 271; Eric Voegelin. *Order and History: The Ecumenic Age*. Vol. 4. Los Angeles: LSU Press and Baton Rouge, 1974, pp. 171-192.

<sup>83</sup> Jonah Goldstein and Jeremy Rayner. 'The Politics of Identity in Late Modern Society'. In: *Theory and Society* 23 (1994), pp. 367-384.

ties walking on the streets of a typical Irish town. He watches tourists wearing Irish symbolic garments – a leprechaun hat or green trousers –, as the voice-over tells us the price of each item. At the end, the main character sits alone in front of his stout in a typical Irish pub and stares in the distance meditatively, while the voice says: ‘Knowing what it really means to be Irish: priceless.’ And finally, we read the conclusion of the clip: ‘There are some things money can’t buy. For everything else, there is MasterCard.’

The ad itself is considered a peak in the advertising industry. Its message is explicit: symbols of Irishness can be superficial; any foreigner can buy them for money. But there is a ‘thing,’ an essence in the form of ‘knowing something,’ which only Irish natives can grasp.

The paradox becomes conspicuous when one realises that the ad promotes a *foreign* business and, moreover, that the MasterCard’s ‘Priceless’ series originated in the US<sup>84</sup> to be later adapted to many countries throughout the world. Now, since the know-how of nationalism is something that comes from abroad, where is the essence of national identity?

The paradox was explicitly formulated by the Swedish anthropologist Orvar Löfgren:<sup>85</sup> as an international ideology, nationalism originates in modernity and, at the same time, serves national interests. As essentialist and ‘fundamentalist’ as it may appear in most countries, nationalism bears the same features everywhere and seems to be constructed following the same recipe.

Löfgren advanced a ‘linguistic’ approach on the theme of national identity. Accordingly, if one wanted to ‘prepare’ a nation, one would have to blend a set of basic elements that would constitute the ‘culinary recipe’ of nationhood.<sup>86</sup> According to Löfgren, one would need precisely the following ingredients:

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<sup>84</sup> ‘Creative: Inside Priceless MasterCard Moments’. In: *Adweek* (Apr. 1999).

<sup>85</sup> Orvar Löfgren. ‘Modernizing the Nation – Nationalizing Modernity’. In: *Etnolška tribna* 15 (1992), pp. 1–115.

<sup>86</sup> Similar approaches can be found in the studies on the genealogy of nationalism by Benedict Anderson, Carolyn Marvin, David Ingle, among others (Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, op. cit.; Carolyn Marvin and David W. Ingle. *Blood Sacrifice and the Nation: Totem Rituals and the American Flag*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

- a 'cultural grammar' comprising a symbolic equipment, such as national symbols, names, sacred texts, etc.;
- a national heritage in the form of a common history, a folklore, and pantheon of national heroes;
- a set of values and peculiar styles referring to the national character;
- a 'national vocabulary' in the sense of a cultural form of local expression.

In the light of the 'three-dimensional' model of the multiple life-world, Löfgren's model of modern nationalism can be translated into a general constitutive formula of identity as an 'exemplary' place that is inhabitable by a potential actualisation of the self, where the word 'place' is to be understood as a well-defined subsphere across the components of a specific FPM: space, time, sociality, knowledge, and experience.

The 'matrix' of identity roughly parallels the general structure of a finite province of meaning and comprises:<sup>87</sup>

- a *temporal* anchor, that is, a coherent history;
- a well-delimited *territory* ordered by its specific criteria of significance;
- an anchor in *sociality*, that is, a line of generative ancestors, mythical heroes, significant others, etc.;
- a *symbolic* baggage, such as totem, logo, name, emblem, anthem, flag, etc.;
- a core of *secret knowledge* that provides a sense of intimacy;
- a set of *values* as an anchor in the field of experience and action, that is, an available 'repertoire' of legitimate actions and desirable experiences.

We need to make two remarks concerning this general template of identity.

The first point is that, arguably, the above model applies to any type of identity – collective or individual, political or religious, corporatist or cultural, primitive or modern, etc. When the ego produces a discourse whose subject is a higher-order entity (e.g., family, community, corporation, political party, state), the mere-

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<sup>87</sup> See 4.2 (p. 114).

ologic form of the natural *epochè* occurs: the *I* is temporarily put in brackets and a specific communal identity is experienced.

The set of elements that we have counted as constituents of identity act as conditions of possibility for all legitimate inclusions in a nostratic entity. For instance, if one used this model to question the European identity, one would probably find few elements to fill the list of necessary ingredients for a strong collective identity. Europe lacks a set of commonly recognised inventory of sacred spaces, sacred times, and sacred figures, in spite of the official rhetoric of the EU authorities. The intensity of historical moments is generally associated with the past experience of violence and collective trauma. However, common suffering in the European peoples' history exists only fragmentarily as a consequence of their being dominated by various empires, and is most intense at the national or lower levels. Today, the ruins of the Berlin Wall may indeed be a sacred place to most peoples in Central and Eastern Europe, because they symbolise the end of the Communist tyranny that they have lived and shared. Jan Palach, the young man who protested against the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia by self-immolating suicide, is indeed recognised as a common hero throughout Eastern Europe, but the pantheon of remarkable figures common to the former Communist nations in Europe is not wide enough to provide a firm 'anchor in Being' to a presumable Eastern European identity.

Moreover, one can hardly find such heroic figures, significant places, or remarkable historical moments in the space of Western Europe. It is unlikely that Germans can be proud of a Portuguese athlete who wins an international title or that the Swedish are proud of the French cuisine as part of their European heritage. Arguably, there are only two traditions in Europe that can provide significant, widely shared elements in the life-world of its peoples: the ethical-religious values of the Christian spirit and the democratic ideology as culmination in modernity of a 'project of autonomy,' which, in the view of Cornelius Castoriadis, started in Ancient Greece<sup>88</sup> and, in the view of Eric Voegelin, has

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<sup>88</sup>Cornelius Castoriadis. 'The Greek Polis and the Creation of Democracy'. In: *Philosophy, Politics, Autonomy*. Ed. by David Ames Curtis. Oxford/ New York: Oxford University Press,

deep roots in Gnostic thought.<sup>89</sup> Nevertheless, if Europeans wanted to use either of them to constitute a viable foundation for their identity, they would run into problems because, first, these traditions are antagonistic and thus one would undermine an identity built upon the other and, second, because both have reached a global magnitude and thus cannot be an effective source of *difference*.

The second point is that the general identity template must not be misinterpreted, as it should not lead to the conclusion that any essentialist basis of identity is to be treated as illusion or ‘myth.’ There is a deeper fact that remains problematic: no matter how artificially fabricated a national identity may appear, there is often an indubitably strong *pretension* to essentiality. This pretension lies at the very ground of the efficiency of any ‘identity system,’ and the open question remains: why and where does this essentialist pretension come from? Similarly, the theories of the plural self may be right in their claim that the self is a mere collection of multiple stances and that the monolithic self is an illusion. However, the open question remains: why is there a *need* for coherence and unity in our selves, why do we feel more comfortable when we say that we are unique beings?

### Sociality

Schutz proposed a typology of otherness in everyday life based on the criterion of distance in space (‘the world within reach,’ ‘the world of restorable reach,’ and ‘the world beyond reach’), time (contemporaries, predecessors, successors), and familiarity vs. anonymity, but he didn’t provide a typology of potestativity. To approach this problem, let us take as starting point several untypical examples of action and discuss them from the point of view of Max Weber’s classical definition of social action,<sup>90</sup> which requires the actor’s orientation to the other’s significant response:

- The flight attendant invites all the passengers to the boarding gate.

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1991, pp. 81–123.

<sup>89</sup>Eric Voegelin. *Science, Politics and Gnosticism*. Trans. by William J. Fitzpatrick. Chicago: Regnery Gateway, 1968 (1959).

<sup>90</sup>Weber, *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*, op. cit., p. 523.

- A mother prays to God for her ill daughter.
- I call my pet dog by name and order it, 'come here!'
- A lion roars at another lion.
- I fill out an online application form for a bank loan; I'm not sure whether my application will be reviewed by a human or by a software.
- I dream that I ride a bicycle and have an accident: I've collided with another cyclist. We have a fight.
- A rape.
- A doctor gives a patient an injection.

Weber would probably dismiss most of these cases as wrong examples of social action, and it is unclear whether Schutz would dismiss them, too. Reading Nick Crossley one may believe that Schutz would dismiss them indeed; Crossley says that 'Schutz is wrong to reduce all agency to human agency'<sup>91</sup> and to ignore the peculiar forms of sociality of non-EDL provinces.

Much of our social experience takes place in relations with untypical and non-human agents: collective agents, companies and institutions, animals, virtual entities, robots, spiritual beings, objects, etc. If we cannot consider them legitimate partners of social action, do we not leave a large part of our daily lives sociologically unaccounted for? Let us mention in this context the Actor-Network-Theory,<sup>92</sup> which emphasises the need to treat non-human agents – such as collective actors – as legitimate partners of social action, John Searle's analyses of the phenomena of collective intentionality, 'we-intentions,' 'we-beliefs,' and 'we-desires,'<sup>93</sup> Timothy Martell's phenomenological investigations of 'joint attention' and 'co-perceiving,'<sup>94</sup> or Karin Knorr Cetina's study of 'object-centered social-

<sup>91</sup>Nick Crossley. *Intersubjectivity: The Fabric of Social Becoming*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1996, p. 91.

<sup>92</sup>Bruno Latour. *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*. Oxford/ New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.

<sup>93</sup>John R. Searle. *Intentionality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983; John R. Searle. 'Collective Intentions and Actions'. In: *Intentions in Communication*. Ed. by P. Cohen, J. Morgan, and M.E. Pollack. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990, pp. 401–415.

<sup>94</sup>Timothy Martell. 'Phenomenology of Joint Attention'. In: *Indo-Pacific Journal of Phenomenology* 10.2 (Oct. 2010), pp. 33–42.

ity.<sup>95</sup>

However, Schutz had a rather nuanced position on this matter, which he has never approached directly and rigorously. In a brief discussion of 'the symbolic presentation of society' and 'our experience of the social collectivity,' he mentioned that the *I* can be in relationship with collective actors or non-individual entities, such as the Congress or the United Nations,<sup>96</sup> a position similar to that of the Actor-Network-Theory.

The diversity of human experience reflected in the diversity of the finite provinces of meaning must be manageable sociologically by an appropriate operational model of social agency as *given* to the experiencing actor in the natural attitude. The notion of social actor does not necessarily have to fit the anthropological or biological definition of 'human being,' but needs to be considered in relation with the finite province of meaning in which it is approached. For this reason, Weber's definition needs to be reversed methodically and be used as a criterion in the depiction of an FPM's social structure and hierarchy of Being. In other words, instead of using meaning as a criterion to discerning between social and solitary action, one can use meaning as a criterion to discerning between a social agent and a mere object.

To Weber, 'solitary prayer' cannot be considered social action precisely because it is solitary, that is, because the other does not have an objectively real existence. However, while solitary prayer is not a case of social action in everyday life, it is a case of social action in the FPM of religion, given that it is an action oriented to an entity called God whom the actor considers totally real and from whom she expects a meaningful response.

My dreaming of a fight is a solitary action when seen from everyday life, but it is a social action in the world of my dream.

An animal living in the house as a pet can take part in interactions with humans as a social actor simply because the actor expects the animal to be proficient

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<sup>95</sup>Karin Knorr Cetina. 'Sociality with Objects: Social Relations in Postsocial Knowledge Societies'. In: *Theory, Culture, & Society* 14.4 (1997), pp. 1–30.

<sup>96</sup>Schutz, 'Symbol, Reality, and Society', op. cit., p. 352.



enough to giving back a response. All controversies among behavioural scientists related to such animal abilities need to be bracketed in this example, because it is not the FPM of ethology that is under scrutiny, but the EDL of a pet owner.

Every time I deny the other the ability or the right to significantly respond to an action of mine, I perform not a social action but an action that is devoid of meaningful otherness. By doing so, I have already located the other in an inferior category – often the very general type of object.<sup>97</sup> Thus, a rape is a case of objectification, not of social action, so long the one who commits it refuses to establish an intersection of meanings with the victim, who is treated as a sub-human being or an object.

Every FPM and every cultural-historical variant of the EDL comes with its own mode of appresented sociality and hierarchy of Being – a ‘natural classification of the world’ in Schutz’s words<sup>98</sup> –, and it is not legitimate to judge one province using the hierarchy of another. In all societies of all times there was some form of demeaning and disregarding some of their members while elevating and honouring others, and these structures of social hierarchies blended or intermingled with the general hierarchic structure of the forms of life, as it was called by Kurt Goldstein,<sup>99</sup> with the Great Chain of Being in the sense of Lakoff and Johnson,<sup>100</sup> or with some other form of social ontology.

The simplest ontological hierarchy of the life-world, which is valid in everyday life as well as in other finite provinces of meaning, counts all or some of the following appresentation types:

1. *inanimate objects*, which have spatial and temporal attributes (size, distance, duration) relative to the experiencing ego and physical properties, are sub-

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<sup>97</sup> See, for instance, Laura Mulvey’s studies on male gaze and dehumanising the female body (Laura Mulvey. ‘Visual Pleasures in Narrative Cinema’. In: *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*. Ed. by Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992, pp. 746–757).

<sup>98</sup> Schutz, ‘Letters of Schutz to Eric Voegelin’, op. cit., p. 217.

