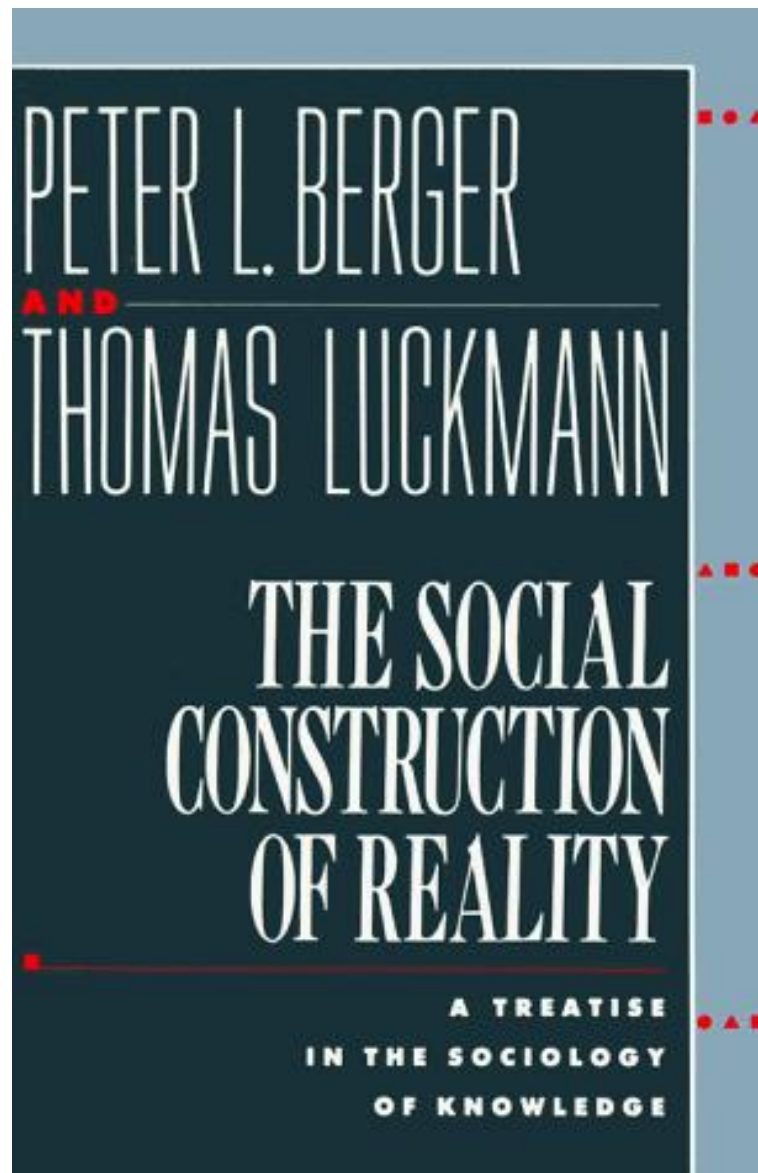


The Social Construction of Reality A Treatise in
the Sociology of Knowledge

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ISBN: 0385058985

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I. The Foundations of Knowledge in Everyday Life 1. THE REALITY OF EVERYDAY LIFE Since our purpose in this treatise is a sociological analysis of the reality of everyday life, more precisely, of knowledge that guides conduct in everyday life, and we are only tangentially interested in how this reality may appear in various theoretical perspectives to intellectuals, we must begin by a clarification of that reality as it is available to the commonsense of the ordinary members of society. How that commonsense reality may be influenced by the theoretical constructions of intellectuals and other merchants of ideas is a further question. Ours is thus an enterprise that, although theoretical in character, is geared to the understanding of a reality that forms the subject matter of the empirical science of sociology, that is, the world of everyday life. It should be evident, then, that our purpose is not to engage in philosophy. All the same, if the reality of everyday life is to be understood, account must be taken of its intrinsic character before we can proceed with sociological analysis proper. Everyday life presents itself as a reality interpreted by men and subjectively meaningful to them as a coherent world. As sociologists we take this reality as the object of our analyses. Within the frame of reference of sociology as an empirical science it is possible to take this reality as given, to take as data particular phenomena arising within it, without further inquiring about the foundations of this reality, which is a philosophical task. However, given the particular purpose of the present treatise, we cannot completely bypass the philosophical problem. The world of everyday life is not only taken for granted as reality by the ordinary members of society in the subjectively meaningful conduct of their

TO THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALTY lives. It is a world that originates in their thoughts and actions , and is maintained as real by these. Before turning to our main task we must, therefore, attempt to clarify the foundations of knowledge in everyday life, case, of course, the parental world will have dominance by predefinition. The child will be recognized by all concerned and by himself as belonging to his parents' group and not his nurse's. All the same, the predefinition of

FOUNDATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE IN EVERYDAY LIFE 21 bored that the consciousness of the Empire State Building differs from the awareness of anxiety. A detailed phenomena logical analysis would uncover the various layers of experience , and the different structures of meaning involved in, say, being bitten by a dog, remembering having been bitten by a dog, having a phobia about all dogs, and so forth. What interests us here is the common intentional character of all consciousness. Different objects present themselves to consciousness as constituents of different spheres of reality. I recognize the fellowmen I must deal with in the course of everyday life as pertaining to a reality quite different from the disembodied figures that appear in my dreams. The two sets of objects introduce quite different tensions into my consciousness and I am attentive to them in quite different ways. My consciousness , then, is capable of moving through different spheres of reality. Put differently, I am conscious of the world as consisting of multiple realities. As I move from one reality to another, I experience the transition as a kind of shock. This shock is to be understood as caused by the shift in attentiveness that the transition entails. Waking up from a dream illustrates this shift most simply. Among the multiple realities there is one that presents itself as the reality par excellence. This is the reality of everyday life. Its privileged position entitles it to the designation of paramount reality. The tension of consciousness is highest in everyday life, that is, the latter imposes itself upon consciousness in the most massive, urgent and intense manner. It is impossible to ignore, difficult even to weaken in its imperative presence consequently, it forces me to be attentive to it in the fullest way. I experience everyday life in the state of being wide-awake. This wide-awake state of existing in and apprehending the reality of everyday life is taken by me to be normal and self-evident, that is, it constitutes my natural attitude. I apprehend the reality of everyday life as an ordered reality . Its phenomena are prearranged in patterns that seem to be independent of my apprehension of them and that impose themselves upon the latter. The reality of everyday life appears already objectified, that is, constituted by an order of

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY objects that have been designated as objects before my appearance on the scene. The language used in everyday life continuously provides me with the necessary objectifications and posits the order within which these make sense and within which everyday life has meaning for me. I live in a place that is geographically designated; I employ tools, from can openers to sports cars, which are designated in the technical vocabulary of my society; I live within a web of human relationships, from my chess club to the United States of America, which are also ordered by means of vocabulary. In this manner language marks the co-ordinates of my life in society and fills that life with meaningful objects. The reality of everyday life is organized around the "here of my body and the "now" of my present. This "here and now" is the focus of my attention to the reality of everyday life. What is "here and now" presented to me in everyday life is the realissimum of my consciousness. The reality of everyday life is not, however, exhausted by these immediate presences , but embraces phenomena that are not present "here and now." This means that I experience everyday life in terms of differing degrees of closeness and remoteness, both spatially and temporally. Closest to me is the zone of everyday life that is directly accessible to my bodily manipulation. This zone contains the world within my reach, the world in which I act so as to modify its reality, or the world in which I work. In this world of working my consciousness is dominated by the pragmatic motive, that is, my attention to this world is mainly determined by what I am doing, have done or plan to do in it. In this way it is my world par excellence. I know, of course, that the reality of everyday life contains zones that are not accessible to me in this manner. But either I have no pragmatic interest in these zones or my interest in them is indirect insofar as they may be, potentially, manipulative zones for me. Typically, my interest in the far zones is less intense and certainly less urgent. I am intensely interested in the cluster of objects involved in my daily occupation -say, the world of the garage, if I am a mechanic. I am interested, though less directly, in what goes on in the testing laboratories of the automobile industry in Detroit-I am unlikely ever to be in one of these laboratories, but the

FOUNDATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE IN EVERYDAY LIFE 23 work done there will eventually affect my everyday life. I may also be interested in what goes on at Cape Kennedy or in outer space, but this interest is a matter of private, "leisure-time" choice rather than an urgent necessity of my everyday life. The reality of everyday life further presents itself to me as an intersubjective world, a world that I share with others. This intersubjectivity sharply differentiates everyday life from other realities of which I am conscious. I am alone in the world of my dreams, but I know that the world of everyday life is as real to others as it is to myself. Indeed, I cannot exist in everyday life without continually interacting and communicating with others. I know that my natural attitude to this world corresponds to the natural attitude of others, that they also comprehend the objectifications by which this world is ordered, that they also organize this world around the "here and now" of their being in it and have projects for working in it. I also know, of course, that the others have a perspective on this common world that is not identical with mine. My "here" is their "there." My "now" does not fully overlap with theirs. My projects differ from and may even conflict with theirs. All the same, I know that I live with them in a common world. Most importantly, I know that there is an ongoing correspondence between my meanings and their meanings in this world, that we share a common sense about its reality. The natural attitude is the attitude of commonsense consciousness precise: because it refers to a world that is common to many men. Commonsense knowledge is the knowledge I share with others in the normal, self-evident routines of everyday life. The reality of everyday life is taken for granted as reality. It does not require additional verification over and beyond its simple presence. It is simply there, as self-evident and compelling facticity. I know that it is real. While I am capable of engaging in doubt about its reality, I am obliged to suspend such doubt as I routinely exist in everyday life. This suspension of doubt is so firm that to abandon it, as I might want to do, say, in theoretical or religious contemplation, I have to make an extreme transition. The world of everyday life proclaims itself and, when I want to challenge the procla-

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY mation, I must engage in a deliberate, by no means easy effort. The transition from the natural attitude to the theoretical attitude of the philosopher or scientist illustrates this point. But not all aspects of this reality are equally unproblematic . Everyday life is divided into sectors that are apprehended routinely, and others that present me with problems of one kind or another. Suppose that I am an automobile mechanic who is highly knowledgeable about all American- made cars. Everything that pertains to the latter is a routine, unproblematic facet of my everyday life. But one day someone appears in the garage and asks me to repair his Volkswagen . I am now compelled to enter the problematic world of foreign-made cars. I may do so reluctantly or with professional curiosity, but in either case I am now faced with problems that I have not yet routinized. At the same time, of course, I do not leave the reality of everyday life. Indeed, the latter becomes enriched as I begin to incorporate into it the knowledge and skills required for the repair of foreign-made cars. The reality of everyday life encompasses both kinds of sectors, as long as what appears as a problem does not pertain to a different reality altogether (say, the reality of theoretical physics, or of nightmares). As long as the routines of everyday life continue without interruption they are apprehended as unproblematic. But even the unproblematic sector of everyday reality is so only until further notice, that is, until its continuity is interrupted by the appearance of a problem. When this happens, the reality of everyday life seeks to integrate the problematic sector into what is already unproblematic. Commonsense knowledge contains a variety of instructions as to how this is to be done. For instance, the others with whom I work are unproblematic to me as long as they perform their familiar, taken-for-granted routines-say, typing away at desks next to mine in my office. They become problematic if they interrupt these routines-say, huddling together in a corner and talking in whispers. As I inquire about the meaning of this unusual activity, there is a variety of possibilities that my commonsense knowledge is capable of reintegrating into the unproblematic routines of everyday life: they may be consulting on how to fix a broken typewriter, or one of them may have

FOUNDATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE IN EVERYDAY LIFE 25 some urgent instructions from the boss, and so on. On the other hand, I may find that they are discussing a union directive to go on strike, something as yet outside my experience but still well within the range of problems with which my commonsense knowledge can deal. It will deal with it, though, as a problem, rather than simply reintegrating it into the unproblematic sector of everyday life. If, however, I come to the conclusion that my colleagues have gone collectively mad, the problem that presents itself is of yet another kind. I am now faced with a problem that transcends the boundaries of the reality of everyday life and points to an altogether different reality. Indeed, my conclusion that my colleagues have gone mad implies ipso facto that they have gone off into a world that is no longer the common world of everyday life. Compared to the reality "derivations " in Pareto). 69. Our concept of "symbolic universe" is very close to Durkheim 's "religion." Schutz's analysis of. "finite provinces of meaning"

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY there are, of course, shifts in attention within everyday life, the shift to a position in the total conversational apparatus. It is important to stress, however, that the greater part of reality-maintenance in conversation is implicit, not explicit. Most conversation does not in so many words define the nature of the world. Rather, it takes place against the background of a world that is silently taken for granted. Thus an exchange such as, "Well, it's time for me to

already encountered in our discussion of legitimation . There are various levels of the legitimation of symbolic universes just as there are of the legitimation of institutions, except that the former cannot be said to descend to the pro- theoretical level, for the obvious reason that a symbolic universe is itself a theoretical phenomenon and remains so even if naively held to. As in the case of institutions, the question arises as to the circumstances under which it becomes necessary to legitimate symbolic universes by means of specific conceptual machineries of universe-maintenance. And again the answer is similar to the one given in the case of institutions. Specific procedures of universe-maintenance become necessary when the symbolic universe has become a problem. As long as this is not the case, the symbolic universe is self-maintaining, that is, self-legitimizing by the sheer facticity of its objective existence in the society in question. One may conceive of a society

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY examination before I have passed through certain educational programs, I cannot practice my profession before I have taken this examination, and so on. Also, the same temporal structure provides the historicity that determines my situation in the world of everyday life. I was born on a certain date, entered school on another, started working as a professional on another, and so on. These dates, however, are all "located" within a much more comprehensive history, and this "location" decisively shapes my situation. Thus I was born in the year of the great bank crash in which my father lost his wealth, I entered school just before the revolution, I began to work just after the great war broke out, and so forth. The temporal structure of everyday life not only imposes prearranged sequences upon the "agenda" of any single day but also imposes itself upon my biography as a whole. Within the co-ordinates set by this temporal structure I apprehend both daily "agenda" and overall biography. Clock and calendar ensure that, indeed, I am a "man of my time." Only within this temporal structure does everyday life retain for me its accent of reality. Thus in cases where I may be "disoriented" for one reason or another (say, I have been in an automobile accident in which I was knocked unconscious), I feel an almost instinctive urge to "reorient" myself within the temporal structure of everyday life. I look at my watch and try to recall what day it is. By these acts alone I re-enter the reality of everyday life.

2. SOCIAL INTERACTION IN EVERYDAY LIFE The reality of everyday life is shared with others. But how are these others themselves experienced in everyday life? Again, it is possible to differentiate between several modes of such experience. The most important experience of others takes place in the face-to-face situation, which is the prototypical case of social interaction. All other cases are derivatives of it. In the face-to-face situation the other is appresented to me in a vivid present shared by both of us. I know that in the same vivid present I am appresented to him. My and his

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of the other. It follows that relations with others in the face-to-face situation are highly flexible. Put negatively, it is comparatively difficult to impose rigid patterns upon face-to-face interaction . Whatever patterns are introduced will be continuously modified through the exceedingly variegated and subtle interchange of subjective meanings that goes on. For instance, I may view the other as someone inherently unfriendly to me and act toward him within a pattern of "unfriendly relations" as understood by me. In the face-to-face situation, however, the other may confront me with attitudes and acts that contradict this pattern, ..ERR, COD:3.. misinterpret the other's meanings even in the face-to-face situation, as it is possible for him "hypocritically" to hide his meanings. All the same, both misinterpretation and "hypocrisy" are more difficult to sustain in face-to-face interaction than in less "close" forms of

FOUNDATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE IN EVERYDAY LIFE 31 typificatory schemes in terms of which others are apprehended and "dealt with" in face-to-face encounters. Thus I apprehend the other as "a man," "a European," "a buyer," "a jovial type," and so on. All these typifications ongoingly affect my interaction with him as, say, I decide to show him a good time on the town before trying to sell him my product. Our face-to-face interaction will be patterned by these typifications as long as they do not become problematic through interference on his part. Thus he for Americans in general and American salesmen in particular. At this point, of course, my typificatory scheme will have to be modified, and the evening planned differently in accordance with this modification. Unless thus challenged, though, the typifications will hold until further notice and will determine my actions in the situation. The typificatory schemes entering into face-to-face situations are, of course, reciprocal. The other also apprehends me in a typified way-as "a man," "an American," "a salesman," "an ingratiating fellow," and so on. The other's typifications are as susceptible to ..ERR, COD:1.. of contempt for Americans in general and American salesmen in particular. At this point, of course, my typificatory scheme will have to be modified, and the evening planned differently in accordance with this modification. Unless thus challenged, though, the typifications will

of which I apprehend fellowmen in face-to-face situations is constantly "filled in" by the multiplicity of vivid symptoms referring to a concrete human being. This, of course, is not the whole story. There are obvious differences in my experiences of mere contemporaries. Some I have experienced again and again in face-to-face situations and expect to meet again regularly (my friend Henry); others I recollect as concrete human beings from a past meeting (the blonde I passed on the street), but the meeting was brief and, most likely, will not be repeated. Still others I know of as concrete human beings, but I can apprehend them only by means of more or less anonymous intersecting typifications ..ERR, COD:1..

FOUNDATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE IN EVERYDAY LIFE 33 (my British business competitors, the Queen of England). Among the latter one could again distinguish between likely partners in face-to-face situations (my British business competitors), and potential but unlikely partners (the Queen of England). The degree of anonymity characterizing the experience of others in everyday life depends, however, upon another factor too. I see the newspaper vendor on the street corner as regularly as I see my wife. But he is less important to me and I am not on intimate terms with him. He may remain relatively anonymous to me. The degree of interest and the degree of intimacy may combine to increase or decrease anonymity of experience. They may also influence it independently. I can be on fairly intimate terms with a number of the fellow members of a tennis club and on very formal terms with my boss. Yet the former, while by no means completely anonymous , may merge into "that bunch at the courts" while the latter stands out as a unique individual. And finally, anonymity may become near-total with certain typifications that are not intended ever to become individualized-such as the "typical reader of the London Times." Finally, the "scope" of the typification-and thereby its anonymity-can be further increased by speaking of "British public opinion." The social reality of everyday life is thus apprehended in a continuum of typifications, which are progressively anonymous as they are! removed from the "here and now" of the face-to-face situation. At one pole of the continuum are those others with whom I frequently and intensively interact in face-to-face situations-my "inner circle," as it were. At the other pole are highly anonymous abstractions, which by their very nature can never be available in face-to-face interaction. Social structure is: the sum total of these typifications and of the recurrent patterns of interaction established by means of them. As such, social structure is an essential element of the reality of everyday life. One further point ought to be made here, though we cannot elaborate it. My relations with others are not limited to consociates and contemporaries. I also relate to predecessors and successors, to those others who have preceded and will follow me in the encompassing history of my society.

28 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY examination before I have passed through certain educational programs, I cannot practice my profession before I have taken this examination, and so on. Also, the same temporal structure provides the historicity that determines my situation in the world of everyday life. I was born on a certain date, entered school on another, started working as a professional on another, and so on. These dates, however, are all "located" within a much more comprehensive history, and this "location" decisively shapes my situation. Thus I was born in the year of the great bank crash in which my father lost his wealth, I entered school just before the revolution, I began to work just after the great war broke out, and so forth. The temporal structure of everyday life not only imposes prearranged sequences upon the "agenda" of any single day but also imposes itself upon my biography as a whole. Within the co-ordinates set by this temporal structure I apprehend both daily "agenda" and overall biography. Clock and calendar ensure that, indeed, I am a "man of my time." Only within this temporal structure does everyday life retain for me its accent of reality. Thus in cases where I may be "disoriented" for one reason or another (say, I have been in an automobile accident in which I was knocked unconscious), I feel an almost instinctive urge to "reorient" myself within the temporal structure of everyday life. I look at my watch and try to recall what day it is. By these acts alone I re-enter the reality of everyday life.

2. SOCIAL INTERACTION IN EVERYDAY LIFE The reality of everyday life is shared with others. But how are these others themselves experienced in everyday life? Again, it is possible to differentiate between several modes of such experience. The most important experience of others takes place in the face-to-face situation, which is the prototypical case of social interaction. All other cases are derivatives of it. In derivatives of it. In the face-to-face situation the other is appresented to me in a vivid present shared by both of us. I know that in the same vivid present I am appresented to him. My and his

FOUNDATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE IN EVERYDAY LIFE 35 access to his subjectivity even though I was sleeping when he threw it and never saw him because he fled after his near-hit. Indeed, if I leave the object where it is, I can look at it again the following morning, and again it expresses to me the anger of the man who threw it. What is more, other men can come and look at it and arrive at the same conclusion. In other words, the knife in my wall has become an objectively available constituent of the reality I share with my adversary and with other men. Presumably, this knife was not produced for the exclusive purpose of being thrown at me. But it expresses a subjective intention of violence, whether motivated by anger or by utilitarian considerations, such as killing for food. The weapon qua objet in the real world continues to express a general intention to commit violence that is recognizable by anyone who knows what a weapon is. The weapon, then, is both a human product and an objectivation of human subjectivity . The reality of everyday life is not only filled with objectivations ; it is only possible because of them. I am constantly surrounded by objects that "proclaim" the subjective intentions of my fellowmen, although I may sometimes have difficulty being quite sure just what it is that a particular object is "proclaiming," especially if it was produced by men whom I have not known well or at all in face-to-face situations. Every ethnologist or archaeologist will readily testify to such difficulties , but the very fact that he can overcome them and reconstruct from an artifact the subjective intentions of men whose society may have been extinct for millennia is eloquent proof of the enduring power of human objectivations. A special but crucially important case of objectivation is signification, that is, the human production of signs. A sign may be distinguished from other objectivations by its explicit intention to serve as an index of subjective meanings. To be sure, all objectivations are susceptible of utilization as signs, even though they were not originally produced with this intention . For instance, a weapon may have been originally produced for the purpose of hunting animals, but may then (say, in ceremonial usage) become a sign for aggressiveness and violence in general. But there are certain objectivations originally and explicitly intended to serve as signs. For in-

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY stance, instead of throwing a knife at me (an act that was presumably intended to kill me, but that might conceivably have been intended merely to signify this possibility), my adversary could have painted a black X-mark on my door, a sign, let us assume, that we are now officially in a state of enmity. Such a sign, which has no purpose beyond indicating the subjective meaning of the one who made it, is also objectively available in the common reality he and I share with other men. I recognize its meaning, as do other men, and indeed it is available to its producer as an objective "reminder" of his original intention in making it. It will be clear from the above that there is a good deal of fluidity between the instrumental and the significatory uses of certain objectivations. The special case of magic, in which there is a very interesting merging of these two uses, need not concern us here. Signs are clustered in a number of systems. Thus there are systems of gesticulatory signs, of patterned bodily movements, of various sets of material artifacts, and so on. Signs and sign systems are objectivations in the sense of being objectively available beyond the expression of subjective intentions "here and now." This "detachability" from the immediate expressions of subjectivity also pertains to signs that require the mediating presence of the body. Thus performing a dance that signifies aggressive intent is an altogether different thing from snarling or clenching fists in an outburst of anger. The latter acts express my subjectivity "here and now," while the former can be quite detached from this subjectivity-I may not be angry or aggressive at all at this point but merely taking part in the dance because I am paid to do so on behalf of someone else who is angry. In other words, the dance can be detached from the subjectivity of the dancer in a way in which the snarling cannot from the snarler. Both dancing and snarling are manifestations of bodily expressivity, but only the former has the character of an objectively available sign. Signs and sign systems are all characterized by "detachability," but they can be differentiated in terms of the degree to which they may be detached from face-to-face situations. Thus a dance is evidently less detached than a material artifact signifying the same subjective meaning. Language, which may be defined here as a system of vocal

FOUNDATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE IN EVERYDAY LIFE 37 signs, is the most important sign system of human society. Its foundation is, of course, in the intrinsic capacity of the human organism for vocal expressivity, but we can begin to speak of language only when vocal expressions have become capable of detachment from the immediate "here and now" of subjective states. It is not yet language if I snarl, grunt, howl, or hiss, although these vocal expressions are capable of becoming linguistic insofar as they are integrated into an objectively available sign system. The common objectivations of everyday life are maintained primarily by linguistic signification. Everyday life is, above all, life with and by means of the language I share with my fellowmen. An understanding of language is thus essential for any understanding of the reality of everyday life.. Language has its origins in the face-to-face situation, but can be readily detached from it. This is not only because I can shout in the dark or across a distance, speak on the telephone or via the radio, or convey linguistic signification by means of writing (the latter constituting, as it were, a sign system of the second degree). The detachment of language lies much more basically in its capacity to communicate meanings that are not direct expressions of subjectivity "here and now." It shares this capacity with other sign systems, but its immense variety and complexity make it much more readily detachable from the face-to-face situation than any other (for example, a system of gesticulations). I can speak about innumerable matters that are not present at all in the face-to-face situation, including matters I never have and never will experience directly. In this way, language is capable of becoming the objective repository of vast accumulations of meaning and experience, which it can then preserve in time and transmit to following generations. In the face-to-face situation language possesses an inherent quality of reciprocity that distinguishes it from any other sign system. The ongoing production of vocal signs in conversation can be sensitively synchronized with the ongoing subjective intentions of the conversants. I speak as I think; so does my partner in the conversation. Both of us hear what each says at virtually the same instant, which makes possible a continuous, synchronized, reciprocal access to our two subjectivities,

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY an intersubjective closeness in the face-to-face situation that no other sign system can duplicate. What is more, I hear myself as I speak; my own subjective meanings are made objectively and continuously available to me and ipso facto become "more real" to me. Another way of putting this is to recall the previous point about my "better knowledge" of the other as against my knowledge of myself in the face-to-face situation. This apparently paradoxical fact has been previously explained by the massive, continuous and prereflective availability of the other's being in the face-to-face situation, as against the requirement of reflection for the availability of my own. Now, however, as I objectivate my own being by means of language, my own being becomes massively and continuously available to myself at the same time that it is so available to him, and I can spontaneously respond to it without the "interruption" of deliberate reflection. It can, therefore, be said that language makes "more real" my subjectivity not only to my conversation partner but also to myself . This capacity of language to crystallize and stabilize for me my own subjectivity is retained (albeit with modifications) as language is detached from the face-to-face situation. This very important characteristic of language is well caught in the saying that men must talk about themselves until they know themselves. Language originates in and has its primary reference to everyday life; it refers above all to the reality I experience in wide-awake consciousness, which is dominated by the pragmatic motive (that is, the cluster of meanings directly pertaining to present or future actions) and which I share with others in a taken-for-granted manner. Although language can also be employed to refer to other realities, which will be discussed further in a moment, it even then retains its rootage in the commonsense reality of everyday life. As a sign system, language has the quality of objectivity. I encounter language as a facticity external to myself and it is coercive in its effect on me. Language forces me into its patterns. I cannot use the rules of German syntax when I speak English; I cannot use words invented by my three-year-old son if I want to communicate outside the family; I must take into account prevailing standards of proper speech for various occasions, even

son-in-law) can have "mother-in-law trouble." In this way, my biographical experiences are ongoingly subsumed under general orders of meaning that are both objectively and subjectively real. Because of its capacity to transcend the "here and now," language bridges different zones within the reality of everyday life and integrates them into a meaningful whole. The transcendences have spatial, temporal and social dimensions. Through language I can transcend the gap between my manipulatory zone and that of the other, I can synchronize my biographical time sequence with his; and I can converse with him about individuals and collectivities with whom we are not at present in face-to-face interaction. As a result of these transcendences language is capable of "making present" a variety of objects that are spatially, temporally and socially absent from the "here and now." Ipso facto a vast accumulation of experiences and meanings can become objectified in the "here and now." Put simply, through language an entire world can be actualized at any moment. This transcending and integrating power of language is retained when I am not actually conversing with another. Through linguistic objectification , even when "talking to myself" in solitary thought, an entire world can be appresented to me at any moment. As

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY far as social relations are concerned, language "makes present" for me not only fellowmen who are physically absent at the moment, but fellowmen in the remembered or reconstructed past, as well as fellowmen projected as imaginary figures into the future. All these "presences" can be highly meaningful, of course, in the ongoing reality of everyday life. Moreover, language is capable of transcending the reality of everyday life altogether. It can refer to experiences pertaining to finite provinces of meaning, and it can span discrete spheres of reality. For instance, I can interpret "the meaning" of a dream by integrating it linguistically within the order of everyday life. Such integration transposes the discrete reality of the dream into the reality of everyday life by making it an enclave within the latter. The dream is now meaningful in terms of the reality of everyday life rather than of its own discrete reality. Enclaves produced by such transposition belong, in a sense, to both spheres of reality. They are "located" in one reality, but "refer" to another. Any significative theme that thus spans spheres of reality may be defined as a symbol, and the linguistic mode by which such transcendence is achieved may be called symbolic language . On the level of symbolism, then, linguistic signification attains the maximum detachment from the "here and now" of everyday life, and language soars into regions that are not only de facto but a priori unavailable to everyday experience . Language now constructs immense edifices of symbolic representations that appear to tower over the reality of everyday life like gigantic presences from another world. Religion, philosophy, art, and science are the historically most important symbol systems of this kind. To name these is already to say that, despite the maximal detachment from everyday experience that the construction of these systems requires, they can be of very great importance indeed for the reality of everyday life. Language is capable not only of constructing symbols that are highly abstracted from everyday experience, but also of "bringing back" these symbols and appresenting them as objectively real elements in everyday life. In this manner, symbolism and symbolic language become essential constituents of the reality of everyday life and of the com-

FOUNDATIONS OF]KNOWLEDGE IN EVERYDAY LIFE 4.1 nonsense apprehension of this reality. I live in a world of signs and symbols every day. Language builds up semantic fields or zones of meaning that are linguistically circumscribed. Vocabulary, grammar and syntax are geared to the organization of these semantic fields. Thus language builds up classification schemes to differentiate objects by "gender" (a quite different matter from sex, of course) or by number; forms to make statements of action as against statements of being; modes of indicating degrees of social intimacy, and so on. For example, in languages (such as tu and vous in French, or du and Sie in German) this distinction marks the co-ordinates of a semantic field that could be called the zone of intimacy. Here lies the world of fiutoiement or of Bruderschaft, with a rich collection of meanings that are continually available to me for the ordering of my social experience. Such a semantic field, of course, also exists for the English speaker, though it is more circumscribed linguistically. Or, to take another example, the sum of linguistic objectifications pertaining to my occupation constitutes another semantic field, which meaningfully orders all the routine events I encounter in my daily work. Within the semantic fields thus built up it is possible for both biographical and historical experience to be objectified, retained and accumulated. The accumulation, of course, is selective, with the semantic fields determining what will be retained and what "forgotten" of the total experience of both the individual and the society. By virtue of this accumulation a social stock of knowledge is constituted, which is transmitted from generation to generation and which is available to the individual in everyday ..ERR, COD:1..

s}2 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY suburb. This knowledge is, of course, shared both by those who are poor themselves and those who are in a more privileged situation. Participation in the social stock of knowledge thus permits the "location" of individuals in society and the "handling" of them in the appropriate manner. This is not possible for one who does not participate in this knowledge, such as a foreigner, who may not recognize me as poor at all, perhaps because the criteria of poverty are quite different in his society-how can I be poor, when I wear shoes and do not seem to be hungry? Since everyday life is dominated by the pragmatic motive, recipe knowledge, that is, knowledge limited to pragmatic competence in routine performances, occupies a prominent place in the social stock of knowledge. For example, I use the telephone every day for specific pragmatic purposes of my own. I know how to do this. I also know what to do. if my telephone fails to function-which does not mean that I know how to repair it, but that I know whom to call on for assistance. My knowledge of the telephone also includes broader information on the system of telephonic communication -for instance, I know that some people have unlisted numbers, that under special circumstances I can get a simultaneous hook-up with two long-distance parties, that I must figure on the time difference if I want to call up somebody in Hongkong, and so forth. All of this telephonic lore is recipe knowledge since it does not concern anything except what I have to know for my present and possible future pragmatic purposes. I am not interested in why the telephone works this way, in the enormous body of scientific and engineering knowledge that makes it possible to construct telephones . Nor am I interested in uses of the telephone that lie outside my purposes, say in combination with short-wave radio for the purpose of marine communication. Similarly, I have recipe knowledge of the workings of human relationships . For example, I know what I must do to apply for a passport. Ail I am interested in is getting the passport at the end of a certain waiting period. I do not care, and do not know, how my application is processed in government offices, by whom and after what steps approval is given, who puts which stamp in the document. I am not making a study of