<sup>99</sup> Kurt Goldstein. *The Organism: A Holistic Approach to Biology Derived from Pathological Data in Man*. New York: Zone Books, 1995 (1939), pp. 353–375.

<sup>100</sup> George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. ‘Conceptual Metaphor in Everyday Language’. In: *The Journal of Philosophy* 77.8 (Aug. 1980), pp. 453–486.

ject to transformations, and can manifest lower or higher resistance to action;

2. *vegetative entities*, which inherit the properties of inanimate objects and, in addition, are endowed with life, which means they can be cared for, aggressed, or killed;
3. *lower beings*, which inherit the properties of vegetative entities and, in addition, are endowed with will, which means they can interact, can aggress, can kill, and can receive orders;
4. *agents*, who are appresented as fellow beings, inherit the properties of lower beings and, in addition, can communicate and can be subject to meaningful interaction;
5. *superior agents or beings* are those entities in front of which the experiencing ego is appresented itself as lower than an agent and 'feels treated' as a lower being, vegetative entity, or inanimate object.

The words 'lower' and 'superior' must not be understood in axiological or absolute terms, but as technical terms denoting the specific status relative to the experiencing ego in the natural attitude or in the specific attitude of a certain finite province of meaning under scrutiny.

Whether one talks about the traditional caste system of India, the modern caste system of Communist North Korea, the informal relations of power in urban gangs, or the user categories of online forum users, the predefined intersubjective structures of agency manifest themselves in several ways: they provide licit and illicit forms of behaviour, they create an orderly, manageable otherness, and – perhaps most importantly – they assign the ego a place in the social dimension of the world, that is, an identity.

The social dimension determines the regulative principles of action and interaction. The set of *values* that we mentioned earlier as essential 'ingredient' in the general identity model is to be seen not only as a normative mechanism of behaviour and also as a source of recognition<sup>101</sup> and self-recognition: when I assume

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<sup>101</sup> See Pizzorno, 'Spiegazione come re-identificazione', op. cit.

a certain identity, I am seen by others and I see myself a *valuable* and legitimate member of that identity.

This leads us to another structuration of the appresentative forms of sociality. With his detailed analyses of the alter ego, the *vis-à-vis* situation, and the 'pure' we-relation, Schutz clarified many aspects of the problem of intersubjectivity, but left many difficulties open. Some of them can be solved by a sharper distinction of what we call the pronominal structure available to the self in intersubjective meaning constitution. Particularly problematic is Schutz's decision to consider face-to-face situation a form of we-relationship. Face-to-face relationship is, and must be considered indeed, the fundamental way of interaction in everyday life and the matrix of any interaction in any FPM. However, in a *vis-à-vis* situation, the other is given fully not as a 'we' or part of a 'we,' but rather as a 'you,' a 'Thou.' It is precisely the 'we' that is bracketed in the face-to-face-situation where the other is appresented as non-I – whether in collaborative dialogue or in confrontation.

The Russian philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin distinguished three 'basic moments' in the 'architectonic' of the self: 'I-for-myself, the other-for-me, and I-for-the-other.'<sup>102</sup> If one reads the Schutzian model through the lens of Bakhtin's categories, one can analyse the experience of subjective meaning in four basic pronominal instances of intersubjective relationship:

- the *I-relationship* does not involve otherness in the constitution of subjective meaning, just a certain distance from self ('I-for-myself') or distance from act (*actum* vs. *actio*), which permeates the constitution of meaning in self-reflection;
- the *You-relationship*, which Schutz confusingly called we-relationship, has as its strongest form the face-to-face interaction and involves otherness as frontal interlocutor – either as partner or as opponent – and requires the existence of an in-between space for communication and interaction to take place;
- the *We-relationship* (or the nostratic relationship) involves the temporary

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<sup>102</sup> Bakhtin, *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*, op. cit., p. 54.

bracketing of the individual self into a larger self, together with its responsibilities and will;

- the *They-relationship* involves the acknowledged presence of the other not as direct agent of interaction but as witness, which forces the self to attach subjective meaning to its actions and interactions.

Each of these types of relationship are specific to everyday life, and from these types derive any form of interaction in any finite province of meaning. Undoubtedly, they should deserve closer scrutiny in the Schutzian spirit, but the scope of the present work does not permit a more detailed analysis. Particularly interesting would be to investigate complex intrications of hierarchical and pronominal relationships. Suffice it to mention for now that people can be involved in several types of relationships at the same time. A just-married young couple listening to the discourse of the priest is an example of We facing You, that is, a We-relationship combined with a You-relationship. A choir performing in front of a group of spectators is a combined We-relationship with another We-relationship. A student who answers the teacher's questions in front of the class is a combined You-relationship with a They-relationship, in which the behaviour of both teacher and student inevitably turns into *performance*,<sup>103</sup> given that every word and gesture must be performed in front of an audience.

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<sup>103</sup>The word 'performance' is used here in the sense of performance theory, not in the sense of the Schutzian typology of behaviour (see 2.1, p. 57).



# Chapter 5

## The life of the provinces

*I cannot write any sort of story unless there is at least one character in it for whom I have physical desire.*

(Tennessee Williams)

### 5.1 The universal projection

Among the most peculiar finite provinces of meaning from the point of view of sociality and also one of the most accessible for investigation is the world of children. Their world is so close to an adult's everyday life and yet so different from it for it involves talking animals, friendly or hostile objects, terrifying monsters, charmed places, dolls who feel pain when you hurt them, cars with eyes instead of headlights, or birds speaking foreign languages, all of them being experienced, obviously, under a fluctuating 'accent of reality.' The form of sociality specific to children is, most often, described under the concept of 'personification' by those adults who master another peculiar FPM: the scientific world of psychology.

Personification also rules the world of 'primitive' people. Commonly, totemic animals may enjoy the gift of communicating with humans or incredible powers. With their myths, 'primitive' people recall events that have a strong accent of

reality, in which objects or animals sometimes appear to be conscious and wilful protagonists.

Instead of 'personification,' Schutz's student Thomas Luckmann called this phenomenon 'universal projection,'<sup>1</sup> which he claimed to be 'an elementary component of the experience of the world' that is present in the social world in general, not only in children or the primitive, and makes us experience '[a]ll things encountered in the life-world' through 'a synthesis of the perceived qualities with the appresented sense "living body."'<sup>2</sup>

Luckmann developed his theory of the universal projection from the Husserlian 'regional topology' by reviewing the concept of 'apperceptive transfer.' Luckmann noted that the 'alter ego is constituted as a human alter ego' and that, for Husserl, 'it seems to be indubitable that the meaning "animal" is a modification of the primary sense "human being."'<sup>3</sup>

But Luckmann stopped midway in his reasoning. The series of 'modifications' (from 'other' to 'human being,' from 'human being' to 'living body,' etc.) express in the form of apperceptive transfer both the ego-centring mode of structuration of the life-world and its embodied character in Merleau-Pontyan sense. Any alter ego is perceived as a projection of the ego (as carrier of a living body) and any experience of the life-world (in any finite province of meaning, as abstract as it might be) is the projection of a particular, primary and bodily experience. Hence, instead of 'living body,' one should explicitly use the syntagm 'the ego's living body' to denote the primary modifiable sense of 'bearing the character of a universal projection.' Obviously, one could lead this discussion on the universal projection further into the literature related to the phenomenon of 'attribution,' but that would exceed the limits of the present investigation.

Given that some objects are specific to certain FPMs, actions are FPM-specific, too. For instance, 'washing' can be performed in EDL as an act of cleaning with

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<sup>1</sup>This section was partially included in: Bența, 'Dolly in the Wonderland of the Identity Constructionism. Or: The Ontological Structure of Space and Being in the Natural Attitude', op. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Thomas Luckmann. *Life-World and Social Realities*. London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1983, p. 53.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 43-44.

water, while in other finite provinces of meaning it can have symbolic references or it can be performed symbolically altogether. In the FPM of religion, particularly in the Christian tradition, the understanding of salvation makes use of the cognitive metaphor *Absolution is Washing*, which points to the idea that some provinces are constituted and structured according to patterns from different provinces. Does this fact contradict, or at least weakens, the law of provincial autonomy that Schutz has suggested? Schutz did acknowledge the existence of relations among provinces, and the very term 'matrix' attributed to EDL is to be understood in the sense that EDL is a constitutional matrix for other provinces.

The universal projection is our fundamental mode of relating to the world at any stage in any culture. It is 'universal' in anthropological sense, because it constitutes the basis of our mundane structures of typicality, and operates in any province of meaning including those that are strongly impregnated by operational rationality, such as the world of scientific experience. Luckmann's concept of 'universal projection' is important not only in describing the specific social structure of a certain FPM, but – in conjunction with the 'cognitive metaphor,' which will be introduced in the next section – can account for the constitutional and genealogical links between the 'paramount reality' and other provinces of meaning.

## 5.2 Connected realities

If, in Schutzian view, finite provinces of meaning are self-coherent and self-consistent but incompatible and separated from each other, how can one understand, say, such Durkheimian views as the one that equates the sacred with the nostratic sociality? In 'primitive' communities, the totem symbolises both the clan and the divine, which Durkheim sees as two faces of the same reality. How, then, can the world of everyday life, with its structured sociality and its norms of behaviour, be seen the same as the world of religious experience? Was there a primordial FPM unity in the history of humanity, which was lost somehow and somewhere? This



question points to the larger problem of the degree and limits of the autonomy of provinces and particularly to the problem of cross-provincial experience.

As we noted, in his reflection on the experience of the FPM of theoretical contemplation, Schutz argues that we constantly cross the borderline between this FPM and everyday life in short incursions, and in his study of symbols he shows that cross-provincial experience are fundamentally of a symbolic nature. However, Schutz doesn't inquire into cross-provincial experience as a general problem of FPM sociology.

Our symbolic experience shows a double character: it is unfolded syntagmatically and follows paradigmatic rules. In the case of syntagmatic relationships, the question refers to the conditions in which an event that took place in a province will produce an effect in another. One can imagine countless examples of cross-provincial syntagmatic relationships, such as:

- while at play with his mates, a little boy suffered an accident that was to affect his EDL for the rest of his life;
- I lost money in gambling, and I must sell my devices that I used as 'gates' or 'portals' to other FPMs (computer, TV set, and smartphone);
- I can't stand my uncle because his face reminds me of an evil character from a certain movie that impressed me a lot;
- I dream that I see an ambulance with the siren on, then I wake up and realise it was my alarm clock.

In all these cases, there is a *source FPM* (children's play, movie, world of gambling, everyday life) where the cause originates as well as a *target FPM* that is affected by a cross-provincial action. Similarly, there are provinces that involve with necessity syntagmatic cross-FPM relations, as is the case of any province governed by a normative system, such as religion or the world of the State's legal system, where every type of province comes with its own referencing filters. For instance, religion penalises lust as sin no matter the FPM in which it was

committed – everyday life or a virtual world –, but the legal system makes a distinction between killing a human in EDL as opposed to killing a character in a virtual world. Also, some provinces that rely on specific technological ‘portals’ or ‘gates’ necessarily involve cross-provincial action: I need to *buy* a device (and thus enter the FPM of the market) in order to use it as a ‘gate.’ As a generalisation, one can mention here the Marxian relationship between substructure and superstructure, which was described by Berger and Luckmann as a connection between ‘human activity and the world produced by that activity’<sup>4</sup> in their rejection of such Neo-Marxian simplifications as ‘economy is the basis of culture.’ In the language of FPM sociology, the provinces of economic activity (narrower versions of the Schutzian ‘world of working’) are distinct from the various provinces of cultural nature, yet not autonomous.

To move now to the paradigmatic relationships, one can say that these can, and in fact tend, to be cross-provincial, given that they involve an observer who, most often, belongs to an exterior FPM. Let us mention briefly two examples of this type.

The first example concerns literary fiction. The sociology of literature makes its object from studying the rapports between social environment and the forms and content of artistic expression, that is, the cross-provincial relationships between the various literary finite provinces of meaning on the one hand and the everyday life of their creators on the other hand. Cross-provincial relationships are meaningful not only to the author, they can affect the ‘consumer,’ too. Since Aristotle, it is believed that the importance of art resides in its cathartic function. Catharsis occurs when an event or set of events that takes place in  $FPM_1$  – say, an exemplary act of courage made by the hero of a drama – influences or leads to a clear outcome over a different sphere  $FPM_2$  – say, the inner life or the everyday life of the spectator. Certainly, the hero of the fiction didn’t decide to act so and so in order to move something in the spirit of the audience (although things are different in the case of the actor playing the hero). The hero is confined within

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<sup>4</sup>Berger and Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality. A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, op. cit., p. 18.

the ontological limits of the fictional reality, and orients his or her actions towards the villain character, not the audience. However, there is a relationship between hero and audience as a case of cross-provincial relationship where the Weberian definition of social action does not apply; this connection, which Michael Barber identified in Schutz in the form of a hermeneutic transcendence,<sup>5</sup> doesn't fit any of Weber's categories of behaviour, action, or social relationship. This paradigmatic relationship is conspicuous, and its outcome is tangible enough to be sociologically relevant. One can include in this category any character or public figure of the arts, music, sport, or politics who can act as role-model in the everyday life of the people.