30 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY the other exhibits. It is typically a "mirror" response to attitudes of the other. It follows that relations with others in the face-to-face situation are highly flexible. Put negatively, it is comparatively difficult to impose rigid patterns upon face-to-face interaction. Whatever patterns are introduced will be continuously modified through the exceedingly variegated and subtle interchange of subjective meanings that goes on. For instance, I may view the other as someone inherently unfriendly to me and act toward him within a pattern of "unfriendly relations" as understood by me. In the face-to-face situation, however, the other may confront me with attitudes and acts that contradict this pattern, perhaps up to a point where I am led to abandon the pattern as inapplicable and to view him as friendly. In other words, the pattern cannot sustain the massive evidence of the other's subjectivity that is available to me in the face-to-face situation. By contrast, it is much easier for me to ignore such evidence as long as I do not encounter the other face to face. Even in such a relatively "close" relation as may be maintained by correspondence I can more successfully dismiss the other's protestations of friendship as not actually representing his subjective attitude to me, simply because in correspondence I lack the immediate, continuous and massively real presence of his expressivity. It is, to be sure, possible for me to misinterpret the other's meanings even in the face-to-face situation, as it is possible for him "hypocritically" to hide his meanings. All the same, both misinterpretation and "hypocrisy" are more difficult to sustain in face-to-face interaction than in less "close" forms of social relations. On the other hand, I apprehend the other by means of typificatory schemes even in the face-to-face situation, although these schemes are more "vulnerable" to his interference than in "remoter" forms of interaction. Put differently, while it is comparatively difficult to impose rigid patterns on face-to-face interaction, even it is patterned from the beginning if it takes place within the routines of everyday life. (We can leave aside for later consideration cases of interaction between complete strangers who have no common background of everyday life.) The reality of everyday life contains

may perhaps doubt elements of it. But these doubts are "not to be taken seriously." For instance, as a businessman I know that it pays to be inconsiderate of others. I may laugh at a joke in which this maxim leads to failure, I may be moved by an actor or a preacher extolling the virtues of consideration, and I may concede in a philosophical mood that all social relations should be governed by the Golden Rule. Having laughed, having been moved and having philosophized, I return to the "serious" world of business, once more recognize the logic of its maxims, and act accordingly. Only when my maxims fail "to deliver the goods" in the world to which they are intended to apply are they likely to become problematic to me "in earnest." Although the social stock of knowledge appresents the everyday world in an integrated manner, differentiated according to zones of familiarity and remoteness, it leaves the totality of that world opaque. Put differently, the reality of everyday life always appears as a zone of lucidity behind which there is a background of darkness. As some zones of reality are illuminated, others are adumbrated. I cannot know everything there is to know about this reality. Even if, for instance, I am a seemingly all-powerful despot in my family, and know this, I cannot know all the factors that go into the continuing success of my despotism. I know that my orders are always obeyed, but I cannot be sure of all the steps and all the motives that lie between the issuance and the execution of my orders. There are always things that go on "behind my back." This is true a fortiori when social

FOUNDATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE IN EVERYDAY LIFE 45 relationships more complex than those of the family are involved -and explains, incidentally, why despots are endemically nervous. My knowledge of everyday life has the quality of an instrument that cuts a path through a forest and, as it does so, projects a narrow cone of light on what lies just ahead and immediately around; on all sides of the path there continues to be darkness. This image pertains even more, of course, to the multiple realities in which everyday life is continually transcended. This latter statement can be paraphrased , poetically if not exhaustively, by saying that the reality of everyday life is overcast by the penumbras of our dreams. My knowledge of everyday life is structured in terms of relevances. Some of these are determined by immediate pragmatic interests of mine, others by my general situation in society. It is irrelevant to me how my wife goes about cooking my favorite goulash as long as it turns out the way I like it. It is irrelevant to me that the stock of a company is falling, if I do not own such stock; or that Catholics are modernizing their doctrine, if I am an atheist; or that it is now possible to fly non-stop to Africa, if I do not want to go there. However, my relevance structures intersect with the relevance structures of others at many points, as a result of which we have ".interesting" things to say to each other. An important element of my knowledge of everyday life is the knowledge of the relevance structures of others. Thus I "know better" than to tell my doctor about my investment problems , my lawyer about my ulcer pains, or my accountant about my quest for religious truth. The basic relevance structures referring to everyday life are presented to me ready. made by the social stock of knowledge itself. I know that "woman talk" is irrelevant to me as a man, that "idle speculation " is irrelevant to me as a man of action, and so forth. Finally, the social stock of knowledge as a whole has its own relevance structure. Thus, in terms of the stock of knowledge objectivated in American society, it is irrelevant to study the movements of the stars to predict the stock market, but it is relevant to study an individual's slips of the tongue to find out about his sex life, and so on. Conversely, in other societies,

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY astrology may be highly relevant for economics, speech analysis quite irrelevant for erotic curiosity, and so on. One final point should be made here about the social distribution of knowledge. I encounter knowledge in everyday life as socially distributed, that is, as possessed differently by different individuals and types of individuals. I do not share my knowledge equally with all my fellowmen, and there may be some knowledge that I share with no one. I share my professional expertise with colleagues, but not with my family, and I may share with nobody my knowledge of how to cheat at cards. The social distribution of knowledge of certain elements of everyday reality can become highly complex and even confusing to the outsider. I not only do not possess the knowledge supposedly required to cure me of a physical ailment, I may even lack the knowledge of which one of a bewildering ..ERR, COD:1..

II. Society as Objective Reality 1. INSTITUTIONALIZATION a. Organism and Activity Man occupies a peculiar position in the animal kingdom .1 Unlike the other higher mammals, he has no species-specific environment, a no environment firmly structured by his own instinctual organization. There is no man-world in the sense that one may speak of a dog-world or a horse-world. Despite an area of individual learning and accumulation, the individual dog or the individual horse has a largely fixed relationship to its environment, which it shares with all other members of its respective species. One obvious implication of this is that dogs and horses, as compared with man, are much more restricted to a specific geographical distribution. The specificity of these animals' environment, however, is much more than a geographical delimitation. It refers to the biologically fixed character of their relationship to the environment , even if geographical variation is introduced. In this sense, all non-human animals, as species and as individuals, live in closed worlds whose structures are predetermined by the biological equipment of the several animal species. By contrast, man's relationship to his environment is characterized by world-openness .8 Not only has man succeeded in establishing himself over the greater part of the earth's surface, his relationship to the surrounding environment is everywhere very imperfectly structured by his own biological constitution. The latter, to be sure, permits man to engage in different activities. But the fact that he continued to live a nomadic existence in one place and turned to agriculture in another cannot be explained in terms of biological processes. This does not mean, of course, that there are no biologically determined limitations to man's relations with his environ-

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY ment; his species-specific sensory and motor equipment imposes obvious limitations on his range of possibilities. The peculiarity of man's biological constitution lies rather in its instinctual component. Man's instinctual organization may be described as underdeveloped, compared with that of the other higher mammals. Man does have drives, of course. But these drives are highly unspecialized and undirected. This means that the human organism is capable of applying its constitutionally given equipment to a very wide and, in addition, constantly variable and varying range of activities. This peculiarity of the human organism is grounded in its ontogenetic development. 4 Indeed, if one looks at the matter in terms of organismic development, it is possible to say that the fetal period in the human being extends through about the first year after birth. 5 Important organismic developments, which in the animal are completed in the mother's body, take place in the human infant after its separation from the womb. At this time, however, the human infant is not only in the outside world, but interrelating with it in a number of complex ways. The human organism is thus still developing biologically while already standing in a relationship to its environment. In other words, the process of becoming man takes place in an interrelationship with an environment. This statement gains significance if one reflects that this environment is both a natural and a human one. That is, the developing human being not only interrelates with a particular natural environment, but with a specific cultural and social order, which is mediated to him by the significant others who have charge of him. e Not only is the survival of the human infant dependent upon certain social arrangements, the direction of his organismic development is socially determined. From the moment of birth, man's organismic development, and indeed a large part of his biological being as such, are subjected to continuing socially determined interference. Despite the obvious physiological limits to the range of possible and different ways of becoming man in this double environmental interrelationship the human organism manifests an immense plasticity in its response to the environmental forces at work on it. This is particularly clear when

SOCIETY AS OBJECTIVE REALITY 49 one observes the flexibility of man's biological constitution as it is subjected to a variety of socio-cultural determinations. It is an ethnological commonplace that the ways of becoming and being human are as numerous as man's cultures. Humanness is socio-culturally variable. In other words, there is no human nature in the sense of a biologically fixed substratum determining the variability of socio-cultural formations. There is only human nature in the sense of anthropological constants (for example, world-openness and plasticity of instinctual structure) that delimit and permit man's sociocultural formations. But the specific shape into which this humanness is molded is determined by those socio-cultural formations and is relative to their numerous variations. While it is possible to say that man has a nature, it is more significant to say that man constructs his own nature, or more simply, that man produces himself? The plasticity of the human organism and its susceptibility to socially determined interference is best illustrated by the ethnological evidence concerning sexuality .9 While man possesses sexual drives that are comparable to those of the other higher mammals, human sexuality is characterized by a very high degree of pliability. It is not only relatively independent of temporal rhythms, it is pliable both in the objects toward which it may be directed and in its modalities of expression. Ethnological evidence shows that, in sexual matters, man is capable of almost anything. One may stimulate one's sexual imagination to a pitch of feverish lust, but it is unlikely that one can conjure up any image that will not correspond to what in some other culture is an established norm, or at least an occurrence to be taken in stride. If the term "normality" is to refer either to what is anthropologically fundamental or to what is culturally universal, then neither it nor its antonym can be meaningfully applied to the varying forms of human sexuality. At the same time, of course, human sexuality is directed, sometimes rigidly structured, in every particular culture. Every culture has a distinctive sexual configuration, with its own specialized patterns of sexual conduct and its own "anthropological" assumptions in the sexual area. The empirical relativity of these configurations, their immense variety and luxurious inventive-

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY ness, indicate that they are the product of man's own sociocultural formations rather than of a biologically fixed human nature 9 The period during which the human organism develops towards its completion in interrelationship with its environment is also the period during which the human self is formed. The formation of the self, then, must also be understood in relation to both the ongoing organismic development and the social process in which the natural and the human environment are mediated through the significant others? e genetic presuppositions for the self are, of course, given at birth. But the self, as it is experienced later as a subjectively and objectively recognizable identity, is not. The same social processes that determine the completion of the organism produce the self in its particular, culturally relative form. The character of the self as a social product is not limited to the particular configuration the individual identifies as himself (for instance, as "a man," in the particular way in which this identity is defined and formed in the culture in question), but to the comprehensive psychological equipment that serves as an appendage to the particular configuration (for instance, "manly" emotions, attitudes and even somatic reactions). It goes without saying, then, that the organism and, even more, the self cannot be adequately understood apart from the particular social context in which they were shaped. The common development of the human organism and the human self in a socially determined environment is related to the peculiarly human relationship between organism and self. This relationship is an eccentric one." On the one hand, man is a body, in the same way that this may be said of every other animal organism. On the other hand, man has a body. That is, man experiences himself as an entity that is not identical with his body, but that, on the contrary, has that body at its disposal. In other words, man's experience of himself always hovers in a balance between being and having a body, a balance that must be redressed again and again. This eccentricity of man's experience of his own body has certain consequences for the analysis of human activity as conduct in the material environment and as externaliSOCIETY

AS OBJECTIVE REALITY 51 zation of subjective meanings. An adequate understanding of any human phenomenon will have to take both these aspects into consideration, for reasons that are grounded in fundamental anthropological facts. It should be clear from the foregoing that the statement that man produces himself in no way implies some sort of Promethean vision of the solitary individual.¹² Man's self-production is always, and of necessity, a social enterprise. Men together produce a human environment, with the totality of its socio-cultural and psychological formations. None of these formations may be understood as products of man's biological constitution, which, as indicated, provides only the outer limits for human productive activity. just as it is impossible for man to develop as man in isolation, so it is impossible for man in isolation to produce a human environment . Solitary human being is being on the animal level (which, of course, man shares with other animals). As soon as one observes phenomena that are specifically human, one enters the realm of the social. Man's specific humanity and his sociality are inextricably intertwined. Homo sapiens is always , and in the: same measure, homo socius.^{1a} The human organism lacks the necessary biological means to provide stability for human conduct. Human existence, if it were thrown back on its organismic resources by themselves, would be existence in some sort of chaos. Such chaos is, however , empirically unavailable, even though one may theoretically conceive: of it. Empirically, human existence takes place in a context of order, direction, stability. The question then arises: From what does the empirically existing stability of human order derive? An answer may be given on two levels. One may first point to the obvious fact that a given social order precedes any individual organismic development. That is, world-openness, while intrinsic to man's biological make-up, is always pre-empted by social order. One may say that the biologically intrinsic world-openness of human existence is always, and indeed must be, transformed by social order into a relative world-closedness. While this reclosure can never approximate the closedness of animal existence, if only because of its humanly produced and thus "artificial" character, it is nevertheless capable, most of the time, of

technological arrangements). Social order is not part of the "nature of things," and it cannot be derived from the "laws of nature."¹⁴ Social order exists only as a product of human activity. No other ontological status may be ascribed to it without hopelessly obfuscating its empirical manifestations. Both in its genesis (social order is the in any instant of time (social order exists only and insofar as human activity continues to produce it) it is a human product. While the social products of human externalization have a character sui generis as against both their organismic and their environmental context, it is important to stress that externalization as such is an anthropological necessity.¹⁵ Human being is impossible in a closed sphere of quiescent interiority . Human being must ongoingly externalize itself in activity. This anthropological necessity is ..ERR, COD:1..

everyday life appears less ongoingly penetrated by sacred forces. The body of theological knowledge is, consequently, further removed from the general stock of knowledge of the society and thus becomes intrinsically more difficult to acquire. Even where it is not deliberately institutionalized as esoteric, it remains "secret" by virtue of its unintelligibility to the general populace. This has the further consequence that the populace may remain relatively

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY ity, habitualization makes it unnecessary for each situation to be defined anew, step by step? large variety of situations may be subsumed under its predefinitions. The activity to be undertaken in these situations can then be anticipated. Even alternatives of conduct can be assigned standard weights. These processes of habitualization precede any institutionalization, indeed can be made to apply to a hypothetical solitary individual detached from any social interaction. The fact that even such a solitary individual, assuming that he has been formed as a self (as we would have to assume in the case of our matchstick-canoe builder), will habitualize his activity in accordance with biographical experience of a world of social institutions preceding his solitude need not concern us at the moment. Empirically, the more important part of the habitualization of human activity is coextensive with the latter's institutionalization. The question then becomes how do institutions arise. Institutionalization occurs whenever there is a reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by types of actors. Put differently, any such typification is an institution 21 What must be stressed is the reciprocity of institutional typifications and the typicality of not only the actions but also the actors in institutions. The typifications of habitualized actions that constitute institutions are always shared ones. They are available to all the members of the particular social group in question, and the institution itself typifies individual actors as well as individual actions. The institution posits that actions of type X will be performed by actors of type X. For example, the institution of the law posits that heads shall be chopped off in specific ways under specific circumstances, and that specific types of individuals shall do the chopping (executioners, say, or members of an impure caste, or virgins under a certain age, or those who have been designated by an oracle). Institutions further imply historicity and control. Reciprocal typifications of actions are built up in the course of a shared history. They cannot be created instantaneously. Institutions always have a history, of which they are the products. It is impossible to understand an institution adequately without an understanding of the historical process in which

occasions . In other words, the background of habitualized activity opens up a foreground for deliberation and innovation .19 In terms of the: meanings bestowed by man upon his activ-

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY uing in time. Let us assume that two persons from entirely different social worlds begin to interact. By saying "persons" we presuppose that the two individuals have formed selves, something that could, of course, have occurred only in a social process. We are thus for the moment excluding the cases of Adam and Eve, or of two "feral" children meeting in a clearing of a primeval jungle. But we are assuming that the two individuals arrive at their meeting place from social worlds that have been historically produced in segregation from each other, and that the interaction therefore takes place in a situation that has not been institutionally defined for either of the participants. It may be possible to imagine a Man Friday joining our matchstick-canoe builder on his desert island, and to imagine the former as a Papuan and the latter as an American. In that case, however, it is likely that the American will have read or at least have heard about the story of Robinson Crusoe, which will introduce a measure of predefinition of the situation at least for him. Let us, then, simply call our two persons A and B. As A and B interact, in whatever manner, typifications will be produced quite quickly. A watches B perform. He attributes motives to B's actions and, seeing the actions recur, typifies the motives as recurrent. As B goes on performing, ..ERR, COD:1..

SOCIETY AS OBJECTIVE REALITY 57 common?z While this reciprocal typification is not yet institutionalization (since, there only being two individuals, there is no possibility of a typology of actors), it is clear that institutionalization is already present in nucleo. At this stage one may ask what gains accrue to the two individuals from this development. The most important gain is that each will be able to predict the other's actions. Concomitantly, the interaction of both becomes predictable. The "There he goes again" becomes a "There we go again." This relieves both individuals of a considerable amount of tension. They save time and effort, not only in whatever external tasks they might be engaged in separately or jointly, but in terms of their respective psychological economies. Their life together is now defined by a widening sphere of taken-for-granted routines. Many actions are possible on a low level of attention. Each action of one is no longer a source of astonishment and potential danger to the other. Instead, much of what goes on takes on the triviality of what, to both, will be everyday life. This means that the two individuals are constructing a background, in the sense discussed before, which will serve to stabilize both their separate actions and their interaction. The construction of this background of routine in turn makes possible a division of labor between them, opening the way for innovations, which demand a higher level of attention. The division of labor and the innovations will lead to new habitualizations, further widening the background common to both individuals. In other words, a social world will be in process of construction, containing within it the roots of an expanding institutional order. Generally, all actions repeated once or more tend to be habitualized to some degree, just as all actions observed by another necessarily involve some typification on his part. However, for the kind of reciprocal typification just described to occur there must be a continuing social situation in which the habitualized actions of two or more individuals interlock. Which actions are likely to be reciprocally typified in this manner? The general answer is, those actions that are relevant to both A and B within their common situation. The areas likely to be relevant in this way will, of course, vary in different

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY situations. Some will be those facing A and B in terms of their previous biographies, others may be the result of the natural, presocial circumstances of the situation. What will in all cases have to be habitualized is the communication process between A and B. Labor, sexuality and territoriality are other likely foci of typification and habitualization. In these various areas the situation of A and B is paradigmatic of the institutionalization occurring in larger societies. Let us push our paradigm one step further and imagine that A and B have children. At this point the situation changes qualitatively. The appearance of a third party changes the character of the ongoing social interaction between A and B, and it will change even further as additional individuals continue to be added 23 The institutional world, which existed in state nascendi in the original situation of A and B, is now passed on to others. In this process institutionalization perfects itself. The habitualizations and typifications undertaken in the common life of A and B, formations that until this point still had the quality of ad hoc conceptions of two individuals, now become historical institutions. With the acquisition of historicity, these formations also acquire another crucial quality, or, more accurately, perfect a quality that was incipient as soon as A and B began the reciprocal typification of their conduct: this quality is objectivity . This means that the institutions that have now been crystallized (for instance, the institution of paternity as it is encountered by the children) are experienced as existing over and beyond the individuals who "happen to" embody them at the moment. In other words, the institutions are now experienced as possessing a reality of their own, a reality that confronts the individual as an external and coercive fact 24 As long as the nascent institutions are constructed and maintained only in the interaction of A and B, their objectivity remains tenuous, easily changeable, almost playful, even while they attain a measure of objectivity by the mere fact of their formation. To put this a little differently, the routinized background of A's and B's activity remains fairly accessible to deliberate intervention by A and B. Although the routines, once established, carry within them a tendency to persist, the possibility of changing them or even abolishing them re-

it is possible in principle to assert that "social facts are things," and to intend thereby no more than the objectivity of social facts as human products. The theoretical key to the question is the distinction between objectivation and reification. 60. Compare here Sartre's concept of the "practico-inert," in *Critique de la raison dialectique*. 61. For this reason Marx called reifying consciousness a false consciousness. This concept may be related to Sartre's "bad faith" (*mauvaise foi*). 62. The work of Lucien Lévy-Bruhl and Jean Piaget may be taken as basic for an understanding of protoreification, both phylo- and ontogenetically. Also, cf. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *La pensée sauvage* (Paris, Plon, 1962). 63. On the parallelism between "here below" and "up above," cf. Mircea Eliade, *Cosmos and History* (New York, Harper, 1959) - A similar point is made by Voegelin, *op. cit.*, in his discussion of "cosmological civilizations." 64. On the reification of identity, compare Sartre's analysis of anti-Semitism. 65. On conditions for dereification, cf. Berger and Pullberg, *loc. cit.* 66. The term "legitimation" is derived from Weber, where it is developed particularly in the context of his political sociology. We have given it a much broader use here. 67. On legitimations as "explanations," compare Pareto's analysis of "derivations." 68. Both Marx and Pareto were aware of the possible autonomy of what we have called legitimations ("ideology" in Marx, "derivations" in Pareto). 69. Our concept of "symbolic universe" is very close to Durkheim's "religion." Schutz's analysis of "finite provinces of meaning"

60 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY the institutional world transmitted by most parents already has the character of historical and objective reality. The process of transmission simply strengthens the parents' sense of reality, if only because, to put it crudely, if one says, "This is how these things are done," often enough one believes it oneself.²⁶ An institutional world, then, is experienced as an objective reality. It has a history that antedates the individual's birth and is not accessible to his biographical recollection. It was there before he was born, and it will be there after his death. This history itself, as the tradition of the existing institutions, has the character of objectivity. The individual's biography is apprehended as an episode located within the objective history of the society. The institutions, as historical and objective facticities, confront the individual as undeniable facts. The institutions are there, external to him, persistent in their reality, whether he likes it or not. He cannot wish them away. They resist his attempts to change or evade them. They have coercive power over him, both in themselves, by the sheer force of their facticity, and through the control mechanisms that are usually attached to the most important of them. The objective reality of institutions is not diminished if the individual does not understand their purpose or their mode of operation. He may experience large sectors of the social world as incomprehensible, perhaps oppressive in their opaqueness, but real nonetheless. Since institutions exist as external reality, the individual cannot understand them by introspection. He must "go out" and learn about them, just as he must to learn about nature. This remains true even though the social world, as a humanly produced reality, is potentially understandable in a way not possible in the case of the natural world.²⁷ It is important to keep in mind that the objectivity of the institutional world, however massive it may appear to the individual, is a humanly produced, constructed objectivity. The process by which the externalized products of human activity attain the character of objectivity is objectivation.²⁸ The institutional world is objectivated human activity, and so is every single institution. In other words, despite the objectivity that marks the social world in human experience, it does not thereby acquire an ontological status apart from

is an objective reality. Man is a social product. It may also already be evident than an analysis of the social world that leavers out any one of these three moments will be distortive?e One may further add that only with the transmission of the social world to a new generation (that is, internalization as effectuated in socialization) does the fundamental social dialectic appear in its totality. To repeat, only with the appearance of a new generation can one properly speak of a social world. At the same point, the institutional world requires legitimation , that is, ways by which it can be "explained" and justified. This is not because it appears less real. As we have seen, the reality of the social world gains in massivity in the course of its transmission. This reality, however, is a historical one, which comes to the new generation as a tradition rather than as a biographical memory. In our paradigmatic example, A and B, the original creators of the social world, can always reconstruct the circumstances under which their world and any part of it was established. That is, they can arrive at the meaning of an institution by exercising their powers of recollection. A's and B's children are in an altogether different situation. Their knowledge of the institutional history is by way of "hearsay." The original meaning

58 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY situations. Some will be those facing A and B in terms of their previous biographies, others may be the result of the natural, presocial circumstances of the situation. What will in all cases have to be habitualized is the communication process between A and B. Labor, sexuality and territoriality are other likely foci of typification and habitualization. In these various areas the situation of A and B is paradigmatic of the institutionalization occurring in larger societies. Let us push our paradigm one step further and imagine that A and B have children. At this point the situation changes qualitatively. The appearance of a third party changes the character of the ongoing social interaction between A and B, and it will change even further as additional individuals continue to be added 23 The institutional world, which existed in state nascendi in the original situation of A and B, is now passed on to others. In this process institutionalization perfects itself. The habitualizations and typifications undertaken in the common life of A and B, formations that until this point still had the quality of ad hoc conceptions of two individuals, now become historical institutions. With the acquisition of historicity, these formations also acquire another crucial quality, or, more accurately, perfect a quality that was incipient as soon as A and B began the reciprocal typification of their conduct: this quality is objectivity . This means that the institutions that have now been crystallized (for instance, the institution of paternity as it is encountered by the children) are experienced as existing over and beyond the individuals who "happen to" embody them at the moment. In other words, the institutions are now experienced as possessing a reality of their own, a reality that confronts the individual as an external and coercive fact 24 As long as the nascent institutions are constructed and maintained only in the interaction of A and B, their objectivity remains tenuous, easily changeable, almost playful, even while they attain a measure of objectivity by the mere fact of their formation. To put this a little differently, the routinized background of A's and B's activity remains fairly accessible to deliberate intervention by A and B. Although the routines, once established, carry within them a tendency to persist, the possibility of changing them or even abolishing them re-

a new generation. In the early phases of socialization the child is quite incapable of distinguishing between the objectivity of natural phenomena and the objectivity of the social formations. To take the most important item of socialization, language appears to the child as inherent in the nature of things, and he cannot grasp the notion of its conventionality. A thing is what it is called, and it could not be called anything else. All institutions appear in the same way, as given, unalterable and self-evident. Even in our empirically unlikely example of parents having constructed an institutional world de novo, the objectivity of this same way, as given, unalterable and self-evident. Even in our empirically unlikely example of parents having constructed an institutional world de novo, the objectivity of this world would be increased for them by the socialization of their children, because the objectivity experienced by the children would reflect back upon their own experience of this world. Empirically, of course,

SOCIETY AS OBJECTIVE REALITY 57 common?z While this reciprocal typification is not yet institutionalization (since, there only being two individuals, there is no possibility of a typology of actors), it is clear that institutionalization is already present in nucleo. At this stage one may ask what gains accrue to the two individuals from this development. The most important gain is that each will be able to predict the other's actions. Concomitantly, the interaction of both becomes predictable. The "There he goes again" becomes a "There we go again." This relieves both individuals of a considerable amount of tension. They save time and effort, not only in whatever external tasks they might be engaged in separately or jointly, but in terms of their respective psychological economies. Their life together is now defined by a widening sphere of taken-for-granted routines. Many actions are possible on a low level of attention. Each action of one is no longer a source of astonishment and potential danger to the other. Instead, much of what goes on takes on the triviality of what, to both, will be everyday life. This means that the two individuals are constructing a background, in the sense discussed before, which will serve to stabilize both their separate actions and their interaction. The construction of this background of routine in turn makes possible a division of labor between them, opening the way for innovations, which demand a higher level of attention. The division of labor and the innovations will lead to new habitualizations, further widening the background common to both individuals. In other words, a social world will be in process of construction, containing within it the roots of an expanding institutional order. Generally, all actions repeated once or more tend to be habitualized to some degree, just as all actions observed by another necessarily involve some typification on his part. However, for the kind of reciprocal typification just described to occur there must be a continuing social situation in which the habitualized actions of two or more individuals interlock. Which actions are likely to be reciprocally typified in this manner? The general answer is, those actions that are relevant to both A and B within their common situation. The areas likely to be relevant in this way will, of course, vary in different

SOCIETY AS OBJECTIVE REALITY 65 De facto, then, institutions are integrated. But their integration is not a functional imperative for the social processes that produce them; it is rather brought about in a derivative fashion. Individuals perform discrete institutionalized actions within the context of their biography. This biography is a reflected-upon whole in which the discrete actions are thought of not as isolated events, but as related parts in a subjectively meaningful universe whose meanings are not specific to the individual, but socially articulated and shared. Only by way of this detour of socially shared universes of meaning do we arrive at the need for institutional integration. This has far-reaching implications for any analysis of social phenomena the integration of an institutional order can be understood only in terms of the "knowledge" that its members have of it, it follows that the analysis of such "knowledge " will be essential for an analysis of the institutional order in question. It is important to stress that this does not exclusively or even primarily involve a preoccupation with complex theoretical systems serving as legitimations for the institutional order. Theories also have to be taken into account, of course. But theoretical knowledge is only a small and by no means the most important part of what passes for knowledge in a society. Theoretically sophisticated legitimations appear at particular moments of an institutional history. The primary knowledge about the institutional order is knowledge on the pretheoretical level. It is the sum total of "what everybody knows" about a social world, an assemblage of maxims, morals, proverbial nuggets of wisdom, values and beliefs, myths, and so forth, the theoretical integration of which re. quires considerable intellectual fortitude in itself, as the long line of heroic integrators from Homer to the latest sociological system-builders testifies. On the pretheoretical level, however, every institution has a body of transmitted recipe knowledge, that is, knowledge that supplies the institutionally appropriate rules of conduct 8a Such knowledge constitutes the motivating dynamics of institutionalized conduct. It defines the institutionalized areas of conduct and designates all situations falling within them. It defines and constructs the roles to be played in the context of the institutions in question. Ipso facto, it controls and

particular activities involved. In its linguistic basis, this knowledge is already indispensable to the institutional "programming" of these economic activities. There will be, say, a vocabulary designating the various modes of hunting, the weapons to be employed, the animals that serve as prey, and so on. There will further be a collection of recipes that must be learned if one is to hunt correctly. This knowledge serves as a channeling, controlling force in itself, an indispensable ingredient of the institutionalization of this area of conduct. As the institution of hunting is crystallized and persists in time, the same body of knowledge serves as an objective (and, inciSOCIETY

AS OBJECTIVE REALITY (mentally, empirically verifiable) description of it. A whole segment of the social world is objectified by this knowledge. There will be an objective "science" of hunting, corresponding to the objective reality of the hunting economy. The point need not be belabored that here "empirical verification" and "science" are not understood in the sense of modern scientific canons, but rather in the sense of knowledge that may be borne out in experience and that can subsequently become systematically organized as a body of knowledge. Again, the same body of knowledge is transmitted to the next generation. It is learned as objective truth in the course of socialization and thus internalized as subjective reality. This reality in turn has power to shape the individual. It will produce a specific type of person, namely the hunter, whose identity and biography as a hunter have meaning only in a universe constituted by the aforementioned body of knowledge as a whole (say, in a hunters' society) or in part (say, in our own society, in which hunters come together in a subuniverse of their own). In other words, no part of the institutionalization of hunting can exist without the particular knowledge that has been socially produced and objectified with reference to this activity. To hunt and to be a hunter implies existence in a social world defined and controlled by this body of knowledge. Mutatis mutandis, the same applies to any area of institutionalized conduct. c. Sedimentation and Tradition Only a small part of the totality of human experiences is retained in consciousness. The experiences that are so retained become sedimented, that is, they congeal in recollection as recognizable and memorable entities. Unless such sedimentation took place the individual could not make sense of his biography. Intersubjective sedimentation also takes place when several individuals share a common biography, experiences of which become incorporated in a common stock of knowledge. Intersubjective sedimentation can be called truly social only when it has been objectified in a sign system of one kind or another, that is, when the possibility of reiterated objectification of the shared experiences arises. Only then

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY is it likely that these experiences will be transmitted from one generation to the next, and from one collectivity to another. Theoretically, common activity, without a sign system, could be the basis for transmission. Empirically, this is improbable. An objectively available sign system bestows a status of incipient anonymity on the sedimented experiences by detaching them from their original context of concrete individual biographies and making them generally available to all who share, or may share in the future, in the sign system in question. The experiences thus become readily transmittable. In principle, any sign system would do. Normally, of course, the decisive sign system is linguistic. Language objectivates the shared experiences and makes them available to all within the linguistic community, thus becoming both the basis and the instrument of the collective stock of knowledge. Furthermore, language provides the means for objectifying new experiences, allowing their incorporation into the already existing stock of knowledge, and it is the most important means by which the objectivated and objectified sedimentations are transmitted in the tradition of the collectivity in question. For example, only some members of a hunting society have the experience of losing their weapons and being forced to fight a wild animal with their bare hands. This frightening experience, with whatever lessons in bravery, cunning and skill it yields, is firmly sedimented in the consciousness of the individuals who went through it. If the experience is shared by several individuals, it will be sedimented intersubjectively, may perhaps even form a profound bond between these individuals. As this experience is designated and transmitted linguistically, however, it becomes accessible and, perhaps, strongly relevant to individuals who have never gone through it. The linguistic designation (which, in a hunting society, we may imagine to be very precise and elaborate indeed-say, "lone, big kill, with one hand, of male rhinoceros," "lone big kill, with two hands, of female rhinoceros," and so forth) abstracts the experience from its individual biographical occurrences. It becomes an objective possibility for everyone, or at any rate for everyone within a certain type (say, fully initiated hunters); that is, it becomes anonymous in principle even if it is still associated with the feats

SOCIETY AS OBJECTIVE REALITY 69 of specific individuals. Even to those who do not anticipate the experience in their own future biography (say, women forbidden to hunt), it may be relevant in a derived manner (say, in terms of the desirability of a future husband) ; in any case it is part of the common stock of knowledge. The objectification of the experience in the language (that is, its transformation into a generally available object of knowledge) then allows its incorporation into a larger body of tradition by way of moral instruction, inspirational poetry, religious allegory and whatnot. Both the experience in the narrower sense and its appendage of wider significations can then be taught -to every new generation, or even diffused to an altogether different collectivity (say, an agriculture society that may attach quite different meanings to the whole business). Language becomes the depository of a large aggregate of collective sedimentations, which can be acquired monothetically , that is, as cohesive wholes and without reconstructing their original process of formation.³ Once the actual origin of the sedimentations has become unimportant, the tradition might invent quite a different origin without thereby threatening what has been objectivated. In other words, legitimations can succeed each other, from time to time bestowing new meanings on the sedimented experiences of the collectivity in question. The past history of the society can be reinterpreted without necessarily upsetting the institutional order as a result. For instance, in the above example, the "big kill" may come to be legitimated as a deed of divine figures and any human repetition of it as an imitation of the mythological prototype. This process underlies all objectivated sedimentations, not only institutionalized actions. It may refer, for instance, to the transmission of typifications of others not directly relevant to specific institutions. For example, others are typified as "tall" or "short," "fat" or "thin," "bright" or "dull," without any particular institutional implications being attached to these typifications. The process, of course, also applies to the transmission of sedimented meanings that meet the previously given specification of institutions. The transmission of the meaning of an institution is based on the social recogni-