The second example refers to the world of politics and the fictional worlds of drama, which are typical examples of finite provinces of meaning: they are governed by specific rules of action and interaction, they have their specific structure of space, time, and sociality, they are experienced under different *accents of reality*, and so on. However, the world of politics is often described and interpreted in terms drama: one may talk of the political *stage*, political *actors*, *plot* twists, etc., and we often feel that there is a 'loss of boundaries between comedy and politics,' as Arpad Szakolczai put it.<sup>6</sup> The apparent blurred frontier is, of course, neither contingent nor contextual, but rather the symptom of a specific genealogical process. In his 2013 book, Professor Szakolczai analysed in detail 'the constitutive links between comedy and the "public sphere" '<sup>7</sup> and, through a reconstruction work on the rebirth of theatre in the late European Renaissance, he identified the begetter of the political practices of modernity in the tradition of the 'low-level comedy,'<sup>8</sup> particularly *commedia dell'arte*. In the words of Lakoff and Johnson, one deals here a conceptual metaphor defined by the headline *Politics is Drama*.

Conceptual metaphor can be a great device in describing cross-FPM paradigmatic relationships, because it, too, involves a transcendence across two separate

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<sup>5</sup> See 3.2.2 (p. 84).

<sup>6</sup> Arpad Szakolczai. *Comedy and the Public Sphere: The Rebirth of Theatre as Comedy and the Genealogy of the Modern Public Arena*. New York/ London: Routledge, 2013, p. xi.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

realms of existence. The similarity was noted by Gerd Sebald who stressed that metaphors 'are forms of symbolic appresentation as they appresent a particular province of meaning in everyday life'<sup>9</sup> and that 'the metaphoric form of explaining one thing in types of another is a basic feature of prepredicative experience.'<sup>10</sup>

The theory of the conceptual metaphors was developed in the 80s by the American linguists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson.<sup>11</sup> They said that people employ metaphors not only in poems or other types of literary texts, but also in everyday speech. Lakoff and Johnson have pushed metaphors out of the exclusive realm of literary studies and made them a topic of social and philosophical investigation by showing that '[o]ur ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature.'<sup>12</sup>

One of the most cited examples of conceptual metaphors is *Argument is War*. It is reflected in everyday language by such expressions as: 'your claims are *indefensible*,' 'he *attacked* every point in my argument,' 'I *demolished* his argument,' 'I've never *won* an argument with her,' and so on. These examples show that we normally see the person we are arguing with as an opponent. Consequently, many things we do in arguing are partially structured by the concept of *war*. Thus, in a different culture, debating could be described by a different conceptual metaphor, such as *Argument is Dancing*; in such a culture, people would emphasise the cooperative rather the conflictual aspects of debating. Other examples of conceptual metaphors are: *Love is a Journey*, *Happy is Up*, *Sad is Down*, *Time is Money*, etc.

One is led to the conclusion that people find it easier to conceptualise abstract entities, actions, or feelings in terms more concrete elements, that is, in terms of EDL experience. In the context of Schutzian sociology, the conclusion sounds natural, given that everyday life is the constitutional matrix for any other province, but also brings something more in the light of Thomas Luckmann's 'universal

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<sup>9</sup>Gerd Sebald. 'Crossing the Finite Provinces of Meaning. Experience and Metaphor'. In: *Human Studies* 34 (Oct. 2011), p. 345.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 342.

<sup>11</sup>Lakoff and Johnson, 'Conceptual Metaphor in Everyday Language', op. cit.; George Lakoff and Mark Johnson. *Metaphors We Live by*. Chicago/ London: The University of Chicago Press, 1980.

<sup>12</sup>Idem, *Metaphors We Live by*, op. cit., p. 3.

projection.’ The stock of our taken-for-granted knowledge about the world is sedimented in language, so analysing conceptual metaphors can be a good method of identifying the taken-for-granted roots of our everyday experience and can lead us to an effective genealogy or ‘etymology’ of FPM constitution. Speaking phenomenologically, such ‘etymology’ should account for the modes of givenness of things into consciousness and should refer to uncovering the strata of everyday typifications, just as etymology itself, in Arpad Szakolczai’s words, ‘is not an antiquarian concern’ but a method for exploring the fundamental experiences that underlie a particular term.<sup>13</sup> *Love is a Journey* is not only the description of a paradigmatic relationship between two provinces of meaning, it also stands for the paradigmatic constitution of the FPM of a relationship between two persons lived as a *love story* and the realm of a *fictional journey* conceived as an EDL-like concrete world.

Conceptual metaphors have a great explanatory potential concerning the values and the tacit knowledge that people use in everyday life, but also in other provinces, including science, because scholars, too, often make use of conceptual metaphors, whether consciously or unconsciously.<sup>14</sup>

Schutz’s basic assumption that the experiences of a finite province of meaning are consistent and compatible among each other, but usually incompatible with the experiences of another province, may create the picture of a number of islands that are completely autonomous and isolated from each other under the conceptual metaphor *FPMs are Islands*. If provinces were totally impermeable to social interaction, we would be able to take important decisions in our working environment in complete abstraction from any influence that might come from other FPMs, such as recent family problems or the movie we watched the day before; having a nightmare would never affect one’s mood and sociality the following day; the emergence of a new theory in science would be neutral in respect with events from non-scientific provinces, such as the personal history of the re-

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<sup>13</sup>Szakolczai, ‘Communism in between Myth and Reality’, op. cit.

<sup>14</sup>For a thorough analysis of the metaphors that underlie the thinking of the main classical social theorists, see José López. *Society and Its Metaphors: Language, Social Theory and Social Structure*. New York/ London: Continuum, 2003.

searcher or their economic interests; and so on. However, we saw that FPMs can be connected both syntagmatically and paradigmatically. Schutz himself never claimed that FPMs were completely autonomous, and discussed the symbolic transcendences that occur between provinces.<sup>15</sup> One can describe FPMs as islands in an ocean, planets of a solar system, rooms of a house, cells of an organism, nodes of a network, dimensions of existence, and so on, and the metaphor one chooses in depicting this sociological construct is responsible for the way one will approach the relational class of problems of FPM sociology and may determine even the conclusions one can arrive to. The word 'province' itself is but a metaphor that carries a whole subtext of geographical and political references, such as 'neighbouring,' 'autonomy,' 'population,' 'sovereignty,' 'regulation,' etc.

The class of questions that a future FPM sociology should discuss concerning 'interprovincial' relationships may comprise the following list:

- What kind of relationships can take place between provinces at syntagmatic level?
- What kind of relationships can take place between provinces at paradigmatic level?
- When can one speak of conflicting provinces?
- Which are the conditions of cross-provincial action and communication?
- Which are the conditions of symbolic transcendences?
- Which are the problems related to visibility and accessibility of an FPM from within another?
- Which are the conditions of embedded FPMs, *i.e.*, provinces-in-provinces?

To better clarify the sphere of these problems, let us discuss a few other examples of cross-provincial relationships of various types involving different pairs of FPMs.

Sigmund Freud explained the taboos associated with death that exist in many 'primitive' societies by saying that mentioning the name of a dead person is a

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<sup>15</sup>Schutz, 'Symbol, Reality, and Society', *op. cit.*

form of 'having contact' with that person. To pronounce a deceased person's name is subsumed to the taboos related to death, because the name of a person is part of that individual's personality, and this is also true in children and neurotics, Freud adds:

We shall no longer feel surprised, therefore, at savages regarding the name of a dead person as a portion of his personality and making it subject to the relevant taboo. So, too, uttering the name of a dead person is clearly a derivative of having contact with him.<sup>16</sup>

The fact that some 'primitive' societies have the death taboo in their culture means that this taboo is relevant to their everyday life, not only to their religious world, because interdictions refer to their communication and interaction rules in their daily life. In those cultures, taboos do not exist because dead people belong to a fictional universe, but because they are believed to continue to exist as real persons in another realm, and their *reality* is relevant (in this case, potentially harming) to the living. In other words, the death taboo is a case of syntagmatic cross-provincial interaction between EDL and the afterlife's FPM.

Erving Goffman studied the dramaturgical techniques that people spontaneously employ in daily life,<sup>17</sup> that is, the paradigmatic relationship between the typifications of action in the FPM of drama and those of the EDL. To Schutz, everyday life is 'the paramount reality,' the constitutive matrix of any other reality, including the world of drama, and this implies that any type of experience or behaviour in an FPM can be traced back to EDL. Put differently, everyday life must hold constitutional precedence over the world of drama. Does then Goffman contradict Schutz in the problem of the 'paramount' character of EDL? Is drama more deeply rooted in our human experience than everyday life?

The answer is unlikely to be positive, given that drama and rituals cannot precede genealogically and constitutionally our experience of the everyday life. The

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<sup>16</sup>Sigmund Freud. *Totem and Taboo: Some Points of Agreement between the Mental Lives of Savages and Neurotics*. London/ New York: Routledge, 2004 (1913), p. 66.

<sup>17</sup>Erving Goffman. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 1956.

explanation must lie somewhere else. What Goffman's approach tells us is that, when a social actor is aware of an observer, an inactive witness, not only will they be inclined to engage in a performance, but, by necessity, their behaviour will bear the character of performance. To clarify this, one should engage in further research on the third person relationship, which has been rather neglected by Schutz, who focused more on the second-person relationship (the *vis-à-vis* situation) and the first person (nostratic) relationship. Schutz did analyse extensively a type of third-person relationship, but only in the case of the sociologist observing the behaviour of actors,<sup>18</sup> that is, the case when the third person (the witness) is located precisely in the FPM of social science, while the other actors act in EDL. Of course, in this peculiar case, actors are typically unaware of them being an object of study. My point is that the third-person relationship is a fundamental type of relationship in EDL as in any other province, and is by no means less important than the first- or the second-person relationships. Performance is a natural type of behaviour in EDL, and it does not automatically transport us into the FPM of drama. I may be involved, for instance, in a certain type of working, say mowing the lawn in front of my house. If I am not aware of anyone else watching me, then I am *doing* a solitary action. If my neighbour is watching me from afar, and I am aware of their gaze, then I am *performing* a solitary action. I can, of course, ignore their gaze or, perhaps, I may feel annoyed. But, as long as I don't forget the fact that I am being watched, my behaviour remains a performance and not a solitary action. The observer may not necessarily be located in the same FPM as the actor. The witness can be someone watching through a camera or God or someone in a portrait whose gaze is subjectively perceived as a *presence*.

The Italian theatre professional Eugenio Barba, who created one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century most significant and revolutionary schools of drama, recalled that his interest in theatre and in developing his own acting technique arose out of an initial frustration. His biographer Jane Turner writes<sup>19</sup> that, in 1951, at the age of 14,

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, his discussion of the Weberian concept of social action in *Der sinnhafte Aufbau* (Schutz, *The Phenomenology of the Social World*, op. cit., pp. 15-44).

<sup>19</sup> Jane Turner. *Eugenio Barba*. London/ New York: Routledge, 2004, pp. 2-3.



Barba went for the first time to the theatre. His feeling was that the actors, who were playing *Cyrano de Bergerac*, did very poor acting, and 'merely pretended to laugh, cry, be surprised, or be out of breath; they lacked energy and conviction.'<sup>20</sup> In contrast, there was one particular actor on stage whose actions 'were not imitation or affected like in pantomime but were what Barba considered "real" actions':<sup>21</sup> a live horse. It was the 'energy' and the 'presence' emanated by the horse that impressed the young Eugenio Barba, and was an object of meditation for many years after:

His intention has been to create theatre where the presence and actions of the actors can be as exciting as those he identified in the horse and these ideas have continued to intrigue him and have informed his research into the presence of the actor on the stage.<sup>22</sup>

The live horse was the only one who was not trying to bracket the reality of everyday life, while all the others, by their poor scenic 'presence,' were communicating to their audience a very low accent of reality. Obviously, the horse's flawless performance was due to the fact that the animal did not *know* that this was not supposed to be everyday behaviour but acting and was not aware of the distinct gaze of the witnessing audience.

To Barba, the event brought the motivation to studying the ways in which actor can work out their skills in creating authentic presence. To sociologists, it points to the question why the actions that we do naturally in everyday life as forms of spontaneity are rather difficult to perform in front of an audience. Are we still in the everyday life when we are aware that our face-to-face conversation is being overheard by a third person? To what extent do we remain ourselves when we acknowledge the presence of another? New questions that cannot be treated here open up if one needs to study the constitution of meaning according to the contextual relationships of the self. Particularly interesting is the question whether the mere presence of a silent witness forcibly attaches a meaning to

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

behaviour, given that being aware of a witness forces one to see oneself from the other one's perspective. There is an intrinsic relationship between meaning and otherness: meaning cannot be constituted but in the presence of a witness, that is, to attach a meaning to my behaviour I need either an external witness or I need to become my own witness (*I* turns into *me*). One cannot give an account of one's actions but in *modo praeterito*, with another or with oneself as another, that is, with a certain distance from the action itself.

Other examples that ostensibly question the precedence of everyday life over fictional provinces and, along with this, its 'paramount' character come from Slavoj Žižek. Shortly after the September 11 tragedy, the Slovenian sociologist was intrigued by the apparently 'anticipated' character of the event:

Not only were the media bombarding us all the time with talk about the terrorist threat; this threat was also obviously libidinally invested – just remember the series of movies from *Escape From New York* to *Independence Day*. That is the rationale of the often-mentioned association of the attacks with Hollywood disaster movies: the unthinkable which happened was the object of fantasy, so that, in a way, America got what it fantasized about, and that was the biggest surprise.<sup>23</sup>

Those who felt that the attacks came as 'a totally unexpected shock'<sup>24</sup> did so because the event was indeed a complete novelty for their everyday life, though not for the fictional worlds they were accustomed to. However, in Žižek's view, what was truly surprising was the stunning similarity between the images of the attacks that ran on the TV screens and the images of cinema catastrophes that had literally *preceded* them. It is not the novelty of the event that generated the shock, but the unexpected accent of reality it imposed itself on the public. Not only did the cruel, bloody reality seem snapped out of Hollywood action films, it seemed *inspired* by them, too.