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY tion of that institution as a "permanent" solution to a "permanent " problem of the given collectivity. Therefore, potential actors of institutionalized actions must be systematically acquainted with these meanings. This necessitates some form of "educational" process. The institutional meanings must be impressed powerfully and unforgettably upon the consciousness of the individual. Since human beings are frequently sluggish and forgetful, there must also be procedures by which these meanings can be reimpresed and rememorized , if necessary by coercive and generally unpleasant means. Furthermore, since human beings are frequently stupid, institutional meanings tend to become simplified in the process of transmission, so that the given collection of institutional "formulae!" can be readily learned and memorized by successive generations. The "formula" character of institutional meanings ensures their memorability. We have here on the level of sedimented meanings the same processes of routinization and trivialization that we have already noted in the discussion of institutionalization. Again, the stylized form in which heroic feats enter a tradition is a useful illustration . The objectivated meanings of institutional activity are conceived of as "knowledge" and transmitted as such. Some of this "knowledge" is deemed relevant to all, some only to certain types. All transmission requires some sort of social apparatus. That is, some types are designated as transmitters, other types as recipients of the traditional "knowledge." The specific character of this apparatus will, of course, vary from society to society. There will also be typified procedures for the passage of the tradition from the knowers to the non- knowers. For example, the technical, magical and moral lore of hunting may be transmitted by maternal uncles to nephews of a certain age, by means of specified procedures of initiation. The typology of knowers and non-knowers, like the "knowledge" that is supposed to pass between them, is a matter of social definition; both "knowing" and "not knowing " refer to what is socially defined as reality, and not to some extra-social criteria of cognitive validity. To put this crudely, maternal uncles do not transmit this particular stock of knowledge because they know it, but they know it (that

SOCIETY AS OBJECTIVE REALITY 71 is, are defined as knowers) because they are maternal uncles. If an institutionally designated maternal uncle, for particular reasons, turns out to be incapable of transmitting the knowledge in question, he is no longer a maternal uncle in the full sense of the word, and, indeed, institutional recognition of this status may be withdrawn from him. Depending on the social span of relevance of a certain type of "knowledge" and its complexity and importance in a particular collectivity, the "knowledge" may have to be reaffirmed through symbolic objects (such as fetishes and military emblems), and/or symbolic actions (such as religious or military ritual). In other words, physical objects and actions may be called upon as mnemotechnic aids. All transmission of institutional meanings obviously implies control and legitimation procedures. These are attached to the institutions themselves and administered by the transmitting personnel. It may be stressed again here that no a priori consistency, let alone functionality, may be presumed as existing between different institutions and the forms of the transmission of knowledge pertaining to them. The problem of logical coherence arises first on the level of legitimation (where there may be conflict or competition between different legitimations and their administrative personnel), and secondly on the level of socialization (where there may be practical difficulties in the internalization of successive or competing institutional meanings). To return to a previous example, there is no a priori reason why institutional meanings that originated in a hunting society should not be diffused to an agricultural society. What is more, these meanings may, to an outside observer, appear to have dubious "functionality" in the first society at the time of diffusion and no "functionality" at all in the second. The difficulties that may arise here are connected with the theoretical activities of the legitimators and the practical ones of the "educators" in the new society. The theoreticians have to satisfy themselves that a hunting goddess is a plausible denizen in an agrarian pantheon and the pedagogues have a problem explaining her mythological activities to children -who have never seen a hunt. Legitimizing theoreticians tend to have logical aspirations axed children tend to be recalcitrant. This, however, is not a problem of

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY abstract logic or technical functionality, but rather of ingenuity on the one hand and credulity on the other—a rather different proposition. d. Roles As we have seen, the origins of any institutional order lie in the typification of one's own and others' performances. This implies that one shares with others specific goals and interlocking phases of performance, and, further, that not only specific actions but forms of action are typified. That is, there will be the recognition not only of a particular actor performing an action of type X, but of type-X action as being performable by any actor to whom the relevance structure in question can be plausibly imputed. For example, one may recognize one's brother-in-law engaged in thrashing one's insolent offspring and understand that this particular action is only one instance of a form of action appropriate to other pairs of uncles and nephews, indeed, is a generally available pattern in a matrilineal society. Only if the latter typification prevails will this incident follow a socially taken-for-granted course, with the father discreetly withdrawing from the scene so as not to disturb the legitimate exercise of avuncular authority. The typification of forms of action requires that these have an objective sense, which in turn requires a linguistic objectification. That is, there will be a vocabulary referring to these forms of action (such as "nephew-thrashing," which will belong to a much larger linguistic structuring of kinship and its various rights and obligations). In principle, then, an action and its sense can be apprehended apart from individual performances of it and the variable subjective processes associated with them. Both self and other can be apprehended as performers of objective, generally known actions, which are recurrent and repeatable by any actor of the appropriate type. This has very important consequences for self-experience. In the course of action there is an identification of the self with the objective sense of the action; the action that is going on determines, for that moment, the self-apprehension of

SOCIETY AS OBJECTIVE REALITY 73 the actor, and does so in the objective sense that has been socially ascribed to the action. Although there continues to be a marginal awareness of the body and other aspects of the self not directly, involved in the action, the actor, for that moment, apprehends himself essentially in identification with the socially objectivated action ("I am now thrashing my nephew"-a taken-for-granted episode in the routine of everyday life). After the action has taken place there is a further important consequence, as the actor reflects about his action. Now a part of the self is objectified as the performer of this action, with the whole self again becoming relatively disidentified from the performed action. That is, it becomes possible to conceive of the self as having been only partially involved in the action (after all, the man in our example is other things besides being a nephew-thrasher). It is not difficult to see: that, as these objectifications accumulate ("nephew-thrasher," "sister-supporter," "initiate-warrior," "rain-dance virtuoso," and so forth), an entire sector of self-consciousness is structured in terms of these objectifications. In other words, a segment of the self is objectified in terms of the socially available typifications. This segment is the truly "social self," which is subjectively experienced as distinct from and even confronting the self in its totality .86 This important phenomenon, which allows an internal "conversation" between the different segments of the self, will be taken up again later when we look at the process by which the socially constructed world is internalized in individual consciousness. For the moment; , what is important is the relationship of the phenomenon to the objectively available typifications of conduct . In sum, the actor identifies with the socially objectivated typifications of conduct in actu, but re-establishes distance from them as he reflects about his conduct afterward. This distance between the actor and his action can be retained in consciousness and projected to future repetitions of the actions. In this way both acting self and acting others are apprehended not as unique individuals, but as types. By definition , these types are interchangeable. We can properly begin to speak of roles when this kind of typification occurs in the context of an objectified stock

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY of knowledge common to a collectivity of actors. Roles are types of actors in such a context 3T It can readily be seen that the construction of role typologies is a necessary correlate of the institutionalization of conduct. Institutions are embodied in individual experience by means of roles. The roles, objectified linguistically, are an essential ingredient of the objectively available world of any society. By playing roles, the individual participates in a social world. By internalizing these roles, the same world becomes subjectively real to him. In the common stock of knowledge there are standards of role performance that are accessible to all members of a society , or at least to those who are potential performers of the roles in question. This general accessibility is itself part of the same stock of knowledge; not only are the standards of role X generally known, but it is known that these standards are known. Consequently every putative actor of role X can be held responsible for abiding by the standards, which can be taught as part of the institutional tradition and used to verify the credentials of all performers and, by the same token, serve as controls. The origins of roles lie in the same fundamental process of habitualization and objectivation as the origins of institutions . Roles appear as soon as a common stock of knowledge containing reciprocal typifications of conduct is in process of formation, a process that, as we have seen, is endemic to, social interaction and prior to institutionalization proper. The question as to which roles become institutionalized is identical with the question as to which areas of conduct are affected by institutionalization, and may be answered the same way. All institutionalized conduct involves roles. Thus roles share in the controlling character of institutionalization. As soon as actors are typified as role performers, their conduct is ipso facto susceptible to enforcement. Compliance and non-compliance with socially defined role standards ceases to be optional, though, of course, the severity of sanctions may vary from case to case. The roles represent the institutional order.³⁸ This representation takes place on two levels. First, performance of the role represents itself. For instance, to engage in judg-

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY §ation in human conduct, which here, of course, is conduct typified in the institutional roles of the law. When individuals begin to reflect upon these matters they face the problem of binding the various representations together in a cohesive whole that will make sense se Any concrete role performance refers to the objective sense of the institution, and thus to the other complementary role performances , and to the sense of the institution as a whole. While the problem of integrating the various representations so involved is solved primarily on the level of legitimation, it is also dealt with in terms of certain roles. All roles represent the institutional order in the afore-mentioned sense. Some roles, however, symbolically represent that order in its totality more than others. Such roles are of great strategic importance in a society, since they represent not only this or that institution, but the integration of all institutions in a meaningful world. Ipso facto, of course, these roles help in maintaining such integration in the consciousness and conduct of the members of the society, that is, they have a special relationship to the legitimating apparatus of the society. Some roles have no functions other than this symbolic representation of the institutional order as an integrated totality, others take on this function from time to time in addition to the less exalted functions they routinely perform. The judge, for instance, may, on occasion, in some particularly important case, represent the total integration of society in this way. The monarch does so all the time and, indeed, in a constitutional monarchy, may have no other function than as a "living symbol" for all levels of the society, down to the man in the street. Historically, roles that symbolically represent the total institutional order have been most commonly located in political and religious institutions 4o More important for our immediate considerations is the character of roles as mediators of specific sectors of the common stock of knowledge. By virtue of the roles he plays the individual is inducted into specific areas of socially objectivated knowledge, not only in the narrower cognitive sense, but also in the sense of the "knowledge" of norms, values and even emotions. To be a judge obviously involves a knowledge of the law and probably also knowledge of a much

when to restrain his feelings of compassion, to mention a not unimportant psychological prerequisite for this role. In this way, each role opens an entrance into a specific sector of the society's total stock of knowledge. To learn a role it is not enough to acquire the routines immediately necessary for its "outward" performance. One must also be initiated into the various cognitive and even affective layers of the body of knowledge that is directly and indirectly appropriate to this role. This implies a social distribution of knowledge 41 A society 's stock of knowledge is structured in terms of what is generally relevant: and what is relevant only to specific roles. This is true of even very simple social situations, such as our previous example of a social situation produced by the ongoing interaction of a man, a bisexual woman and a Lesbian. Here some knowledge is relevant to all three individuals (for instance, knowledge of the procedures necessary to keep this company economically afloat), while other knowledge is relevant only to two of the individuals (the savoir-faire of Lesbian or, in the other case, of heterosexual seduction). In other words, the social distribution of knowledge entails a dichotomization in terms of general and role-specific relevance. Given the historical accumulation of knowledge in a society , we can assume that because of the division of labor role-specific knowledge will grow at a faster rate than generally relevant and accessible knowledge. The multiplication of specific tasks brought about by the division of labor requires standardized solutions that can be readily learned and transmitted. These in turn require specialized knowledge of certain situations, and of the means/ends relationships in terms of which the situations are socially defined. In other words, specialists will arise, each of whom will have to know whatever is deemed necessary for the fulfillment of his particular task. To accumulate role-specific knowledge a society must be ..ERR, COD:1..

SOCIETY AS OBJECTIVE REALITY 55 it was produced. Institutions also, by the very fact of their existence, control human conduct by setting up predefined patterns of conduct, which channel it in one direction as against the many other directions that would theoretically be possible. It is important to stress that this controlling character is inherent in institutionalization as such, prior to or apart from any mechanisms of sanctions specifically set up to support an institution. These mechanisms (the sum of which constitute what is generally called a system of social control) do, of course, exist in many institutions and in all the agglomerations of institutions that we call societies. Their controlling efficacy, however, is of a secondary or supplementary kind. As we shall see again later, the primary social control is given in the existence of an institution as such. To say that a segment of human activity has been institutionalized is already to say that this segment of human activity has been subsumed under social control. Additional control mechanisms are required only insofar as the processes of institutionalization are less than completely successful. Thus, for instance, the law may provide that anyone who breaks the incest taboo will have his head chopped off. This provision may be necessary because there have been cases when individuals offended against the taboo. It is unlikely that this sanction will have to be invoked continuously (unless the institution delineated by the incest taboo is itself in the course of disintegration, a special case that we need not elaborate here). It makes little sense, therefore, to say that human sexuality is socially controlled by beheading certain individuals. Rather, human sexuality is socially controlled by its institutionalization in the course of the particular history in question. One may add, of course, that the incest taboo itself is nothing but the negative side of an assemblage of typifications, which define in the first place which sexual conduct is incestuous and which is not. In actual experience institutions generally manifest themselves in collectivities containing considerable numbers of people. It is theoretically important, however, to emphasize that the institutionalizing process of reciprocal typification would occur even if two individuals began to interact *de novo*. Institutionalization is incipient in every social situation contin-

one inquires into the ways in which the individual, in his total social activity, relates to the collectivity in question. Such an inquiry will, of necessity, be an exercise in role analysis 42 e. Scope and Modes of Institutionalization So far we have discussed institutionalization in terms of essential features that may be taken as sociological constants. Obviously we cannot in this treatise give even an overview of the countless variations in the historical manifestations and combinations of these constants—a task that could be achieved only by writing a universal history from the point of view of sociological theory. There are, however, a number of historical variations in the character of institutions that are so important for concrete sociological analyses that they should be at least briefly discussed. Our focus will, of course, continue to be on the relationship between institutions and knowledge. In investigating any concrete institutional order, one may ask the following question: What is the scope of institutionalization within the totality of social actions in a given collectivity? In other words, how large is the sector of institutionalized activity as compared with the sector that is left uninstitutionalized?43 Clearly there is historical variability in this matter, with different societies allowing more or less room for uninstitutionalized actions. An important general

HO THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY consideration is what factors determine a wider as against a narrower scope of institutionalization. Very formally, the scope of institutionalization depends on the generality of the relevance structures. If many or most relevance structures in a society are generally shared, the scope of institutionalization will be wide. If only few relevance structures are generally shared, the scope of institutionalization will be narrow. In the latter case, there is the further possibility that the institutional order will be highly fragmented, as certain relevance structures are shared by groups within the society but not by the society as a whole. It SOCIETY AS OBJECTIVE REALITY 81 such a society there would be almost no common stock of knowledge. Almost all knowledge would be role-specific. In terms of macroscopic societies, even approximations of this type are historically unavailable. But certain approximations can be found in smaller social formations—for example, in libertarian colonies where common concerns are limited to economic arrangements, or in military expeditions consisting of a number of tribal or ethnic units whose only common problem is the waging of the war. Apart from stimulating sociological fantasies, such heuristic fictions are useful only insofar as they help to clarify the conditions that favor approximations to them. The most general condition is the degree of division of labor, with the concomitant differentiation of institutions^{4e} Any society in which there is increasing division of labor is moving away from the first extreme type described above. Another general condition, closely related to the previous one, is availability of an economic surplus, which makes it possible for certain individuals or groups to engage in specialized activities not directly concerned with subsistence ⁴⁷ These specialized activities, as we have seen, lead to specialization and segmentation in the common stock of knowledge. And the latter makes possible knowledge subjectively detached from any social relevance, that is, "pure theory."⁴⁸ This means that certain individuals are (to return to a previous example) freed from hunting not onh⁷ to forge weapons but also to fabricate myths. Thus we have the "theoretical life," with its luxurious proliferation of specialized bodies of knowledge, administered by specialists whose social prestige may actually depend upon their inability to do anything except theorize—which leads to a number of analytic problems to which we shall return later. Institutionalization is not, however, an irreversible process, despite the fact that institutions, once formed, have a tendency to persist⁴⁹ For a variety of historical reasons, the scope of institutionalized actions may diminish; deinstitutionalization may take place in certain areas of social life so For example, the private sphere that has emerged in modern industrial society is considerably deinstitutionalized as compared to the public sphere ⁵¹

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY several actions work together for the great society (which is A-B-C), this "knowledge" will influence what goes on in the situation. For instance, C may now be more amenable to budgeting her time in an equitable way between her two major enterprises. If this extension of our example seems far-fetched, we can bring it closer to home by imagining a secularization process in the consciousness of our religious genius. Mythology no longer seems plausible. The situation has to be explained by social science. This, of course, is very easy. It is evident (to our religious genius turned social scientist, that is) that the two sorts of sexual activity going on in the situation express deep-seated psychological needs of the participants. He "knows" that to frustrate these needs will lead to "disfunctional " tensions. On the other hand, it is a fact that our trio sell their flowers for coconuts on the other end of the island. That settles it. Behaviour patterns A-B and B-C are functional in terms of the "personality system," while C-A is functional in terms of the economic sector of the "social system." A-B-C is nothing but the rational outcome of functional integration on the intersystemic level. Again, if A is successful in propagandizing his two girls with this theory, their "knowledge " of the functional imperatives involved in their situation will have certain controlling consequences for their conduct. Mutatis mutandis, the same argument will hold if we transpose it from the face-to-face idyll of our example to the macro-social level. The segmentation of the institutional order and the concomitant distribution of knowledge will lead to the problem of providing integrative meanings that will encompass the society and provide an overall context of objective sense for the individual's fragmented social experience and knowledge. Furthermore, there will be not only the problem of overall meaningful integration, but also a problem of legitimating the institutional activities of type of actor vis-d-vis other types. We may assume that there is a universe of meaning that bestows objective sense on the activities of warriors, farmers, traders, and exorcists. This does not mean that there will be no conflict of interests between these types of actors. Even within the common universe of meaning, the

are performed within situations of equal relevance to all the actors. This heuristic model of a totally institutionalized society (a fit topic for nightmare³, it might be remarked in passing) can be slightly modified by conceiving that all social actions are institutionalized, but not only around common problems. While the style of life such a society would impose on its members would be equally rigid, there would be a greater degree of role-specific distribution of knowledge. A number of liturgies would be going on at the same time, so to speak. Needless to say, neither the model of institutional totality nor its modification can be found in history. Actual societies can, however, be considered in terms of their approximation to this extreme type. It is then possible to say that primitive societies approximate the type to a much higher degree than civilized ones .44 It may even be said that in the development of archaic civilizations there is a progressive movement away from this type .45 The opposite extreme would be a society in which there is only one common problem, and institutionalization occurs only with respect to actions concerned with this problem. In

Eg~ require much more developed solutions of the economic problem. Like all social edifices of meaning, the subuniverses must be "carried" by a particular collectivity, ^{s4} that is, by the group that ongoingly produces the meanings in question and within which these meanings have objective reality. Conflict or competition may exist between such groups. On the simplest level, there may be conflict over the allocation of surplus resources to the specialists in question, for example, over exemption from productive labor. Who is to be officially exempt, all medicine men, or only those who perform services in the household of the chief? Or, who is to receive a fixed stipend from the authorities, those who cure the sick with herbs or those who do it by going into a trance? Such social conflicts are readily translated into conflicts between rival schools of thought, each seeking to establish itself and to dis-

200 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY 54. Weber repeatedly refers to various collectivities as "carriers" (Träger) of what we have called here subuniverses of meaning, especially in his comparative sociology of religion. The analysis of this phenomenon is, of course, related to Marx's Unterbau/Überbau scheme. 55. The pluralistic competition between subuniverses of meaning is one of the most important problems for an empirical sociology of knowledge of contemporary society. We have dealt with this problem elsewhere in our work in the sociology of religion, but see no point in developing an analysis of it as a dialectical one, that is, knowledge is a social product and knowledge is a factor in social change." This principle of the dialectic between social production and the objectivated world that is its product has already been explicated; it is especially important to keep it in mind in any analysis of concrete subuniverses of meaning. The increasing number and complexity of subuniverses make them increasingly inaccessible to outsiders. They become esoteric enclaves, "hermetically sealed" (in the sense classically associated with the Hermetic corpus of secret lore) to all but those who have been properly initiated into their mysteries. The increasing autonomy of subuniverses makes for special problems of legitimation vis-à-vis both outsiders and insiders. The outsiders have to be kept out, sometimes even kept ignorant of the existence of the subuniverse. If, however, they are not so ignorant, and if the subuniverse requires various special privileges and recognitions from the larger society, there is the problem of keeping out the outsiders and at the same time having them acknowledge the legitimacy of this procedure. This is done through various techniques of intimidation, rational and irrational propaganda (appealing to the outsiders' interests and to their emotions), mystification and, generally, the manipulation of prestige symbols. The insiders, on the other hand, have to be kept in. This requires the development of both practical and theoretical procedures by which the temptation to escape from the subuniverse can be checked. We shall look at some of the details of this double problem of legitimation later. An illustration may serve for the moment. It is not enough to set

SS THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY up an esoteric subuniverse of medicine. The lay public must be convinced that this is right and beneficial, and the medical fraternity must be held to the standards of the subuniverse . Thus the general population is intimidated by images of the physical doom that follows "going against doctor's advice "; it is persuaded not to do so by the pragmatic benefits of compliance, and by adopt to meet the threat of inconsistency. Various techniques to cope with the threat of discontinuity are also available. The use of correspondence to continue significant conversation despite physical separation may serve as an illustration 22 Different conversations can be compared in terms of the density of the reality they produce or maintain. On the whole, frequency of conversation enhances its reality-generating potency, but lack of frequency can sometimes be compensated for by the intensity of the conversation when it does take place. One may see one's lover only once a month, but the conversation then engaged in is of sufficient intensity to make up for its relative infrequency. Certain conversations may also be explicitly defined and legitimated as having a privileged status-such as conversations with one's confessor, one's psychoanalyst, or a similar "authority" figure. The "authority" here lies in the cognitively and normatively superior status that is assigned to these conversations. Subjective reality is thus always dependent upon specific plausibility structures, that is, the specific social base and social processes required for its maintenance. One can maintain

away. The objectivity of the social world means that it confronts man as something outside of: himself. The decisive question is whether he still retains the awareness that, however objectivated, the social world was made by men-and, therefore, can be remade by them. In other words, reification can be described as an extreme step in the process of objectivation, whereby the objectivated world loses its comprehensibility as a human enterprise and becomes fixated as a non-human, non-humanizable, inert facticity.⁶⁰ Typically, the real relationship between man and his world is reversed in consciousness. Man, the producer of a world, is apprehended as its product, and human activity as an epiphenomenon of non-human processes. Human meanings are no longer understood as world-producing but as being, in their turn, products of the "nature of things." It must be emphasized that reification is a modality of consciousness, more: precisely, a modality of man's objectification of the human world. Even while apprehending the world in reified terms, man continues to produce it. That is, man is capable paradoxically of producing a reality that denies him.⁶¹ Reification is possible on both the pretheoretical and theoretical levels of consciousness. Complex theoretical systems can be described as reifications, though presumably they have their roots in pretheoretical reifications established in

go THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY this or that social situation. Thus it would be an error to limit the concept of reification to the mental constructions of intellectuals. Reification exists in the consciousness of the man in the street and, indeed, the latter presence is more practically significant. It would also be a mistake to look at reification as a perversion of an originally non-reified apprehension of the social world, a sort of cognitive fall from grace. On the contrary, the available ethnological and psychological evidence seems to indicate the opposite, namely, that the original apprehension of the social world is highly reified both phylogenetically and ontogenetically e2 This implies that an apprehension of reification as a modality of consciousness is dependent upon an at least relative dereification of consciousness, which is a comparatively late development in history and in any individual biography. Both the institutional order as a whole and segments of it may be apprehended in reified terms. For example, the entire order of society may be conceived of as a microcosm reflecting the macrocosm of the total universe as made by the gods. Whatever happens "here below" is but a pale reflection of what takes place "up above."83 Particular institutions may be apprehended in similar ways. The basic "recipe" for the reification of institutions is to bestow on them an ontological status independent of human activity and signification. Specific reifications are variations on this general theme. Marriage, for instance, may be reified as an imitation of divine acts of creativity, as a universal mandate of natural law, as the necessary consequence of biological or psychological forces, or, for that matter, as a functional imperative of the social system. What all these reifications have in common is their obfuscation of marriage as an ongoing human production. As can be readily seen in this example, the reification may occur both theoretically and pretheoretically. Thus the mystagogue can concoct a highly sophisticated theory reaching out from the concrete human event to the farthest corners of the divine cosmos, but an illiterate peasant couple being married may apprehend the event with a similarly reifying shudder of metaphysical dread. Through reification, the world of institutions appears to merge with the world of nature. It becomes

SOCIETY AS OBJECTIVE REALITY 91 necessity and -fate, and is lived through as such, happily or unhappily as the case may be. Roles may be reified in the same manner as institutions. The sector of self-consciousness that has been objectified in the role is then also apprehended as an inevitable fate, for which the individual may disclaim responsibility. The paradigmatic formula for this kind of reification is the statement "I have no choice in the matter, I have to act this way because of my position"-as husband, father, general, archbishop, chairman of the board, gangster, or hangman, as the case may be. This means that the reification of roles narrows the subjective distance that the individual may establish between himself and his role-playing. The distance implied in all objectification remains, of course, but the distance brought about by disidentification shrinks to the vanishing point. Finally, identity itself (the total self, if one prefers) may be reified, both one's own and that of others. There is then a total identification of the individual with his socially assigned typifications. He is apprehended as nothing but that type. This apprehension may be positively or negatively accented in terms of values or emotions. The identification of "Jew" may be equally reifying for the anti-Semite and the Jew himself, except that the latter will accent the identification positively and the former negatively. Both reifications bestow an ontological and total status on a typification that is humanly produced and that, even as it is internalized, objectifies but a segment of the self. Once more, such reifications may range from the pretheoretical level of "what everybody knows about Jews" to the most complex theories of Jewishness as a manifestation of biology ("Jewish blood"), psychology ("the Jewish soul") or metaphysics ("the mystery of Israel"). The analysis of reification is important because it serves as a standing corrective to the reifying propensities of theoretical thought in general and sociological thought in particular. It is particularly important for the sociology of knowledge, because it prevents it from falling into an undialectical conception of the relationship between what men do and what they think. The historical and empirical application of the sociology of knowledge must take special note of the social circumstances that favor dereification-such as the overall col-

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY tells the individual why he should perform one action and not another; it also tells him why things are what they are. In other words, "knowledge" precedes "values" in the legitimation of institutions. It is possible to distinguish analytically between different levels of legitimation (empirically, of course, these levels overlap). Incipient legitimation is present as soon as a system of linguistic objectifications of human experience is transmitted. For example, the transmission of a kinship vocabulary ipso facto legitimates the kinship structure. The fundamental legitimating "explanations" are, so to speak, built into the vocabulary. Thus a child learns that another child is a "cousin," a piece of information that immediately and inherently legitimates the conduct with regard to "cousins" that is learned along with the designation. To this first level of incipient legitimation belong all the simple traditional affirmations to the effect that "This is how things are done"-the earliest and generally effective responses to a child's questions of "Why?" This level, of course, is pretheoretical. But it is the foundation of self-evident "knowledge" on which all subsequent theories must rest-and, conversely, which they must attain if they are to become incorporated in tradition. The second level of legitimation contains theoretical propositions in a rudimentary form. Here may be found various explanatory schemes relating sets of objective meanings. These schemes are highly pragmatic, directly related to concrete actions. Proverbs, moral maxims and wise sayings are common on this level. Here, too, belong legends and folk tales, frequently transmitted in poetic forms. Thus the child learns such adages as "He who steals from his cousin gets warts on his hands" or "Go when your wife cries, but run when your cousin calls for you." Or he may be inspired by the "Song of the Loyal Cousins Who Went Hunting Together " and frightened out of his wits by the "Dirge for Two Cousins Who Fornicated." The third level of legitimation contains explicit theories by which an institutional sector is legitimated in terms of a differentiated body of knowledge. Such legitimations provide fairly comprehensive frames of reference for the respective sectors of institutionalized conduct. Because of their com-

SOCIETY AS OBJECTIVE REALITY 95 plexity and differentiation, they are frequently entrusted to specialized personnel who transmit them through formalized initiation procedures. Thus there may be an elaborate economic theory of "cousinhood," its rights, obligations and standard operating procedures. This lore is administered by the old men of the clan, perhaps assigned to them after their own economic usefulness is at an end. The old men initiate the adolescents into this higher economics in the course of the puberty rites and appear as experts whenever there are problems of application. If we assume that the old men have no other tasks assigned to them, it is likely that they will spin out the theories in question among themselves even if there are no problems of application, or, more accurately, they will invent such problems in the course of their theorizing. In other words, with the development of specialized legitimating theories and their administration by full-time legitimators, legitimation begins to go beyond pragmatic application and to become "pure theory." With this step, the sphere of legitimations begins to attain a measure of autonomy vis-a-vis the legitimated institutions and eventually may generate its own institutional processes .68 In our example, the "science of cousinhood" may begin to have a life of its own quite independent of the activities of merely "lay" cousins, and the body of "scientists" may set up its own institutional processes over against the institutions that the "science" was originally meant to legitimate. We may imagine an ironic culmination of this development when the word "cousin" no longer applies to a kinship role but to the holder of a degree in the hierarchy of "cousinhood" specialists. Symbolic universes constitute the fourth level of legitimation . These are bodies of theoretical tradition that integrate different provinces of meaning and encompass the institutional order in a symbolic totality, B9 using the term "symbolic " in the way, we have previously defined. To reiterate, symbolic processes are processes of signification that refer to realities other than those of everyday experience. It may be readily seen how the symbolic sphere relates to the most comprehensive level of legitimation. The sphere of pragmatic application is transcended once and for all. Legitimation now takes place by means of symbolic totalities that cannot be

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY experienced in everyday life at all-except, of course, insofar as one might speak of "theoretical experience" (strictly speaking, a misnomer, to be used heuristically if at all). This level of legitimation is further distinguished from the preceding one by its scope of meaningful integration. Already on the preceding level it is possible to find a high degree of integration of particular provinces of meaning and discrete processes of institutionalized conduct. Now, however, all the sectors of the institutional order are integrated in an all-embracing frame of reference, which now constitutes a universe in the literal sense of the word, because all human experience can now be conceived of as taking place within it. The symbolic universe is conceived of as the matrix of all socially objectivated and subjectively real meanings; on another, started working as a professional on another, and so on. These dates, however, are all "located" within a much more comprehensive history, and this "location" decisively shapes my situation. Thus I was born in the year of the great bank crash in which my father lost his wealth, I entered school just before the revolution, I began to work just after the great war broke out, and so forth. The temporal structure of everyday life not only imposes prearranged sequences upon the "agenda" of any single day but also imposes itself upon my biography as a whole. Within the co-ordinates set by this temporal structure I apprehend both daily "agenda" and overall biography. Clock and calendar ensure that, indeed, I am a "man of my time." Only within this temporal structure does everyday life retain for me its accent of reality. Thus in cases where I may be "disoriented" for one reason or another (say, I have been in an automobile accident in which I was knocked unconscious), I feel an almost instinctive urge to "reorient" myself within the temporal structure of everyday life. I look at my watch and try to recall what day it is. By these acts alone I re-enter the reality of everyday life.

2. SOCIAL INTERACTION IN EVERYDAY LIFE The reality of everyday life is shared with others. But how are these others themselves experienced in everyday life? Again, it is possible to differentiate between several modes of such experience. The most important experience of others takes place in the face-to-face situation, which is the prototypical case of social interaction. All other cases are derivatives of it. In the face-to-face situation the other is appresented to me in a vivid present shared by both of us. I know that in the same vivid present I am appresented to him. My and his

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY ing the shock that accompanies the passage from one reality to another.⁷² The provinces of meaning that would otherwise remain unintelligible enclaves within the reality of everyday life are thus ordered in terms of a hierarchy of realities, ipso facto becoming intelligible and less terrifying. This integration of the realities of marginal situations within the paramount reality of everyday life is of great importance, because these situations constitute the most acute threat to taken-for-granted, routinized existence in society. If one conceives of the latter as the "daylight side" of human life, then the marginal situations constitute a "night side" that keeps lurking ominously on the periphery of everyday consciousness. Just because the "night side" has its own reality, often enough of a sinister kind, it is a constant threat to the taken-for-granted, matter-of-fact, "sane" reality of life in society. The thought keeps suggesting itself (the "insane" thought par excellence) that, perhaps, the bright reality of everyday life is but an illusion, to be swallowed up at any moment by the howling nightmares of the other, the night-side reality. Such thoughts of madness and terror are contained by ordering all conceivable realities within the same symbolic universe that encompasses the reality of everyday life—to wit, ordering them in such a way that the latter reality retains its paramount, definitive (if one wishes, its "most real") quality. This nomic function of the symbolic universe for individual experience may be described quite simply by saying that it "puts everything in its right place." What is more, whenever one strays from the consciousness of this order (that is, when one finds oneself in the marginal situations of experience), the symbolic universe allows one "to return to reality"—namely, to the reality of everyday life. Since this is, of course, the sphere to which all forms of institutional conduct and roles belong, the symbolic universe provides the ultimate legitimation of the institutional order by bestowing upon it the primacy in the hierarchy of human experience. Apart from this crucially important integration of marginal realities, the symbolic universe provides the highest level of integration for the discrepant meanings actualized within everyday life in society. We have seen how meaningful integration of discrete sectors of institutionalized conduct takes

real entity in an ultimately real universe. The gods know-or psychiatric science--or the party. In other words, the realissimum of identity need not be legitimated by being known at all times by the individual; it is enough, for purposes of legitimation, that it is knowable. Since the identity that is known or knowable by the gods, by psychiatry, or by the party is at the same time the identity that is assigned the status of paramount reality, legitimation again integrates all conceivable transformations of identity with the identity whose reality is grounded in everyday life in society. Once more, the symbolic universe establishes a hierarchy, from the "most real" to the most fugitive self-apprehensions of identity.