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<sup>23</sup> Slavoj Žižek. *Welcome to the Desert of the Real: Five Essays on September 11 and Related Dates*. London/ New York: Verso, 2002, pp. 15-16.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

While the ‘everyday life’ of that day of 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2001 *seemed* inspired by the finite province of meaning of disaster movies, there are cases when the inspiration source is undoubtful and even acknowledged, and Žižek seems particularly interested in such cases. In a film review, he discussed the story of the Indonesian political leader Anwar Congo.<sup>25</sup> In the documentary film *The Act of Killing*,<sup>26</sup> Anwar Congo and his fellows reenacted in front of the camera, with the help of modern filmmaking techniques, the atrocities that they had committed *in reality* in the 60s when, as death squad leaders, were responsible for the deaths of two and a half million people. Anwar Congo and his friends admitted they were all admirers of Hollywood movies.

Now, the same question arises: is it possible for the seat of paramount reality occupied by the everyday life to be taken over by another province, in this case the fictional world of cinema? Or, rather, can these coexist polythetically in our experience? The answer comes in no way as a relief, and is to be found in the concept of *permanent liminality* that characterises modernity in Arpad Szakolczai’s view as a continuous state of exception where the frontiers that separate the finite provinces of meaning are cancelled, slowly directing the modern world towards ‘the frightening nightmare of a permanent apocalyptic carnival.’<sup>27</sup>

### 5.3 Morphology, constitution, and dynamics

When science has to deal with a large number of objects or phenomena, its main concerns are to analyse their internal organisation and anatomy, to classify them, to find relations among them, and, in the case of evolving phenomena, such as biological or cultural entities, to study the conditions of their birth, death, mutations, and transformations. We have already approached the problem of the general constitutive structure of a finite province of meaning, so the next step is

<sup>25</sup> Slavoj Žižek. *Slavoj Žižek on The Act of Killing and the modern trend of “privatising public space”*. Retrieved on 10 June 2013. 2013. URL: <http://www.newstatesman.com/culture/2013/07/slavoj-zizek-act-killing-and-modern-trend-privatising-public-space>.

<sup>26</sup> Joshua Oppenheimer, 2012

<sup>27</sup> Szakolczai, *Comedy and the Public Sphere: The Rebirth of Theatre as Comedy and the Genealogy of the Modern Public Arena*, op. cit., p. 298.

to study the FPM typology by using the constitutive elements – resources, methods, and conditions of experience – as criteria. However, given that the field of investigation that opens up this way is too wide to be covered here, we limit ourselves to a set of remarks on this problem.

Obviously, there are ‘provincial’ sociologies that are already established as sciences, although they do not call themselves so: there is a sociology of everyday life, a sociology of media, a sociology of art, a sociology of family life, or a sociology of science, and one needs to make use of these specific sciences to investigate the worlds that people experience in those contexts and make those FPMs thematic. Let us mention a few criteria that one can use in building a typology of the finite provinces of meaning:

**Sociality.** In this case, the criterion is the scope of the referencing self, namely the question, who is a specific province valid for? Some FPMs can be valid for individuals – dreaming or fiction reading are fundamentally personal experiences and everyday life is basically a social experience unless one lives in complete isolation like a hermit – while other provinces, such as the worlds of cinema, shopping, computer games, or tourism, can be valid globally.

**Forms of potestativity.** Some provinces – such as everyday life or games – can give the subject a high degree of power and responsibility, while others – such as theatre, fiction, or other FPMs that are experienced from the position of a spectator – offer low degrees of potestativity.

**Experiential constraints.** Some FPMs are voluntary, such as the worlds of leisure, while others impose themselves without our will, such as everyday life, school life, or religious rituals in traditional societies.

**Specific form of the natural *epochè*.** Some provinces, such as everyday life, television news, or science, have the NAE and the accent of reality of the paramount reality, while other FPMs, such as fiction, theatre, or jokes, are experienced with lower accents of reality.

**Portalling.** One can analyse how technique and technologies affect the conditions of experience and set general constraints upon FPM experience. Some provinces, such as television, radio, or computer work, require specific technologies without which experience in those FPMs would not be possible, and these technologies have invaded, to a certain extent, the paramount reality. Technique must not be understood as referring exclusively to contemporary high technologies, but to the fundamental human ability to operate over the environment using tools and imagination. Such provinces as dream or theoretical contemplation can be considered technique-free realities, but is everyday life, too, a technique-free province? In developed countries, EDL cannot be conceived without technology; while life in traditional communities doesn't require high levels of technicality, it still cannot be considered technique-free.

The high diversity of the finite provinces of meaning also gives rise to the problem of inner variations within a specific FPM class. When Schutz says 'everyday life,' he may have a clear picture in mind, but this picture is first of all the result of his self-inspection and self-reflection. Generalisations are bound by specific limits, for he admits that he has in mind the 'everyday life of the wide-awake grown up adult and not that of the child.'<sup>28</sup> There is no special province for children, but there are special modes of experience of the various provinces by them: their everyday life is not our everyday life, and the 'the experience of the "leap" from one finite area of meaning into another one gets another meaning in the child's sphere.'<sup>29</sup> Even to the 'wide-awake grown up adult,' the everyday life and the FPM structure in general can suffer mutations, and Schutz described this kind of experience in his essays 'The Homecomer'<sup>30</sup> and 'The Stranger.'<sup>31</sup> Also, life's diversity across cultures and history makes it obvious that the everyday life of traditional people does not follow the same rules as the everyday life in con-

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<sup>28</sup> Schutz, 'Letters of Schutz to Eric Voegelin', op. cit., p. 217.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 217.

<sup>30</sup> Schutz, 'The Homecomer', op. cit.

<sup>31</sup> Idem, 'The Stranger: An Essay in Social Psychology', op. cit.

temporary societies or that such determinants as social status, ethnicity, cultural background, or even language are linked to the FPM structure of a person or community.

In the introduction to his deeply disturbing book on the North Korean concentrational universe *Escape from Camp 14*,<sup>32</sup> Blaine Harden contrasts the lives of two contemporary young men from this communist country, Kim Jong-eun and Shin Dong-heuk. The first was raised in the palaces of the totalitarian regime in heavy luxury, did his studies in Switzerland, and lived in complete immunity to the law. The second was born within the walls of a prison, had a poor education in the camp, suffered from extreme hunger and various diseases, did not know the meaning of love, and was punished every single day without reason. The contrast between the life of the young Kim, who was to become the absolutist leader of his country, and that of the young Shin, who was to flee his prison-country and find his freedom in the West, is as strong as one can imagine. On the other hand, both Kim and Shin had their own share of FPM diversity, both had their own everyday life, their 'world of working,' their world of dreams, and their worlds of fantasy. If one sets the reference point in the EDL of one of them, the other one's EDL appears as a very different FPM and vice-versa. To the Western readers of Blaine's book, the everyday lives of Kim and Shin appear as two different provinces of meaning. Strikingly, both of these provinces impose themselves with the highest accent of reality on their experiencing subjects and claim this accent from the reader, too, for 'Escape from Camp 14' is not a fiction book but an account of real-life events. This suggests that one can also use axiological criteria in classifying finite provinces of meaning: some provinces are socially accepted, others are morally stained; some provinces are desirable, others undesirable; some are comfortable, others are traumatic; and so on.

On the question of the *genesis* and *genealogy* of FPMs, let us note that some provinces are culturally and historically specific and others appear only at specific stages in the life of the individual or the individuals who inhabit them. A

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<sup>32</sup>Blaine Harden. *Escape from Camp 14: One Man's Remarkable Odyssey from North Korea to Freedom in the West*. New York: Viking, 2012.

new province is not constructed out of nothing: we don't allot a brand new specific style of experience and a set of specific rules of interaction for a new province once we need it, but rather take an already existing province – most often the EDL – and modify it to meet our requirements. Humans being are never prepared to give up their up-and-running life-world structure just to create a new one 'from scratch.' When the telephone as a technology was invented, the social sphere of telephone conversation, with its habits, norms, and styles, had to be invented as well. This new experience did not come out of nowhere, but emerged as a modification of face-to-face interaction, that is, the structure and the norms of telephone conversation were adopted from the already existing *type* of face-to-face interaction in everyday life.

Provinces are born one out of another according to the same principles of the types of everyday life, because EDL is paramount province in a three-fold way: genealogically, ontogenetically, and constitutionally. Drawing on Paul Virilio, Anne Friedberg assumes that cinema is derived from theatre, showing how the architecture of the movie theatre was transformed to maximise the visual and audio experience specific to film,<sup>33</sup> and that computers are descendants of cinema.<sup>34</sup> This 'descendance' is not only historical, but also constitutive in the framework of the multiple reality, in which one FPM is a matrix of the other. Ontogenetically, this means that the first experience of a human being is a primordial experience that subsequently develops into what we call everyday life. The world of newborn babies only implies basic sensory information provided by smell, touch, and the kinaesthetic sense, which means that their everyday life is collapsed into a yet-undivided core. This primary everyday life will be the first from which any other FPM will derive directly or indirectly. Schutz called everyday life 'the prototype' of any FPM. The word prototype literally means 'the first type;' it is the type that serves as matrix for the construction of any subsequent type in the sense that EDL-world holds constitutive precedence over any other province.

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<sup>33</sup> Friedberg, 'Urban Mobility and Cinematic Visuality: The Screens of Los Angeles - Endless Cinema or Private Telematics', op. cit.

<sup>34</sup> Anne Friedberg. 'Virilio's Screen: The Work of Metaphor in the Age of Technological Convergence'. In: *Journal of Visual Culture* 3.2 (2004), p. 186.

# Chapter 6

## Methods of experience

*I used to work in a factory, and I was really happy  
because I could daydream all day.*

(Ian Curtis)

In some of his studies, such as his applied sociological studies<sup>1</sup> or in his conception of the 'imposed relevances,'<sup>2</sup> Schutz emphasised the concern with the pathic<sup>3</sup> side of human experience while in other theoretical investigations he emphasised the potestative component of the subject's being-in-the-world at the expense of its pathic component. Experience is two-faceted, and the theoretical phenomenology of the life-world needs to balance the way it treats subject-object relationship by placing equal weight on the intentional act and on its reverse. Freud and Foucault made us aware that the outside world is never dull, inanimate, and neutral but charged with desires, emotions, and complex-triggers. I see an object, but I am 'seen' by it, too; I turn my gaze towards an object, I intrude on its reality, but I am affected and 'infected' by its being, too. This 'inverted

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<sup>1</sup>Schutz, 'The Homecomer', op. cit.; idem, 'The Stranger: An Essay in Social Psychology', op. cit.

<sup>2</sup>Schutz, *Reflections on the Problem of Relevance*, op. cit., p. 28.

<sup>3</sup>We prefer the term 'pathic' over of 'passive,' because pathic experience does not equate with passivity: the fact that weather conditions impose themselves on our life does not mean that we remain passive and never do anything against them, such as taking an umbrella or wearing adequate clothes. Also, for the opposite of 'pathic,' we prefer the term 'emphatic' over 'active,' because we need to focus on a specific orientation of experience, not necessarily on 'action.'



intentionality' has, of course, more to do with the unconscious levels of human being than the consciously-reflexive sphere. The fact that an object is given – *i.e.*, offered for possession – implies a change, an affect on the part of the receiving side. Just as intentionality is two-sided, experience in EDL has its own receptive side, too: apart from the set of actions that I can 'do to the world,' there are those things that the world 'does to me.' These two attachments of the ego – one solid (the past) and the other fuzzy (the future) have two components: what *has been done* to me and what *can be done* to me.

Finite provinces of meaning always invite us – sometimes force us – to accept certain identities, to play roles, to wear 'avatars.' By just being present within the horizontal walls of a province, we are automatically placed in a relationship of desire, power, collaboration, love, hatred, etc. with our environment, and thus our presence has a performative component implying an 'interpellation' in the sense of Judith Butler or an 'inverted intentionality' in the sense of Emmanuel Lévinas and other phenomenologists. Butler says that every interpellation is a form of 'calling names,'<sup>4</sup> and Lévinas sees 'inverted intentionality' as the fact of 'being addressed,' 'being called.'<sup>5</sup> Interpellation reveals itself as the reverse of intentionality or rather the *pathic* side of it, in which the ego is 'affected' by the object or by the environment in a sort of 'see-saw effect' as the theatre professional Keith Johnstone called it.<sup>6</sup> I might be the proudest member of a proud community, but in front of Michelangelo's *Moses* I cannot avoid suffering suddenly the inferior condition of my identity. I might be the humble member of an oppressed minority, but in front of Leon Bonnat's *Job* I spontaneously feel superior. Schutz himself borrowed the concept of 'situation' from theatre and the concept of 'number' from the structure of opera.<sup>7</sup> Situatedness means that we are

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<sup>4</sup>Judith Butler. *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*. New York/ London: Routledge, 1997, p. 18.

<sup>5</sup>Emmanuel Lévinas. *Autrement qu'être ou au-delà de l'essence*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic, 2004 (1978), pp. 78-81.

<sup>6</sup>According to Johnstone, the 'see-saw effect' is the conscious and subconscious status play that takes place in interactions, most typically in dialogues: '[w]hen one raises, the other automatically drops' (Keith Johnstone. *Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre*. London: Methuen Drama, 1989, p. 33).

<sup>7</sup>Schutz, 'Mozart and the Philosophers', *op. cit.*, p. 191.

never context-independent actors and that context is always performative.

Arguably, situatedness and pathic experience have been overlooked to some extent by the dominant schools of Western thinking in favour of the empathic or potestative component of human experience. We have no reason to emphasise one component over the other, and the fact that the active side of intentionality has a privileged position in many thinkers, including Weber and Husserl – in spite of their concern with *Verstehen*, apperception, or *Erfahrung* – may be related to the more general tendency of the Judeo-Greek thought that emphasises the solar, active side of experience, which itself comes from the privileged position that the ego has been granted in the constitution of its relationship with the world. Symptomatic for this state of affairs is the wide understanding of social theory mainly as a preoccupation with *action* and *social action*, that is, with ‘things that we do’ rather than ‘things that occur to us.’

Apart from the names already mentioned, one may count among exceptions the anthropology of experience, which seeks to trace the identity-shaping events and experiences in the life of an individual or community,<sup>8</sup> the existentialist thinking, such as Heidegger’s, who takes into account the ‘thrownness’ character of the *Dasein* and emphasises the interplay between thrownness and freedom, that is, between the pathic and the potestative components of experience.<sup>9</sup> The Marxian tradition, with its concern with alienation and oppression, along with the Durkheimian tradition, with its view of social facts as forces externally imposed upon individuals, can also be mentioned on the list of exceptions, but, unfortunately, their positivism prevented them from showing a real concern with experience.

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<sup>8</sup>See, for example: Arnold van Gennep. *The Rites of Passage*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960 (1909); Victor Turner. *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of the Ndembu Ritual*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967; Szokolczai, ‘Identity Formation Mechanisms: A Conceptual and Genealogical Analysis’, *op. cit.*

<sup>9</sup>Martin Heidegger. *Being and Time*. Oxford/ Cambridge: Blackwell, 2001 (1927).

## 6.1 Behaviour, action, experience

In our discussion of Schutz's concept of action, we drew a visual representation<sup>10</sup> of his typology of behaviour according to four criteria (presence of a subjective meaning, inner/outer world, presence of a project, and intention of executing it), and we noted that it missed social action, which was, to both Weber and Schutz, the most important type of behaviour, for it was the concept that fundamentally defined the scope of interpretive sociology.

Let us extend now Schutz's typology of spontaneity by including it in the wider class of experience and by making use of three more criteria: symbolisation, empathic/pathic form, and existence of the other as meaning-target in Weberian sense. The diagram in figure 6.1, which reflects this extended typology, is self-explanatory, so we only need to mention that, apart from the elements found in Schutz's original typology, it includes symbolic experiences and some of their subtypes as well as pathic spontaneity, which is not discriminated further for the same reasons of economy. One can note that the structure of behaviour parallels the structure of language, which points to deeper implications that we will discuss in the following two sections, and also that there is a homology of the two constitutional pillars of the intersubjective world: communication and social action.

The structure is not complete – because some elements, such as non-projected conduct, were omitted to avoid an excess of complexity – and it is just an approximation and a work-in-progress. For instance, one can go further and define *reading* as meaningful reception or *vagary* as unintended, unprojected inner discourse. The term 'interpellation' is mentioned in the sense of Butler,<sup>11</sup> and the criterion of otherness is used here in a simplified, approximate form and should be understood in the context of a You-relationship, while a more precise typology should take into account the facts that subjective meaning cannot be dissociated

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<sup>10</sup> Figure 2.1 (p. 57).

<sup>11</sup> Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*, op. cit., p. 18.

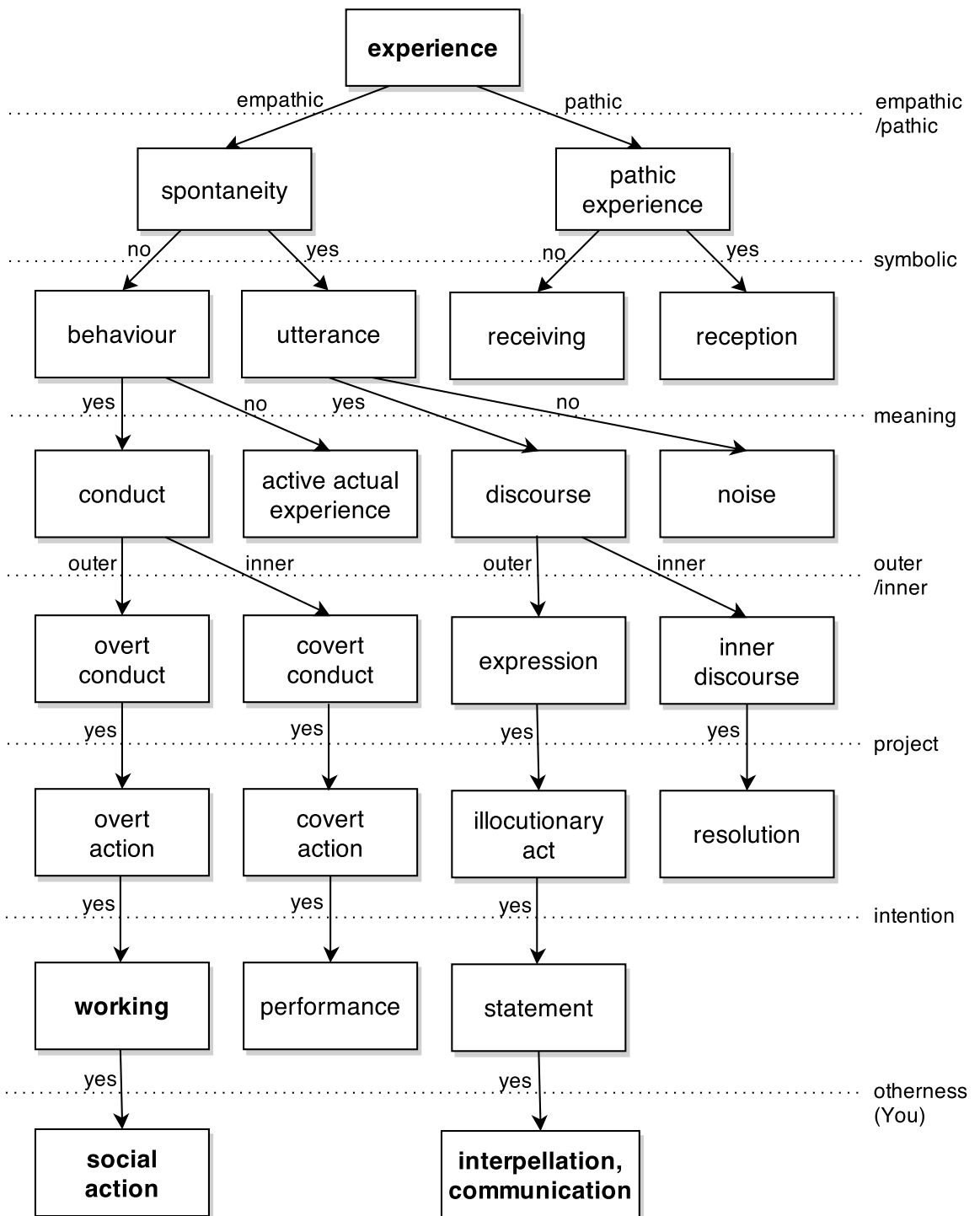


Figure 6.1: Main types of experience across seven criteria.

from otherness, that otherness as a criterion produces itself four subtypes,<sup>12</sup> and that all symbolic acts require otherness – either present or implied – especially illocutionary acts in the sense of Austin.<sup>13</sup>

## 6.2 Biographical situation

These types of experience occur in speech or in act, and we live them in our daily life or in the provinces that we visit, we incite them or we suffer them, we share them intersubjectively or keep them private. Once we have them, they become irreversibly ours and add up to our subjective life-histories and life-stories that shape our identities through the charges of meaning they carry or through the ruptures of meaning they inflict upon us. These series of encounters and experiences, regardless of the province they belong to, ultimately account for our biographies.

*Biographical situation* isn't limited to one's state in a certain moment in time like a pawn's position on a chess board, but comprises the whole cluster of qualities of one's sedimented experiences – subjective or intersubjective, intimate or public, coherent or incoherent, accepted or rejected.

According to Schutz, the sphere of 'the world within reach' is always with us and always around us, changing shape and nature according to the province we find ourselves at a certain moment:

I experience the world within my actual reach as an element of phase of my unique biographical situation, and this involves a transcending of the Here and Now to which it belongs.<sup>14</sup>

The ego carries along with it an immutable, solid luggage of its past actional history, and finds itself always surrounded by a cloud of potential actions that reflect its actional freedom, that is, its potestativity. To the ego, finite provinces

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<sup>12</sup>See 4.4 (p. 146).

<sup>13</sup>Austin, *How to Do Things with Words: The William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955*, op. cit.

<sup>14</sup>Schutz, 'Symbol, Reality, and Society', op. cit., p. 308.

of meaning provide specific identities, but also fields of evolution, fields of crisis, or frameworks in which biographies are developed. We carry the imprints of our collective belonging with ourselves throughout FPMs, but our identity is each time negotiated with our environment, and the self can live with multiple and even conflicting identities as long as their FPMs remain distinct.

My biographical situation involves my past experiences – pathic or empathic –, which situate me not only in the structure of the temporal dimension, that is, in a history, but also in an axiological situation. My past experiences are built up in a series of sedimentations that mediate in a double sense the intersubjective network to which I belong: on the one hand, it is reflected in the structure of otherness surrounding my person at this moment of my life as a form of recognition and sanction of my accomplishments, failures, good deeds, bad deeds, etc.; on the other hand, it is given to my own consciousness as a form of self-recognition; these two aspects of my biographical situation reflection do not necessarily coincide.

The double-sided forms of recognition work like a *social karma*, a constantly changing and evolving horizon that I carry always and everywhere with me in an inescapable way. Social karma is not necessarily coherent and consistent in its fabric of interconnected meaning relations, just as someone's Curriculum Vitae is not necessarily a coherent, complete, and consistent list of accomplishments. Whether we call it biographical situation or social karma, we should not mistake it for one's personality, nor for one's perception or self-perception, but see it as series of sedimentations endowed with meanings, a deposit of images that impose themselves with the highest accent of reality and cannot be changed once settled.

Social karma is the set of all memories, desires, satisfactions, frustrations, and anticipations that we project upon the others, upon the world, and upon ourselves at a certain moment of our lives. We can keep its elements hidden, we can downplay them or highlight them by adding new events, and we can reinterpret them through meaning-giving works. Sometimes, we may carry different social karmas in different finite provinces of meaning, and at other times we may bear a single social karma across provinces.

Our biographical situation is not a dry document that we carry along with us, but a performative principle that regulates our social relations in each FPM according to the norms and codes that are valid in that province. The traditional, religious meaning of karma requires the existence of a divine accountability framework; social karma, as a pure sociological construct, implies the existence of a social accountability framework either in the form of an external institution (such as justice, family, school, etc.) or in the form of an inner instance of the self. That is, social karma is assessed by 'accredited' instances: auditors of companies, academic committees in the academic field, the elderly in traditional communities, forum moderators in Internet discussion boards, etc.

The fundamental way we and those around us reflect upon our biographical situations is the narrative. Our lives are crystallised in life-stories because our fundamental way of communication is verbal, but there may be a deeper reason for it: both experience and discourse follow similar principles of organisation.

# Chapter 7

## Experience as discourse

*We can't tell stories more beautiful than ourselves.*

(Vasile S. Dâncu)

We noted<sup>1</sup> that Schutz has made use of some linguistic terminology to describe the various forms of behaviour. The legitimacy of translating methods from linguistics to sociology resides in Schutz's typology of action,<sup>2</sup> where he considers behaviour and acts of speech as belonging to the more general class of *spontaneity*, which itself is a form of *experience*. Human experience follows simple, general laws of organisation because it emerges through simple, general modes of constitution, which allows one to describe, analyse, and interpret finite provinces of meaning in terms of narratives and discursive phenomena that exhibit register variability, specific syntax, paradigmatic attributes manifested in syntagmatic experiential occurrences, and so on. Once again, Schutz's approach is not singular. Paul Ricoeur and Clifford Geertz have proposed<sup>3</sup> that we *read* social reality as texts and treat meaningful action as we treat a narrative production; Jacques Lacan showed that dreams are structured like a language, and one can decipher

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<sup>1</sup> See 2.6 (p. 60) and 2.1 (p. 57).

<sup>2</sup> See 2.4 (p. 54).

<sup>3</sup> See: Paul Ricoeur. 'The Model of the Text: Meaningful Action Considered as a Text'. In: *New Literary History* 5.1 (1973), pp. 91–117; Clifford Geertz. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1973; Mark A. Schneider. 'Culture-As-Text in the Work of Clifford Geertz'. In: *Theory and Society* 16 (1987), pp. 809–839.



them by analysing the tropes of their rhetoric,<sup>4</sup> along with a whole structuralist school that sought to identify linguistic structures in social phenomena, such as culinary systems, myths, and so on.