SOCIETY AS OBJECTIVE REALITY 101 This means that the individual can live in society with some assurance that he really is what he considers himself to be as he plays his routine social roles, in broad daylight and under the eyes of significant others. A strategic legitimating function of symbolic universes for individual biography is the "location" of death. The experience of the death of others and, subsequently, the anticipation of one's own death posit the marginal situation par excellence for the individual.⁷⁴ Needless to elaborate, death also posits the most terrifying threat to the taken-for-granted realities of everyday life. The integration of death within the paramount reality of social existence is, therefore, of the greatest importance for any institutional order. This legitimation of death is, consequently, one of the most important fruits of symbolic universes. Whether it is done with or without recourse to mythological, religious or metaphysical interpretations of reality, is not the essential question here. The modern atheist, for of law is, of course, also represented by legal language, codes of law, theories of jurisprudence and, finally, by the ultimate legitimations of the institution and its norms in ethical, religious, or mythological systems of thought. Such man-made phenomena as the awesome paraphernalia that frequently accompany the administration of law, and such natural ones as the clap of thunder that may be taken as the divine verdict in a trial by ordeal and may eventually even become a symbol of ultimate justice, further represent the institution. All these representations, however, derive their continuing significance and even intelligibility from their utili-

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY the institutional order represents a shield against terror. To be anomic, therefore, means to be deprived of this shield and to be exposed, alone, to the onslaught of nightmare. While the horror of aloneness is probably already given in the constitutional sociality of man, it manifests itself on the level of meaning in man's incapacity to sustain a meaningful existence in isolation from the nomic constructions of society . The symbolic universe shelters the individual from ultimate terror by bestowing ultimate legitimation upon the protective structures of the institutional order.^{7a} Very much the same may be said about the social (as against the just discussed individual) significance of symbolic universes. They are sheltering canopies over the institutional order as well as over individual biography. They also provide the delimitation of social reality; that is, they set the limits of what is relevant in terms of social interaction. One extreme possibility of this, sometimes approximated in primitive societies, is the definition of everything as social reality, even inorganic matter is dealt with in social terms. A narrower , and more common, delimitation includes only the organic or animal worlds. The symbolic universe assigns ranks to various phenomena in a hierarchy of being, defining the range of the social within this hierarchy.⁷⁶ Needless to say, such ranks are also assigned to different types of men, and it frequently happens that broad categories of such types (sometimes everyone outside the collectivity in question) are defined as other than or less than human. This is commonly expressed linguistically (in the extreme case, with the name of the collectivity being equivalent to the term "human"). This is not too rare, even in civilized societies. For example, the symbolic universe of traditional India assigned a status to the outcastes that was closer to that of animals than to the human status of the upper castes (an operation ultimately legitimated in the theory of karma-sarnsara, which embraced all beings, human or otherwise), and as recently as the Spanish conquests in America it was possible for the Spaniards to conceive of the Indians as belonging to a different species (this operation being legitimated in a less comprehensive manner by a theory that "proved" that the Indians could not be descended from Adam and Eve).

SOCIETY AS OBJECTIVE REALITY 103 The symbolic universe also orders history. It locates all collective events in a cohesive unity that includes past, present and future. With regard to the past, it establishes a "memory " that is shared by all the individuals socialized within the collectivity.⁷⁷ With regard to the future, it establishes a common frame of reference for the projection of individual actions. Thus the symbolic universe links men with their predecessors and their successors in a meaningful totality,⁷⁸ serving to transcend the finitude of individual existence and bestowing meaning upon the individual's death. All the members of a society can now conceive of themselves as belonging to a meaningful universe, which was there before they were born and will be there after they die. The empirical community is transposed onto a cosmic plane and made majestically independent of the vicissitudes of individual existence .⁷⁹ As we have already observed, the symbolic universe provides a comprehensive integration of all discrete institutional processes. The entire society now makes sense. Particular institutions and roles are legitimated by locating them in a comprehensively meaningful world. For example, the political order is legitimated by reference to a cosmic order of power and justice, and political roles are legitimated as representations of these cosmic principles. The institution of divine kingship in archaic civilizations is an excellent illustration of the manner in which this kind of ultimate legitimation operates . It is important, however, to understand that the institutional order, like the order of individual biography, is continually threatened by the presence of realities that are meaningless in its terms. The legitimation of the institutional order is also faced with the ongoing necessity of keeping chaos at bay. All social reality is precarious. All societies are constructions in the face of chaos. The constant possibility of anomic terror is actualized whenever the legitimations that obscure the precariousness are threatened or collapse. The dread that accompanies the death of a king, especially if it occurs with sudden violence, expresses this terror. Over and beyond emotions of sympathy or pragmatic political concerns , the death of a king under such circumstances brings the tenor of chaos to conscious proximity. The popular re-

SOCIETY AS OBJECTIVE REALITY 57 common?z While this reciprocal typification is not yet institutionalization (since, there only being two individuals, there is no possibility of a typology of actors), it is clear that institutionalization is already present in nucleo. At this stage one may ask what gains accrue to the two individuals from this development. The most important gain is that each will be able to predict the other's actions. Concomitantly, the interaction of both becomes predictable. The "There he goes again" becomes a "There we go again." This relieves both individuals of a considerable amount of tension. They save time and effort, not only in whatever external tasks they might be engaged in separately or jointly, but in terms of their respective psychological economies. Their life together is now defined by a widening sphere of taken-for-granted routines. Many actions are possible on a low level of attention. Each action of one is no longer a source of astonishment and potential danger to the other. Instead, much of what goes on takes on the triviality of what, to both, will be everyday life. This means that the two individuals are constructing a background, in the sense discussed before, which will serve to stabilize both their separate actions and their interaction. The construction of this background of routine in turn makes possible a division of labor between them, opening the way for innovations, which demand a higher level of attention. The division of labor and the innovations will lead to new habituations, further widening the background common to both individuals. In other words, a social world will be in process of construction, containing within it the roots of an expanding institutional order. Generally, all actions repeated once or more tend to be habitualized to some degree, just as once or more tend to be habitualized to some degree, just as all actions observed by another necessarily involve some typification on his part. However, for the kind of reciprocal typification just described to occur there must be a continuing social situation in which the habitualized actions of two or more individuals interlock. Which actions are likely to be reciprocally typified in this manner? The general answer is, those actions that are relevant to both A and B within their common situation. The areas likely to be relevant in this way will, of course, vary in different

SOCIETY AS OBJECTIVE REALITY 105 of kinship legitimation, once the institution of cousinship is located" in a cosmos of mythological cousins, it is no longer a simple matter of social fact without any "additional" significance . The mythology itself, however, may be held to naively without theoretical reflection about it. Only after a symbolic universe is objectivated as a "first" product of theoretical thought does the possibility of systematic reflection about the nature of that universe arise. Whereas the symbolic universe legitimates the institutional order on the highest level of generality, theorizing about the symbolic universe may be described as, so to speak, legitimation to the second degree. All legitimations, from the simplest pretheoretical legitimations of discrete institutionalized meanings to the cosmic establishments of symbolic universes may, in turn, be described as machineries of universe- maintenance. These, it will readily be seen, require a good deal of conceptual sophistication from the beginning. Obviously there are difficulties in drawing firm lines between "naive" and "sophisticated" in concrete instances. The analytic distinction, however, is useful even in such instances, because it draws attention to the question of the extent to which a symbolic universe is taken for granted. In this respect , of course; , the analytic problem is similar to the one we have already encountered in our discussion of legitimation . There are various levels of the legitimation of symbolic universes just as there are of the legitimation of institutions, except that the former cannot be said to descend to the pro- theoretical level, for the obvious reason that a symbolic universe is itself a theoretical phenomenon and remains so even if naively held to. As in the case of institutions, the question arises as to the circumstances under which it becomes necessary to legitimate symbolic universes by means of specific conceptual machineries of universe-maintenance. And again the answer is similar to the one given in the case of institutions. Specific procedures of universe-maintenance become necessary when the symbolic universe has become a problem. As long as this is not the case, the symbolic universe is self-maintaining, that is, self-legitimizing by the sheer facticity of its objective existence in the society in question. One may conceive of a society

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY in which this would be possible. Such a society would be a harmonious, self-enclosed, perfectly functioning "system." Actually, no such society exists. Because of the inevitable tensions of the processes of institutionalization, and by the very fact that all social phenomena are constructions produced historically through human activity, no society is totally taken for granted and so, a fortiori, is no symbolic universe. Every symbolic universe is incipiently problematic. The question, then, is the degree to which it has become problematic. An intrinsic problem, similar to the one we discussed in connection with tradition in general, presents itself with the process of transmission of the symbolic universe from one generation to another. Socialization is never completely successful. Some individuals "inhabit" the transmitted universe more definitely than others. Even among the more or less accredited "inhabitants," there will always be idiosyncratic variations in the way they conceive of the universe. Precisely because the symbolic universe cannot be experienced as such in everyday life, but transcends the latter by its very nature, it is not possible to "teach" its meaning in the straightforward manner in which one can teach the meanings of everyday life. Children's questions about the symbolic universe have to be answered in a more complicated way than their questions about the institutional realities of everyday life. The questions of idiosyncratic adults require further conceptual elaboration. In the previous example, the meaning of cousinhood is continually represented by flesh-and-blood cousins playing cousin roles in the experienced routines of everyday life. Human cousins are empirically available. Divine cousins, alas, are not. This constitutes an intrinsic problem for the pedagogues of divine cousinhood. Mutatis mutandis, the same is true of the transmission of other symbolic universes. This intrinsic problem becomes accentuated if deviant versions of the symbolic universe come to be shared by groups of "inhabitants." In that case, for reasons evident in the nature of objectivation, the deviant version congeals into a reality in its own right, which, by its existence within the society, challenges the reality status of the symbolic universe as originally constituted. The group that has objectivated this

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY A further question, with respect to which institutional orders will vary historically, is: What is the relationship of the various institutions to each other, on the levels of performance and meanings? In the first extreme type discussed above, there is a unity of institutional performances and meanings in each subjective biography. The entire social stock of knowledge is actualized in every individual biography. Everybody does everything and knows everything. The problem of the integration of meanings (that is, of the meaningful relationship of the various institutions) is an exclusively subjective one. The objective sense of the institutional order presents itself to each individual as given and generally known, socially taken for granted as such. If there is any problem at all, it is because of subjective difficulties the individual may have internalizing the socially agreed-upon meanings. With increasing deviance from this heuristic model (that is, of course, with all actual societies, though not to the same degree) there will be important modifications in the givenness of the institutional meanings. The first two of these we have already indicated: a segmentation of the institutional order, with only certain types of individuals performing certain actions, and, following that, a social distribution of knowledge, with role-specific knowledge coming to be reserved to certain types. With these developments, however, a new configuration appears on the level of meaning. There will now be an objective problem with respect to an encompassing integration of meanings within the entire society. This is an altogether different problem from the merely subjective one of harmonizing the sense one makes of one's biography with the sense ascribed to it by society. The difference is as great as that between producing propaganda that will convince others and producing memoirs that will convince oneself. In our example of institutions. The transmission of the meaning of an institution is based on the social recogni-

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY deviants, whose contrariness is ipso facto defined as folly or wickedness, than to confront another society that views one's own definitions of reality as ignorant, mad or downright evil.⁸³ It is one thing to have some individuals around, even if they band together as a minority group, who cannot or will not abide by the institutional rules of cousinhood. It is quite another thing to meet an entire society that has never heard of these rules, perhaps does not even have a word for "cousin," and that nevertheless seems to get along very well as a going concern. The alternative universe presented by the other society must be met with the best possible reasons for the superiority of one's own. This necessity requires a conceptual machinery of considerable sophistication. The appearance of an alternative symbolic universe poses a threat because its very existence demonstrates empirically that one's own universe is less than inevitable. As anyone can see now, it is possible to live in this world without the institution of cousinhood after all. And it is possible to deny or even mock the gods of cousinhood without at once causing the downfall of the heavens. This shocking fact must be accounted for theoretically, if nothing more. Of course it may also happen that the alternative universe has a missionary appeal. Individuals or groups within one's own society might be tempted to "emigrate" from the traditional universe or, even more serious a danger, to change the old order in the image of the new. It is easy to imagine, for example, how the advent of the patriarchal Greeks must have upset the universe of the matriarchal societies then existing along the eastern Mediterranean. The Greek universe must have had considerable appeal for the henpecked males of these societies, and we know that the Great Mother made quite an impression on the Greeks themselves. Greek mythology is full of the conceptual elaborations that proved necessary to take care of this problem. It is important to stress that the conceptual machineries of universe-maintenance are themselves products of social activity, as are all forms of legitimation, and can only rarely be understood apart from the other activities of the collectivity in question. Specifically, the success of particular conceptual machineries is related to the power possessed by those who

SOCIETY AS OBJECTIVE REALITY 57 common?z While this reciprocal typification is not yet institutionalization (since, there only being two individuals, there is no possibility of a typology of actors), it is clear that institutionalization is already present in nucleo. At this stage one may ask what gains accrue to the two individuals from this development. The most important gain is that each will be able to predict the other's actions. Concomitantly, the interaction of both becomes predictable. The "There he goes again" becomes a "There we go again." This relieves both individuals of a considerable amount of tension. They save time and effort, not only in whatever external tasks they might be engaged in separately or jointly, but in terms of their respective psychological economies. Their life together is now defined by a widening sphere of taken-for-granted routines. Many actions are possible on a low level of attention. Each action of one is no longer a source of astonishment and potential danger to the other. Instead, much of what goes on takes on the triviality of what, to both, will be everyday life. This means that the two individuals are constructing a background, in the sense discussed before, which will serve to stabilize both their separate actions and their interaction. The construction of this background of routine in turn makes possible a division of labor between them, opening the way for innovations, which demand a higher level of attention. The division of labor and the innovations will lead to new habituations, further widening the background common to both individuals. In other words, a social world will be in process of construction, containing within it the roots of an expanding institutional order. Generally, all actions repeated once or more tend to be habitualized to some degree, just as all actions observed by another necessarily involve some typification on his part. However, for the kind of reciprocal typification just described to occur there must be a continuing social situation in which the habitualized actions of two or more individuals interlock. Which actions are likely to be reciprocally typified in this manner? The general answer is, those actions that are relevant to both A and B within their common situation. The areas likely to be relevant in this way will, of course, vary in different

100 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY sequence that is given in the "nature of things," or in his own "nature." That is, he can reassure himself that he is living "correctly." The "correctness" of his life program is thus legitimated on the highest level of generality. As the individual looks back upon his past life, his biography is intelligible to him in these terms. As he projects himself into the future, he may conceive of his biography as unfolding within a universe whose ultimate co-ordinates are known. The same legitimating function pertains to the "correctness" of the individual's subjective identity. By the very nature of socialization, subjective identity is a precarious entity .78 It is dependent upon the individual's relations with significant others, who may change or disappear. The precariousness is further increased by self-experiences in the aforementioned marginal situations. The "sane" apprehension of oneself as possessor of a definite, stable, and socially recognized identity is continually threatened by the "surrealistic" metamorphoses of dreams and fantasies, even if it remains relatively consistent in everyday social interaction. Identity is a symbolic universe presupposes theoretical reflection on the part of somebody (to whom the world or, more specifically, the institutional order appeared problematic), everybody may "inhabit" that universe in a taken-for-granted attitude. If the institutional order is to be taken for granted in its totality as a meaningful whole, it must be legitimated by "placement" in a symbolic universe . But, other things being equal, this universe itself does not require further legitimation. To begin with, it was the institutional order, not the symbolic universe, that appeared problematic and to