To say that experience in an FPM is organised like a language has several implications:

1. The taken-for-granted rules of action and interaction specific to that province can be treated as basic codes of behaviour, that is, sets of licit versus illicit combinations.
2. Actions and experiences always have a *subject* and are regulated by the general pronominal structure of intersubjectivity.<sup>5</sup> The self is the personal *subject* of an action or experience; for instance, the *first-person plural* (nostratic) relationship, in which the ego co-authors an action with someone else, is not a real case of social action in Weberian sense given that action is not oriented *towards* the other ego. Rather, both of them are subsumed to the acting self as a collective, nostratic entity. If this collective action is oriented towards a second-person self (human or non-human, singular or collective), then action is social.
3. Actions and experiences are always given to the experiencing self in a *temporal* mode (past, ongoing, future), a *potestative* mode (I can do it, I cannot do it), and a *realisation* mode (completed, uncompleted).
4. Finite provinces of meaning have *authors*, and authors can identify or not with the experiencing subject.
5. Both linguistic acts and actions can take part as units in sequences of individual behaviour<sup>6</sup> or in social interaction. 'Illocutionary acts' in the sense of

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<sup>4</sup>Jacques Lacan. *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*. New York/ London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006 (1901), pp. 266-269; Jacques Lacan. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan. Book XV: The Psychoanalytic Act. 1967, 1968*. Trans. by Cormac Gallagher. Retrieved on 16 July 2013. URL: <http://www.tau.ac.il/~cohenron/ScanSeminar.pdf>, pp. 174-175.

<sup>5</sup>See 4.4 (p. 141).

<sup>6</sup>Structures of behaviour that exhibit a linguistic pattern may not be an exclusively human specificity, as they were also noted in animal behavioural chains (Alina Rusu and Marius I. Bența. 'Behavior as Discourse: A Structural Analysis of the Feeding Behavior of Laboratory Rats'. In: *Measuring Behavior 2000, 3rd International Conference on Methods and Techniques in Behavioral Research*, July 2000).

J. L. Austin,<sup>7</sup> for instance, qualify as social action in the Weberian sense.

6. Both speech acts and actions are acts of identity. Robert LePage says that an individual chooses from the linguistic register and from the available repertoire those speech acts that correspond to the identity they want to project in a specific situation.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, one can say that an individual chooses from the actional register and the set of actional codes available those specific acts that correspond to the identity they want to project or assume.
7. The life-world's attributes (coordinatisation, non-homogeneity, etc.) are shaped narratively.
8. The Saussurean distinctions *langue* vs. *parole* and *paradigm* vs. *syntagm* can be generalised to FPM experience.

Let us examine the last two points more closely in the following sections.

## 7.1 Narrative tools

Our three-dimensional model of the FPM structure provides a synchronic anatomy of experience and identity, but overlooks the diachronic mechanics of life-world constitution and identity formation. The management of FPM resources requires a set of dynamic interventions of a certain type, and, in this context, we are interested in the following questions:

- Given that the social space is non-homogeneous and fractured, how and why does it come to bear these non-homogeneities or fractures and not others?
- Given that the social time is engraved with significant events, how and why did these points receive the mark of significability while others did not?
- Given that identities are shaped through interactions and relations, how and why were they shaped in a particular way and not another?

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<sup>7</sup> Austin, *How to Do Things with Words: The William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955*, op. cit.

<sup>8</sup> Robert B. Le Page and Andrée Tabouret-Keller. *Acts of Identity: Creole-Based Approaches to Language and Ethnicity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

The 'why' part of the answers must reside in the knowledge resources of a FPM, particularly in the relevance structures, while the 'how' answers must come from the methods of experience, particularly from narrative practices and codes of communication and interaction.

Experience must be a central concern in the social sciences, as Arpad Szokolczai<sup>9</sup> argued, and narratives constitute the royal gate to experience, because they normally account for things as they were experienced, not things as they really happened. By 'narrative' or 'discourse' we mean any account of experience, be it immediate or mediated, social or individual. The question whether discourse is *aposteriori* (as it follows experience) or *apriori* (as it precedes experience) is an aporia that needs not to be solved here.

Exploring a narrative is a complex process of deconstruction and reconstruction. Narratives are not pure reflections of people's experiences, but the result of a reconstruction work on the multidimensional architecture of the meanings attached by them.

Let us imagine that one had the task of transporting a castle from its location to another site. For the price of a great deal of resources and energy, it is possible to 'deconstruct' a building, to load every piece of stone on vehicles, move them to the new location, and rebuild the edifice there.<sup>10</sup> But there is one important detail that engineers need to take care at every step: the code. The castle, a three-dimensional object, is initially transformed into a one-dimensional entity, a queue of stone blocks. For the reconstruction work to be possible, every single block of stone needs to be marked and be assigned a code value according to its position in the whole. In any language or narrative, the code works in the same way as in our architectural scenario. Without a code, a pile of blocks remains just a pile of blocks and speech remains meaningless noise.

The narrativisation of experience is hence the linearisation of meaning, as language is eminently a time-bound, one-dimensional structure, whereas meaning

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<sup>9</sup> Arpad Szokolczai. *Experience and Identity*. Retrieved on 19 July 2007. Cork: University College Cork, 2001. URL: <http://www.ucc.ie/depts/sociology/identity/epubl/iddrs.html>.

<sup>10</sup> An example from: Bența, 'Spații sociale, spații virtuale [Social Spaces, Virtual Spaces]', op. cit.

is multidimensional. The fact that language and action share one-dimensionality as their fundamental constraint is not a coincidence, since speaking, story telling, and action belong to the more general category of experience. The meaning-units we employ in linguistic utterances or narratives need to be produced and moved, like stone blocks, along the channel of communication one after the other in a serial process. The code implies in both cases that the occurrence of a sign or the position of a piece of stone cannot be arbitrary, but must be determined by a rule of production. Obviously, the same rule needs to be used in the reconstruction work, even though sometimes things do not happen that way if the codes used by the experiencer and the interpreter do not match.

Places, events, and objects acquire their entitlement to existence by simply taking part to the discourse of everyday life or a different finite provinces of meaning. They additionally receive specific amounts of significability by holding specific positions in the discourse. The narrative techniques that we use in shaping our multiple realities imply a series of *choices* based on the relevance structure of the self in a specific FPM, because 'relevance is a regulative principle of reality construction in the sense that it is a regulative principle of knowing and experiencing objects, events, and, in turn, the subject, as well as a regulative principle for defining the situation.'<sup>11</sup>

**Selection** is perhaps the first and most important of all discursive tools. One could even argue that any discourse device can be reduced to, or expressed in terms of, selection, given that situations typically involve possible choices. Selection begins when the narrative instance decides which event is going to be counted in and which is going to be left out. Of all the agents experienced, some are to become characters in the story, others don't. Of all the events experienced, some take part in the plot, others don't. Selection criteria depend on the type and breadth of the discourse, on who produces it, and on who receives it; often, these criteria stay under the sign of relativity or even arbitrariness. For example, the official maps drawn by the British

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<sup>11</sup>Nasu, 'A Continuing Dialogue with Alfred Schutz', op. cit., p. 93.

colonial bureaucracies to depict 'savage' territories in Africa strongly reflect Europe's social construction of the world for many centuries under the doctrine of *terra nullius*. For the colonial powers, landscape appeared empty and mostly uninhabited, that is, eagerly waiting to be occupied. James Duncan writes that the English explorer George Barrow 'produced detailed descriptions of African landscapes which minimized the presence of Africans on the land,' which 'portrayed a country that was rich in resources,' vast, and void of social presence, *i.e.*, 'open to European imperialism.'<sup>12</sup>

**Spotlighting** refers chiefly to the technique of setting a boundary between background and foreground elements of a discourse. Out of a set of several actions, changes, or states of affair *selected* to be part of a narrative, one of them constitutes the main element and becomes the headline. Of all the characters of the story, one is the main character, and spotlighting is called *protagonising*. The audience will always identify with the protagonist regardless of the axiological charges or the values associated with this character. The meaning of a story can change dramatically if one simply switches the order of the sentences, while truth remains untouched. The main element is always perceived as standing out in foreground, whereas the other items are seen as laying back in the background. Spotlighting directs identification: the character that the audience will tend to identify with is not necessarily the most beautiful, the kindest, or the strongest, but simply the one that is perceived as protagonist of the story.

**Ranking** is another moment of discourse production, which deals with tacitly creating hierarchies among the elements of the narrative or among the pieces of narratives in a larger discourse. The order in which various pieces of information are passed creates not only background/foreground distinctions, it also sets up an inner hierarchy of textual elements. On a printed page, the text or the photo at the top will be perceived as more important than the

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<sup>12</sup>James Duncan. 'Sites of Representation: Place, Time, and the Discourse of the Other'. In: *Place/Culture/Representation*. Ed. by James Duncan and David Ley. London/ New York: Routledge, 1993, p. 50.

bottom text or photo; in a series of facts, those that are mentioned in the beginning and the end are perceived as most important: the first because it's the one that captures attention and the last because it remains in the memory of the audience.

**Contextualisation** refers to changing the perception of an element by placing it into a specific context or, in other words, into a syntagmatic or paradigmatic relationship with other elements. The perception of the foreground figure highly depends on the background against which it is perceived: to describe, say, a celebrity's luxurious appearance in the context of a high-life event sheds a certain light over that person, while presenting the same image in the context of the fight against poverty in Africa sheds a completely different light upon them.

The narrative tools mentioned above work in the general three-dimensional structure of the life-world in times of stability when the order of the world is rooted and largely unquestioned. For this reason, they are not necessarily the proper tools of understanding historicity and becoming, for their explanatory potential halts in liminal times, when the taken-for-granted rules of the world are suspended and order is turned upside-down. More investigation is needed to connect the Schutzian sociology of 'times of peace' with the anthropology of the 'times of crisis' and parallel the 'shocking' passage from a FPM to another with the large-scale inflection points that affect in liminal times the life of an individual or community.<sup>13</sup>

## 7.2 Paradigm and syntagm

Edmund Husserl recognises two ways of referring to space:<sup>14</sup> on the one hand, one can talk of 'objective space' – a system of objective locales (*Raumstellen*) and,

<sup>13</sup>See Genep, *The Rites of Passage*, op. cit.; Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of the Ndembu Ritual*, op. cit.; Szokolczai, 'Identity Formation Mechanisms: A Conceptual and Genealogical Analysis', op. cit.

<sup>14</sup>Husserl, 'Text Nr. 6: Aus dem Vorlesungen Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie – Wintersemester 1910/1911', op. cit., pp. 16-17.

on the other hand, 'the phenomenon of space' – the way in which space appears as 'here and there,' 'front and back,' or 'left and right.' The objective space is a socially relevant network of places, a paradigmatic structure that cannot be experienced at once by an individual in the natural attitude. Yet, one always experiences space as a 'phenomenon' – a temporally and referentially determined place. If, for a specific community, social space is heterogeneous and if different places appear to be charged with higher amounts of significance than others it is because certain events have marked those specific places in the course of that community's intersubjective history. Just as a living language itself exists concretely as *parole* – i.e., as actual speech or text and not as an abstract set of rules – so too the social world is experienced only as historical sequentiality.

This double character of experience imposes itself not only upon the spatial and linguistic order but upon all the dimensions of the life-world. The very fact that we deal with different categories of time and different categories of objects and actors – that is, with the paradigmatic structure of the world – reveals the way in which the stream of the social life is syntagmatically produced according to a specific set of rules of relevance. The social structures that shape the life environment of the ego or, more generally, the system of typification of everyday life, stand for the paradigmatic side of sociality, whereas the history through which an ego articulates its meaningful events represents the syntagmatic side of temporal experience. Our actions, attitudes, and interactions can be analysed in the light of the syntagm/paradigm perspective, as we always take part paradigmatically to a contextual world that assigns us a status and a set of implicit meanings and we always interact syntagmatically with objects or actors that themselves are involved in paradigmatic structures.

Any cause-and-effect system of interpreting actions and interactions will place them under the general category of syntagmatic relationships. Paradigmatic relations comprise principally, but are not limited to, relations of similarity, classification, and typification. The distinction can apply to what is commonly called

in drama terminology 'situation' (or 'number' in opera<sup>15</sup>) as opposed to 'status.' Keith Johnstone explains that a character can have a high status in relation with the other characters of the story, but 'play low' in a certain situation.<sup>16</sup> Someone may know a particular street as generally homely and cosy, yet feel it as an unwelcoming and alien environment in a particular situation. In this context, 'situation' refers to the syntagmatic side of experience, whereas 'status' to its paradigmatic component.

Let us imagine two characters of the same story or film, say, Brenda and Rob, who neither know each other, nor meet each other in the story. Today, Rob has just failed his exam and faces an emotional break-down. Today, too, by the end of her complicated love-story, Brenda has just been dumped by her boy-friend and faces, too, an emotional break-down. Rob and Brenda have never met, but both of them experience at the same time a failure with similar psychological implications. The reader is presented with their failure stories in the same narrative, thus experiences their failures synchronically. There is no possible causal relation between the two events, which, however, belong to the same paradigm. Can one speak of a *relationship* between Rob and Brenda? Not in the sense of a social, interactional relationship, that is to say, not from syntagmatic perspective. The fact that the two stories are similar and belong to the same class of events exists only in the mind of an *observer*. But aren't causes and effects, too, just constructions of an observer? Fiction writers constantly make use of such paradigmatic relationships among events, characters, and situations, because they are devices that help them induce particular effects in their readers. Joining Brenda and Rob's failure experiences in the same story invites the audience to meditate on the themes of failure and rejection. Not only writers, but sociologists, too, sometimes make inferences on the basis of this type of connection, especially when they make use of such constructs as types and ideal types. In fact, every generalisation, whether statistical or interpretive, implies a system of paradigmatic relationships between actors or phenomena. The important point here is that both paradigmatic and

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<sup>15</sup> Schutz, 'Mozart and the Philosophers', op. cit., p. 191.

<sup>16</sup> Johnstone, *Impro: Improvisation and the Theatre*, op. cit., p. 36.



syntagmatic relations are two faces of the same reality – social experience – in the same sense in which paradigm and syntagm are two aspects of language as a unique reality.

While syntagmatic relations appear to be regulated by the logical principles of cause and effect, the logic of paradigmatic relations seems rather capricious and unaccountable. In the preface to *The Order of Things*, Michel Foucault recalls with amusement a text by Jorge Luis Borges that describes how animals are classified, according to ‘a certain Chinese encyclopaedia,’ in the following types: ‘(a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) sucking pigs, (e) sirens, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (l) *et cetera*, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies.’<sup>17</sup> The exaggerated, bizarre approach of this imaginary encyclopaedia is a good pretext for Foucault to stir up the reader’s epistemic curiosity in the works of the episteme of taxonomy and the exoticism of its output, for, obviously, he must have been aware, along with Borges, that the Chinese language was already a stock of knowledge in itself that would never pass the test of modern, operational rationality. Chinese does not have a special category for the animals that can be ‘drawn with a very fine camelhair brush,’ but does have a system of classification that includes, for instance, in the same category the road, the fish, the leg, the snake, and the river – or, better, the words that designate these objects – a fact that appears equally bizarre to anyone educated in the Western world. When counted, these nouns take the same measure-word<sup>18</sup> based on their physical *appearance*: they are all *elongated* objects. The meaning-based paradigmatic ontologies of the archaic life-worlds are not operational in the finite provinces of meaning of scientific rationality. The noun’s categories of number or gender have no scientific relevance outside the field of linguistics: the fact that the generic cat is called using a feminine noun in German (*die Katze*) and a masculine noun in French

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<sup>17</sup> Michel Foucault. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. London/ New York: Routledge, 2005 (1966), p. xvi.

<sup>18</sup> 条, *tiào*

(*le chat*) stirs no interest in a biologist. Ferdinand de Saussure considered this a mere consequence of the arbitrary character of the linguistic sign.<sup>19</sup> Whether he was right or not, it is obvious that the ontologies of the traditional worlds are not compatible with the ontologies of modern science even though they can be operational in a modern world; in Schutz's words, this is so because we are dealing with different, incompatible finite provinces of meaning.

The prototype of action and social action in modernity is based on a 'means-ends rationality' according to Weber or on the logic of the *Um-zu Motiv* and the *Weil-Motiv* according to Schutz.<sup>20</sup> What makes an action rational is the way it finds its links in a causal-teleological structure and the efficiency thereof. Either causal or teleological, this type of rationality remains predominantly sequential and syntagmatic, and characteristic for causal and teleological sequences of action is the exclusion of 'a third party.' Paradigmatic relations are neither causal nor teleological, because they are not conditioned by temporality.

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<sup>19</sup>Ferdinand de Saussure. *Cours de linguistique générale*. Paris: Éditions Payot & Rivages, 1967 (1916), pp. 100-103.

<sup>20</sup>Alfred Schutz. 'Choice and the Social Sciences'. In: *Collected Papers V: Phenomenology and the Social Sciences*. Ed. by Lester Embree. Phaenomenologica. Dordrecht/ Heidelberg/ London/ New York: Springer, 2011 (1945), pp. 79-81.



## Chapter 8

# Ancient FPM portals: painted screens

*Formerly, I, Zhuang Zi, dreamt that I was a butterfly, a butterfly flying about, feeling that it was enjoying itself. I did not know that it was Zi. Suddenly, I awoke...*

(Zhuang Zi)

A wall is the simplest architectural element that can fracture space by hindering the sensory channels that normally make the presence of an object possible. A picture is the simplest mechanism that can open up the space enclosed by a wall to another FPM by creating sensory impressions related to objects that do not belong to the world of its material support, and this mechanism is fundamental to the ‘portalling’ nature of symbolic experience: ‘before a painting, we permit our visual field to be limited by what is within the frame as a passage into the pictorial world,’<sup>1</sup> as Schutz put it. The German philosopher Eugen Fink, one of Husserl’s students, said that a picture has the power of a window that opens to an ‘image-world’ (*Bildwelt*),<sup>2</sup> and MacDonald et al. investigated the phenomenon of ‘portalling’ that is found in many traditional societies as ‘the experience of mov-

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<sup>1</sup>Schutz, ‘Symbol, Reality, and Society’, op. cit., p. 344.

<sup>2</sup>Fink, ‘Vergegenwärtigung und Bild. Beiträge zur Phänomenologie der Unwirklichkeit’, op. cit.

ing from one reality to another via a tunnel, door, aperture, hole, or the like.<sup>3</sup>

Let us discuss here<sup>4</sup> a very simple yet very rich type of FPM ‘portal’ that originated in Ancient China and spread, along with Chinese writing and many fine art traditions, to Japan and Korea before being exported to the West: the *painted screen*<sup>5</sup> (also known as *folded screen* or *folding room divider*).

The painted screen is one of the oldest techniques of modular architectonics, and is an object made of wood, paper, wood gilded in gold, or painted canvas ‘that occupies a three-dimensional space and divides space,’ and takes the shape of a single painted panel or a set of multiple panels (up to eight) linked together to surround a particular private area in indoors or outdoors settings.<sup>6</sup> Screens are typically used to create spaces of intimacy, to protect from draft,<sup>7</sup> as backdrops in performances or the tea ceremony, as enclosures for Buddhist rites, or as a discreet way of hiding entrances. With the help of a folding screen, ‘one could literally make the bedroom disappear’<sup>8</sup> or, ‘by using the folding screen as a border, interior space could be transformed into “sacred space,” which intercepts the “space” of the outside world.’<sup>9</sup> A gilded screen – symbol of wealth and power – placed behind the seat of a landlord who gave a speech at night created a dramatic atmosphere in a ‘dimly lit interior’ where light from candles and oil lamps was reflected in the golden panels.<sup>10</sup>

Folded screens have the power not only to reorganise space, but to temporarily change its qualities, as Wu Hung said in a study on this type of objects:

<sup>3</sup> MacDonald et al., ‘Mirrors, Portals, and Multiple Realities’, op. cit., p. 39.

<sup>4</sup> In this chapter, I develop further several ideas introduced in: Bența, ‘Spații sociale, spații virtuale [Social Spaces, Virtual Spaces]’, op. cit.

<sup>5</sup> See, for example, Miranda Hofelt. *Japanese Screens in the Art Institute of Chicago*. The Art Institute of Chicago. Chicago, 1996; Misato Ido. ‘Gilded Space: Creating Spaces with Gilded Folding Screens’. In: *Utopia: Here and There*. Ed. by Koichi Maeda. Vol. 4. UTCP Booklet. Tokyo: The University of Tokyo Center for Philosophy, 2008, pp. 65–75; Wu Hung. ‘The Painted Screen’. In: *Critical Inquiry* 23, The University of Chicago Press (1996), pp. 37–79.

<sup>6</sup> Idem, ‘The Painted Screen’, op. cit., p. 38.

<sup>7</sup> In Japanese, the screens are called *byōbu* (屏風, literally: ‘protection from wind’), in French they are referred to as *paravent*, while in Chinese they are called *píngzhàng* (屏障), both signs having the meaning of ‘shield’ or ‘to shield’ (see Hofelt, *Japanese Screens in the Art Institute of Chicago*, op. cit., p. 2; Hung, ‘The Painted Screen’, op. cit., p. 39).

<sup>8</sup> Hofelt, *Japanese Screens in the Art Institute of Chicago*, op. cit., p. 3.

<sup>9</sup> Ido, ‘Gilded Space: Creating Spaces with Gilded Folding Screens’, op. cit., p. 69.

<sup>10</sup> Hofelt, *Japanese Screens in the Art Institute of Chicago*, op. cit., pp. 3–4.

[The screen] not only divides an undifferentiated space into two juxtaposed areas – that in front of it and that behind it – but also qualifies these two areas. To the person backed or surrounded by a screen, the area behind the screen has become hidden from sight; it has suddenly disappeared, at least temporarily. He finds himself within an encircled area and perceives this area as belonging to him. He is the master of this place.<sup>11</sup>

A folded screen can turn a specific FPM into another type of FPM. A screen that depicts a particular scene works as a window, and the person surrounded by it becomes the *master* of an enlarged area. This sense of ownership the space encircling the individual must certainly be connected to the science of *proxemics* inaugurated by Edward T. Hall – a science that is concerned with the anthropological diversity of the experience of space<sup>12</sup> – in the sense that space ownership should apply not only to physical space, but also to the symbolically constructed space of a picture. The painted screen ‘transforms space into places,’<sup>13</sup> and works as horizontal membrane of a specific FPM by providing both a sense of security and a sense of freedom.<sup>14</sup> This understanding of space ownership must also be linked to what we called earlier ‘FPM authorship:’ the particular qualities of the space created with the use of a gilded screen find their social legitimacy in the power of the screen’s owner who is this way an ‘FPM creator.’

Misato Ido explains that the Japanese have a word for the peculiar provinces created by such enclosures: *muen*,<sup>15</sup> which ‘is a concept denoting that there is no connection with ordinary space, and it should be shut out from “real” society,’ a place where the everyday life’s social hierarchies are put between brackets, a ‘kind of utopian space, which negates reality,’<sup>16</sup> negates the authority of everyday

<sup>11</sup> Hung, ‘The Painted Screen’, op. cit., pp. 38-39.

<sup>12</sup> Hall, ‘Proxemics’, op. cit.

<sup>13</sup> Hung, ‘The Painted Screen’, op. cit., p. 39.

<sup>14</sup> See 4.4 (p. 128).

<sup>15</sup> The word *muen* (無縁) means, literally, ‘no connection’ or ‘unrelatedness.’

<sup>16</sup> Ido, ‘Gilded Space: Creating Spaces with Gilded Folding Screens’, op. cit., p. 72.

life norms, and declares the autonomy of a specific finite province of meaning delimited by the articulated panels.

Screen painting was done on canvas, wood, or gold, and had both a decorative function and a narrative intention, especially in Buddhist and Zen contexts. Like the frames of a film or a cartoon, a screen's panels were supposed to be *read* – typically from right to left – because each panel would depict a different scene on a certain theme, and the sequence would tell a story with the intention of moving the viewer spiritually.<sup>17</sup>

A screen has the power to shield a place or to create frontiers-crossings between different realities with different standards of spatiality, temporality, ideas and behaviour. Wu Hung analyses a royal portrait of an emperor of the Ming dynasty. To express the majesty of his status and posture, the artist has painted the figure of the emperor in front of a screen decorated with images of dragons and clouds. Hung notices a set of semiotic interactions between the figure of the emperor and the screen: the axe of his body appears at the centre of the screen beneath the biggest of the three dragons. The patterning interaction occurs in multiple ways: there are dragons painted on the carpet under the emperor's feet, on the decorations of his costume, and on the throne as well, and this paradigmatic interaction creates bridges between the image and the person sitting in front of it and assures continuity; it is a relationship that moves against framing, which means separating syntagmatically the two areas. The emperor does not acknowledge the screen behind him, as he 'watches' the spectator, and this subject-viewer relationship is meant to function as an 'intimidating interpellation.'

Hung also gives an example of an illicit syntagmatic relationship. During a court audience, the Emperor Guangwu was sitting 'on his throne surrounded by a screen newly painted with images of eminent women.'<sup>18</sup> According to Hung, the emperor turned around several times to look and enjoy the female portraits, an act that was seen as immoral by the noblemen who attended the audience. They did not hesitate to admonish the emperor, because he had 'identified himself as

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<sup>17</sup> Hofelt, *Japanese Screens in the Art Institute of Chicago*, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

<sup>18</sup> Hung, 'The Painted Screen', op. cit., p. 44.

a viewer of the screen and thus acknowledged the screen's independent value as art to be appreciated.<sup>19</sup> The emperor abandoned the paradigmatic relationship that was ensuring his majestic condition, and 'stepped down' to the common face-to-face and syntagmatic interaction between a (mere) male watching a female body.

In Schutzian terms, the prototype of all interaction is the face-to-face encounter,<sup>20</sup> which is the only situation that takes the other as fully real. The 'prototype' character of the face-to-face situation entails, as a first logical step, the existence of 'weaker' instances of interaction, which are to be found, most likely, in non-EDL provinces. A painting can be such a 'weak' case of *vis-à-vis* interaction.

The second step is what Hung calls 'metapicture' or painting-within-painting. He gives several examples of screens that depict scenes depicting other screens, a setting that invites the viewer to a metaphysical interrogation on the frontiers between real and non-real:

The designer deliberately confuses and puzzles the viewer, who is led to believe that the domestic scene painted on the screen is part of the real world portrayed in the painting. The consistent obliqueness of both 'real' and 'painted' furniture – platforms, beds, tables [...] – guide the viewer's gaze into the distance without interruption and the reduced size of the 'painted' figures and objects on the screen suggests their remoteness.<sup>21</sup>

Metapictures problematise the frame of the painting and point to the possibility of a 'degree of reality,' which is not to be confounded with the Schutzian 'accent of reality,' but should represent the mere arithmetical number of frontiers in a series of metapictures. The third logical step is, of course, the possibility of transgressing these frontiers.<sup>22</sup> An ancient story tells that a beautiful woman painted

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 44.

<sup>20</sup> Schutz took the concept of 'face-to-face situation' from Charles Horton Cooley Wagner, *Alfred Schutz: An Intellectual Biography*, op. cit., p. 72.

<sup>21</sup> Hung, 'The Painted Screen', op. cit., pp. 69-70.

<sup>22</sup> Bența, 'Spații sociale, spații virtuale [Social Spaces, Virtual Spaces]', op. cit.



on a screen might, under certain circumstances (such as a truly devoted love), turn out into a real woman. The reversed passageway has been imagined as well, at least in anecdotes. Hung recounts the story of King Sun Liang, who ordered 'an extremely thin glass screen' for his favoured concubines be seen through at parties, as a means to bypass ancient China's rule according to which women were not supposed to be publicly exposed.

One may also imagine a 'step zero' by asking oneself how can one be sure that one's everyday life-world itself is not a world depicted on a screen in someone else's room.

Schutz drew the whole FPM model following the structure of EDL, to which he granted the paramount and archetype status, which means that EDL encompasses all other FPMs, and, for this reason, it is a more *stable* province compared to others. That is to say, I can wake up into EDL from a dream or I can finish reading a novel and turn back to EDL, but I cannot wake up from the state of awakesness itself. The EDL not only encompasses all the other provinces, but offers them a prototypical pattern of constitution, too. In this sense, EDL has a continually primal precedence over the others, and sociologists are entitled to make use of the EDL template structure as a methodological device in analysing its 'modifications' in other FPMs. Ostensibly, Schutz used the paramount character of EDL as a legitimation of its archetypal character.

Hung doesn't mention any case of 'step zero' in his study on the painted screens, but, not surprisingly, ancient Chinese philosophy does have stories where the 'paramount' status of everyday life is questioned. One of these stories comes from the Daoist philosopher Zhuangzi who lived in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, and does not involve painted screens but the FPM of dream. The ancient story tells that once, Zhuangzi dreamt that he was a butterfly.<sup>23</sup> This butterfly was flying around happily without knowing that he was Zhuangzi. Then Zhuangzi woke up. Now, was Zhuangzi dreaming of being a butterfly or rather the butterfly was dreaming

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<sup>23</sup> Chuang Tzu. *The Essential Chuang Tzu*. Ed. by Sam Hamill and J. P. Seaton. Boston/ London: Shambhala, 1999, p. 18; Hans-Georg Möller. 'Zhuangzi's 'Dream of the Butterfly' – a Daoist Interpretation'. In: *Philosophy East & West* 49.4 (Oct. 1999), pp. 439–450.

of being Zhuangzi?

Numerous schools of thought have claimed that the world of daily life is just an illusion, while the ultimate reality is transcendental. One can mention Plato's myth of the cave or the Upaniṣads' general conception of the all-encompassing illusion that dominates the phenomenal world.<sup>24</sup>

Obviously, the problem has a metaphysical nature and cannot be approached within the realm of sociology, let alone within the limits of the 'natural attitude' analysis, which Schutzian sociology assumes. As a consequence, in FPM sociology, one should not understand the status of 'paramount reality' in a metaphysical sense, but simply in a phenomenological-epistemological sense. In other words, everyday life must not be seen as 'ultimate reality,' but as main aggregator of FPM portals.

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<sup>24</sup>In the words of Surendranath Dasgupta, the first scholar who wrote a systematic history of Indian philosophy, it is 'the doctrine of *Māyā* [which] becomes the foundation of Śāṅkara's philosophy of the Vedānta in which Brahman alone is real and all else beside him is unreal.' (Surendranath Dasgupta. *A History of Indian Philosophy*. Vol. 1. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922, p. 50)



# Conclusion

*'Además, no tenemos testigos.'*

*'¿Dios?'*

*'Sí. Pero El es de nuestra parte.'*<sup>25</sup>

(Pedro Almodóvar, *Mala Educación*)

Any sociological theory must draw its impetus from two motivations: as a systematic construction, it must bring a new light of understanding onto the general set of problems that it addresses – that is, it must bring novel epistemological value – and it must serve as a tool to investigating further particular areas of the various realms of the social life – that is, it must bring an effective methodology. FPM theory may not have these motivational grounds fully stable yet, but does have them as a determined project that finds itself in the stage of construction site.

We saw that finite provinces of meaning can be described in terms of a general structure, whose constitutive elements can vary, thus pointing to particular 'provincial' classes. FPMs are given to the social scientist who, invariably, sees them from a specific province called sociology, anthropology, or social psychology, and is able to analyse them as particular entities or, comparatively, as classes. They are experienced under their specific NAE and given to the experiencing ego in reflection and self-reflection. In first approximation, they can be considered autonomous, self-consistent, self-coherent, and mutually incoherent, but at closer inspection they appear connected and related among themselves in several

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<sup>25</sup> *'Besides, we had no witness.'* 'God?' 'Yes. But He is on our side.' (In Spanish)

ways: syntagmatically in the course of our daily transitions from one province to another, paradigmatically through the invariant structures of the self that transcend the particular 'provincial' conditions, and polythetically in the simultaneous, 'polyphonic' character of experience. Some finite provinces of meaning are constituted intersubjectively and impose themselves 'from the outside' upon the experiencing subject, while others are constituted in pure subjectivity. Experience in finite provinces of meaning can be analysed narratively and identity can be seen as a fluid place within the frontiers of a province that awaits to be inhabited by an equally fluid and polyphonic self. Historically and culturally, FPMs show a high diversity and an ever-changing morphology, and the genealogy of their forms appears to follow generally the paths of their constitutional links.

Our work clarified some points of the Schutzian theory, but also opened up more questions. One of these refers to the status of the concept of finite province of meaning. As a sociological construct, it must be clearly identified as object belonging to the FPM of sociology itself that does not follow its principles with the precision of physical phenomena, but faces ambiguities and vagueness with respect to its definition, its classes, and its laws. For instance, it is clear that everyday life is a finite province of meaning of a peculiar type. However, the historical and cultural human diversity brings the problem of the diversity of forms of everyday life in contrast with the diversity of the finite provinces of meaning. Also, it seems clear following Schutz that the world of religion is a finite province of meaning. However, the high diversity of manifestation forms of the sacred makes it difficult to answer the question where a province starts and where it ends. Can cultures be considered and treated as FPMs, too? In an earlier manuscript, Schutz assumed they can, and he set himself the task of 'explicating the implied *attention à la vie* which gives rise to the Renaissance, or to the cultural circle of Buddhism, or to the Gothic peoples, or to the polyphony of the Netherlands, or to the work of Giorgione, as well as to the political thinking of the Romantics and to the economic theory of liberalism.'<sup>26</sup> In his later texts, Schutz dropped the idea,

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<sup>26</sup>Schutz, 'The Problem of Personality in the Social World', op. cit., p. 240.

and probably realised that culture must be seen as a variability factor of EDL and other provinces rather than a province in itself. The problem of diversity and variability must be solved by carefully taking into account the referencing point: the everyday life of our predecessors was, no doubt, their paramount reality, whereas to us, their EDL is a mere historical FPM; the everyday life of practising Buddhists is their paramount reality, while to us, their EDL is a particular FPM and vice-versa.

There are also questions that knock on metaphysics' doors, such as the problem of Zhuangzi's dream, mentioned in the previous chapter.

Another one is the question what happens when finite provinces of meaning and their shock-transitions themselves are *given* in the natural attitude. For the past years, I happened to be acquainted with theatre and film professionals – actors, directors, or script writers – and, in our casual conversations, I would often use the opportunity and ask them about the way they manage the many realities they are bound to live in because of their profession and which are their limits of *behaviour* on stage. Actors have their ethical or psychological limits as to what they can do on stage apart from those limits imposed by their physical abilities. They are trained in acting schools how to drop their inhibitions and overcome the barriers of behaviour that society tried so hard to inscribe in their being, and the limits that remain are always determined personally, socially, and culturally for each actor. Elena Ivanca, an actor with the National Theatre in Cluj city, confessed to me on one such occasion that once she had refused to play the role of a woman suffering from cancer. At the time when we had our discussion, she was working for a short film in which she played a mother who had lost her son in a car accident, and she told me she felt a bit anxious about that role, given that she was a mother in real life, too. Everyone is aware this is *just* a play or a film, that the actor's actions and words are mere *lines* and words that preserve their coherence and consume their power within the limits of the finite province of meaning of the play, but can we be really sure that they never exceed the stage-world? If the words pronounced and actions performed on stage have a certain power – benign or harmful – outside the province of drama, whose responsibility is it? There are

many 'actors' involved in this complex movements and reflections of meanings of a stage performance: author, director, actor, stage designer, and spectator, they all take part in the intersubjective constitution of meaning, and all have these meanings knitted in the fabric of their personal biographical situations.

The FPM framework is not a view on reality, but a view on how people experience reality. It helps us understand reality as a management technique that people employ to bring order into the fragmentary and meaningless pre-constituted mass of their experience, and it helps us understand the life-world's order itself. It is a consequence of FPM theory that *any* human experience takes place, and must take place, in a finite province of meaning, for if it does not, it only means that there must be another FPM where that specific experience should be at home. However, this idea may lead one to hasty and unreasonable theoretical standpoints. Specifically, one should avoid falling into a 'sociologism of the multiple reality' and consider this framework as a 'sociological theory of everything.' Undoubtedly, drama is a finite province of meaning, but is not only that. Drama is also a field of study for the literary theorist, it is a job for the employee of a theatre, it is a source of philosophical and metaphysical contemplation, and so too with any realm of human life experiences. FPM theory is, first of all, a sociological tool of investigation and understanding developed within a particular school of thought – the interpretive-phenomenological tradition – among numerous other methodological and theoretical frameworks that are available to the social scientist. It may shed light over a number of phenomena and sociological problems, but one should not expect it to accommodate any type of sociological problem. Phenomenological sociology faces its own difficulties and weaknesses in many types of matters, such as those related to the problems of historicity, to the macro-sociological dimension of the social world, or to quantitative research, and FPM sociology may or may not be successfully connected with these topics.

Among the tasks that a future FPM sociology may assume, one can count the integration of various writings on the topic by Schutz's followers along with a comparative work on the wider context of various theories of multiplicity, empirical applications of the method that derives from this theoretical framework

– FPM analysis – to particular types of provinces, further developments on the theoretical problems related to the structure, the life, the relations, and the regulating principles of finite provinces of meaning, as well as better clarifications of such sociological concepts as action, identity, self, experience, language, symbol, power, community, etc. in the context of FPM sociology.

With his theory of the multiple reality, Schutz opened up the path to a promising and generous realm of sociology. The present work is meant – in spite of its ‘critical’ and reconstructive premises – to be an humble continuation of Alfred Schutz’s work and a modest tribute to his life.

We conclude this work by returning briefly to his exemplary life-story, which is also the story of the birth of the concept of multiple reality. As we saw it in the first chapter, Schutz had his ideas on finite provinces of meaning crystallised over a period that lasted approximately seven years and coincided with the disintegration of an old world in Austria and the rebuilding of a new life in America. To Schutz’s life history, this was the second and the deepest liminal period, but not the last one. In his adoptive country, Schutz reached academic recognition with his numerous journal publications, his position with the New School for Social Research, and his success at the various conferences and meetings that he took part in. ‘The years 1957-58 were years of success for Schutz,’ Barber says, but also ‘times of decline, in which Schutz felt increasing alienation from the academic and publishing establishment and in which he found his health gradually and seriously deteriorating.’<sup>27</sup>

There is a passage dear to Schutz from the American writer John Cheever’s story ‘The Summer Farmer,’ which, along with Barber, I reproduce entirely:

It is true of even the best of us that if an observer can catch us boarding a train at a way station; if he will mark our faces, stripped by anxiety of their self-possession; if he will appraise our luggage, our clothing, and look out of the window to see who has driven us to the station; if he will listen to the harsh or tender things we say if we are with our

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<sup>27</sup> Barber, *The Participating Citizen: A Biography of Alfred Schutz*, op. cit., p. 127.



families, or notice the way we put our suitcase onto the rack, check the position of our wallet, our key ring, and wipe the sweat off the back of our necks; if he can judge sensibly the self-importance, diffidence, or sadness with which we settle ourselves, he will be given a broader view of our lives than most of us would intend.<sup>28</sup>

This 'clipping,' which was found among Schutz's papers, reveals his intuition that major passages in one's life can unveil – to 'an observer,' a *witness*, or a reader of our life stories – one's true being much better than one's ordinary, everyday existence.

During the last 'rite of passage' of his life, Schutz 'spent more time with his family than ever before.'<sup>29</sup> In 1959, he had to go through double surgery because of a chronic heart condition. He passed away six weeks after the operation on the 20<sup>th</sup> of May. After 20 years, he had to board again an important train or ship. This time, it took him to the ultimate, horizonless province of meaning.

Fictional and nonfictional stories alike have the power to create finite provinces of meaning, and our life-stories may sometimes appear even to ourselves as provinces different from our everyday life. In Schutz's own biography, FPM theory is a small but intimate element, a lighthouse beacon in times of liminal drift the meaning of which comes out faintly and foggily.

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp. 208-209.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 214-215.

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