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALM unaffected by the sophisticated universe-maintaining theories concocted by the theological specialists. The coexistence of na mythology among the masses and a sophisticated theology among an elite of theoreticians, both serving to maintain the same symbolic universe, is a frequent historical phenomenon. Only with this phenomenon in mind, for example , is it possible to call traditional societies of the Far East "Buddhist," or, for that matter, to call medieval society "Christian." Theology is paradigmatic for the later philosophical and scientific conceptualizations of the cosmos. While theology may be closer to mythology in the religious contents of its definitions of reality, it is closer to the later secularized conceptualizations in its social location. Unlike mythology, the other three historically dominant forms of conceptual machinery became the property of specialist elites, whose bodies of knowledge were increasingly removed from the common knowledge of the society at large. Modern science is an extreme step in this development, and in the secularization and sophistication of universe-maintenance. Science not only completes the removal of the sacred from the world of everyday life, but removes universe-maintaining knowledge as such from that world. Everyday life becomes bereft of both sacred legitimation and the sort of theoretical intelligibility that would link it with the symbolic universe in its intended totality. Put more simply, the "lay" member of society no longer knows how his universe is to be conceptually maintained , although, of course, he still knows who the specialists of universe-maintenance are presumed to be. The interesting problems posed by this situation belong to an empirical sociology of knowledge of contemporary society belong to an empirical sociology of knowledge of contemporary society and cannot be further pursued in this context. It goes without saying that the types of conceptual machinery appear historically in innumerable modifications and combinations, and that the types we have discussed are not necessarily exhaustive. But two applications of universe- maintaining conceptual machinery still remain to be discussed in the context of general theory: therapy and nihilation . Therapy entails the application of conceptual machinery

SOCIETY AS OBJECTIVE REALITY 113 to ensure that actual or potential deviants stay within the institutionalized definitions of reality, or, in other words, to prevent the "inhabitants" of a given universe from "emigrating ." It does this by applying the legitimating apparatus to individual "cases." Since, as we have seen, every society faces the danger of individual deviance, we may assume that therapy in one form or another is a global social phenomenon. Its specific institutional arrangements, from exorcism to psychoanalysis, from pastoral care to personnel counseling programs, belong, of course, under the category of social control . What interests us here, however, is the conceptual aspect of therapy. Since therapy must concern itself with deviations from the "official" definitions of reality, it must develop a conceptual machinery to account for such deviations and to maintain the realities thus challenged. This requires a body of knowledge that includes a theory of deviance, a diagnostic apparatus, and a conceptual system for the "cure of souls." For example, in a collectivity that has institutionalized military homosexuality the stubbornly heterosexual individual is a sure candidate for therapy, not only because his sexual interests constitute an obvious threat to the combat efficiency of his unit of warrior-lovers, but also because his deviance is psychologically subversive to the others' spontaneous virility . After all, some of them, perhaps "subconsciously," might be tempted to follow his example. On a more fundamental level, the deviant's conduct challenges the societal reality as such, putting in question its taken-for-granted cognitive ("virile men by nature love one another") and normative ("virile men should love one another") operating procedures. Indeed, the deviant probably stands as a living insult to the gods, who love one another in the heavens as their devotees do on earth. Such radical deviance requires therapeutic practice soundly grounded in therapeutic theory. There must be a theory of deviance (a "pathology," that is) that accounts for this shocking condition (say, by positing demonic possession). There must be a body of diagnostic concepts (say, a symptomatology, with appropriate skills for applying it in trials by ordeal), which optimally not only permits precise specification of acute conditions, but also detection of "latent heterosexuality" and the prompt adoption of preventive meas-

. " It is in the legitimation A and B have children. At this point the situation changes qualitatively. The appearance of a third party changes the character of the ongoing social interaction between A and B, and it will change even further as additional individuals continue to be added

23 The institutional world, which existed in state nascendi in the original situation of A and B, is now passed on to others. In this process institutionalization perfects itself. The habituations and typifications undertaken in the common life of A and B, formations that until this point still had the quality of ad hoc conceptions of two individuals, now become historical institutions. With the acquisition of historicity, these formations also acquire another crucial quality, or, more accurately, perfect a quality that was incipient as soon as A and B began the reciprocal typification of their conduct: this quality is objectivity . This means that the institutions that have now been crystallized (for instance, the institution of paternity as it is encountered by the children) are experienced as existing over and beyond the individuals who "happen to" embody them at the moment. In other words, the institutions are now experienced as possessing a reality of their own, a reality that confronts the individual as an external and coercive fact

24 As long as the nascent institutions are constructed and maintained only in the interaction of A and B, their objectivity remains tenuous, easily changeable, almost playful, even while they attain a measure of objectivity by the mere fact of their formation. To put this a little differently, the routinized background of A's and B's activity remains fairly accessible to deliberate intervention by A and B. Although the routines, once established, carry within them a tendency to persist, the possibility of changing them or even abolishing them re-

SOCIETY AS OBJECTIVE REALITY 115 The nihilating application of the conceptual machinery is most often used, with individuals or groups foreign to the society in question and thus ineligible for therapy. The conceptual operation here is rather simple. The threat to the social definitions of reality is neutralized by assigning an inferior ontological status, and thereby a not-to-be-taken-seriously cognitive status, to all definitions existing outside the symbolic universe. Thus, the threat of neighboring anti-homosexual groups can be conceptually liquidated for our homosexual society by looking upon these neighbors as less than human, congenitally befuddled about the right order of things, dwellers in a hopeless cognitive darkness. The fundamental syllogism goes as follows: The neighbors are a tribe of barbarians. The neighbors are anti-homosexual. Therefore, their anti-homosexuality is barbaric nonsense, not to be taken seriously by reasonable men. The same conceptual procedure may, of course, also be applied to deviants within the society. Whether one then proceeds from nihilation to therapy, or rather goes on to liquidate physically what one has liquidated conceptually, is a practical question of policy. The material power of the conceptually liquidated group will be a not insignificant factor in most cases. Sometimes, alas, circumstances force one to remain on friendly terms with barbarians. Second, nihilation involves the more ambitious attempt to account for all deviant definitions of reality in terms of concepts belonging to one's own universe. In a theological frame of reference, this entails the transition from heresiology to apologetics. The deviant conceptions are not merely assigned a negative status, they are grappled with theoretically in detail. The final goal of this procedure is to incorporate the deviant conceptions within one's own universe, and thereby to liquidate them ultimately. The deviant conceptions must, therefore, be translated into concepts derived from one's own universe. In this manner, the negation of one's universe is subtly changed into an affirmation of it. The presupposition is always that the negator does not really know what he is saying. His statements become meaningful only as they are translated into more "correct" terms, that is, terms deriving from the universe he negates. For example,

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY our homosexual theoreticians may argue that all men are by nature homosexual. Those who deny this, by virtue of being possessed by demons or simply because they are barbarians, are denying their own nature. Deep down within themselves, they know that this is so. One need, therefore, only search their statements carefully to discover the defensiveness and bad faith of their position. Whatever they say in this matter can thus be translated into an affirmation of the homosexual universe, which they ostensibly negate. In a theological frame of reference the same procedure demonstrates that the devil unwittingly glorifies God, that all unbelief is but unconscious dishonesty, even that the atheist is really a believer. The therapeutic and nihilating applications of conceptual machineries are inherent in the symbolic universe as such. If the symbolic universe is to comprehend all reality, nothing can be allowed to remain outside its conceptual scope. In principle, at any rate, its definitions of reality must encompass the totality of being. The conceptual machineries by which this totalization is attempted vary historically in their degree of sophistication. In nuce they appear as soon as a symbolic universe has been crystallized. c. Social Organization for Universe-Maintenance Because they are historical products of human activity, all socially constructed universes change, and the change is brought about by the concrete actions of human beings. If one gets absorbed in the intricacies of the conceptual machineries by which any specific universe is maintained, one may forget this fundamental sociological fact. Reality is socially defined. But the definitions are always embodied, that is, concrete individuals and groups of individuals serve as definers of reality. To understand the state of the socially constructed universe at any given time, or its change over time, one must understand the social organization that permits the definers to do their defining. Put a little crudely, it is essential to keep pushing questions about the historically available conceptualizations of reality from the abstract "What?" to the sociologically concrete "Says who?" so As we have seen, the specialization of knowledge and the

FOUNDATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE IN EVERYDAY LIFE 45 relationships more complex than those of the family are involved -and explains, incidentally, why despots are endemically nervous. My knowledge of everyday life has the quality of an instrument that cuts a path through a forest and, as it does so, projects a narrow cone of light on what lies just ahead and immediately around; on all sides of the path there continues to be darkness. This image pertains even more, of course, to the multiple realities in which everyday life is continually transcended. This latter statement can be paraphrased , poetically if not exhaustively, by saying that the reality of everyday life is overcast by the penumbras of our dreams. My knowledge of everyday life is structured in terms of relevances. Some of these are determined by immediate pragmatic interests of mine, others by my general situation in society. It is irrelevant to me how my wife goes about cooking my favorite goulash as long as it turns out the way I like it. It is irrelevant to me that the stock of a company is falling, if I do not own such stock; or that Catholics are modernizing their doctrine, if I am an atheist; or that it is now possible to fly non-stop to Africa, if I do not want to go there. However, my relevance structures intersect with the relevance structures which we have already discussed , is the emergence of pure theory. Because the universal experts operate on a level of considerable abstraction from the vicissitudes of everyday life, both others and they themselves may conclude that their theories have no relation whatever to the ongoing life of the society, but exist in a sort of Platonic heaven of ahistorical and asocial ideation. This is, of course, an illusion, but it can have great socio-historical potency, by virtue of the relationship between the reality- defining and reality-producing processes. A second consequence is a strengthening of traditionalism in the institutionalized actions thus legitimated, that is, a strengthening of the inherent tendency of institutionalization toward inertia .91 Habitualization and institutionalization in themselves limit the flexibility of human actions. Institutions tend to persist unless they become "problematic."

SOCIETY AS OBJECTIVE REALITY 57 common?z While this reciprocal typification is not yet institutionalization (since, there only being two individuals, there is no possibility of a typology of actors), it is clear that institutionalization is already present in nucleo. At this stage one may ask what gains accrue to the two individuals from this development. The most important gain is that each will be able to predict the other's actions. Concomitantly, the interaction of both becomes predictable. The "There he goes again" becomes a "There we go again." This relieves both individuals of a considerable amount of tension. They save time and effort, not only in whatever external tasks they might be engaged in separately or jointly, but in terms of their respective psychological economies. Their life together is now defined by a widening sphere of taken-for-granted routines. Many actions are possible on a low level of attention. Each action of one is no longer a source of astonishment and potential danger to the other. Instead, much of what goes on takes on the triviality of what, to both, will be everyday life. This means that the two individuals are constructing a background, in the sense discussed before, which will serve to stabilize both their separate actions and their interaction. The construction of this background of routine in turn makes possible a division of labor between them, opening the way for innovations, which demand a higher level of attention. The division of labor and the innovations will lead to new habitualizations, further widening the background common to both individuals. In other words, a social world will be a social world will be in process of construction, containing within it the roots of an expanding institutional order. Generally, all actions repeated once or more tend to be habitualized to some degree, just as all actions observed by another necessarily involve some typification on his part. However, for the kind of reciprocal typification just described to occur there must be a continuing social situation in which the habitualized actions of two or more individuals interlock. Which actions are likely to be reciprocally typified in this manner? The general answer is, those actions that are relevant to both A and B within their common situation. The areas likely to be relevant in this way will, of course, vary in different

AS OBJECTIVE REALITY 219 tieians and the practitioners of power in such a situation. The latter were: represented by the Kshatriyas, the military and princely caste. The epic literature of ancient India, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, give eloquent witness to this conflict. Not accidentally the two great theoretical rebellions against the Brahman universe, Jainism and Buddhism, had their social locations in the Kshatriya caste. Needless to say, both the Jain and the Buddhist redefinitions of reality produced their own expert personnel, as was probably also the case with the epic poets who challenged the Brahman universe in a less comprehensive and less sophisticated manner.³ This brings us to another, equally important possibility of conflict—that between rival coteries of experts. As long as theories continue to have immediate pragmatic applications, what rivalry may exist is fairly amenable to settlement by means of pragmatic testing. There may be competing theories of boar hunting; in which rival coteries of hunting experts develop vested interests. The question can be decided with relative ease by seeing which theory is most conducive to killing the most boars. No such possibility exists for deciding between, say, a polytheistic and a henotheistic theory of the universe. The respective theoreticians are forced to substitute abstract argumentation for pragmatic testing. By its very nature such argumentation does not carry the inherent conviction of pragmatic success. What is convincing to one man may not be to another. We cannot really blame such theoreticians if they resort to various sturdier supports for the frail power of mere argument—such as, say, getting the authorities to employ armed might to enforce one argument against its competitors. In other words, definitions of reality may be enforced by the police. This, incidentally, need not mean that such definitions will remain less convincing than those accepted "voluntarily"—power in society includes the power to determine decisive socialization processes and, therefore, the power to produce reality. In any case, highly abstract symbolizations (that is, theories greatly removed from the concrete experience of everyday life) are validated by social rather than empirical support.⁴ It is possible to say that in this manner a pseudo-pragmatism is reintroduced. The theories may again be said to be convincing be-

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY cause they work-work, that is, in the sense of having become standard, taken-for-granted knowledge in the society in question. These considerations imply that there will always be a social-structural base for competition between rival definitions of reality and that the outcome of the rivalry will be affected, if not always determined outright, by the development of this base. It is quite possible for abstruse theoretical formulations to be concocted in near-total isolation from the broad movements in the social structure, and in such cases competition between rival experts may occur in a sort of societal vacuum. For instance, two coterie of eremitical dervishes may go on disputing about the ultimate nature of the universe in the midst of the desert, with nobody on the outside being in the least interested the other of these viewpoints gets a hearing in the surrounding society, it will be largely extratheoretical interests that will decide the outcome of the rivalry. Different social groups will have different affinities with the competing theories and will, subsequently, become "carriers" of the latter 95 Thus dervish theory A may appeal to the upper stratum and dervish theory B to the middle stratum of the society in question, for reasons far removed from the passions that animated the original inventors of these theories. The competing coterie of experts will then come to attach themselves to the "carrier" groups, and their subsequent fate will depend on the outcome of whatever conflict led these groups to adopt the respective theories. Rival definitions of reality are thus decided upon in the sphere of rival social interests whose rivalry is in turn "translated" into theoretical terms. Whether the rival experts and their respective supporters are "sincere" in their subjective relationship to the theories in question is of ..ERR, COD:1..

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY for example, no member of the conquering or ruling group may worship gods of type Y, but the subjugated or lower strata may do so. The same protective segregation may be applied to foreigners or "guest peoples." .. or a collectivity (say, the Albigensian community). At the same time, the church, as the monopolistic guardian of the Christian tradition, was quite flexible in incorporating within that tradition a variety of folk beliefs and practices so long as these did not congeal into articulate, heretical challenges to the Christian universe as such. It did not matter if the peasants took one of their old gods, "baptized" him as a Christian saint, and continued to tell the old stories and to celebrate the old feasts associated with him. And certain competing definitions of reality at least could be segregated within Christendom without being viewed as a of course, is that of the Jews, although similar situations also arose where Christians and Muslims were forced to live close to one another in times of peace. This sort of segregation, incidentally, also protected the Jewish and Muslim universes from Christian "contamination." As long as competing definitions of reality can be conceptually and socially segregated as appropriate to strangers, and ipso facto as irrelevant to oneself, it is possible to have fairly friendly relations with these strangers. The trouble begins whenever the "strangeness" is broken through and the deviant universe appears as a possible habitat for one's own people. At that point, the traditional experts are likely to call for the fire and the sword-or, alternatively , particularly if fire and sword turn out to be unavailable , to ..ERR, COD:1..

224. THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY ideology" of the Saracens. The distinctiveness of ideology is rather that the same overall universe is interpreted in different ways, depending upon concrete vested interests within the society in question. Frequently an ideology is taken on by a group because of specific theoretical elements that are conducive to its interests. For example, when an impoverished peasant group struggles against an urban merchant group that has financially enslaved it, it may rally around a religious doctrine that upholds the virtues of agrarian life, condemns the money economy and its credit system as immoral, and generally decries the luxuries of urban living. The ideological "gain" of such a doctrine for the peasants is obvious. Good illustrations of this may be found in the history of ancient Israel. It would be erroneous, however, to imagine that the relationship between an interest group and its ideology is always so logical. Every group engaged in social conflict requires solidarity. Ideologies generate solidarity. The choice of a particular ideology is not necessarily based on its intrinsic theoretical elements, but may stem from a chance encounter. It is far from clear, for example, that it was intrinsic elements in Christianity that made the latter politically "interesting" to certain groups in the age of Constantine. It seems rather that Christianity (originally a lower-middle-class ideology if anything) was harnessed by powerful interests for political purposes with little relationship to its religious contents. Something else might have served equally well-Christianity just happened to be around at some crucial moments of decision. Of course, once the ideology is adopted by the group in question (more accurately, once the particular doctrine becomes the ideology of the group in question) it is modified in accordance with the interests it must now legitimate. This entails a process of selection and addition in regard to the original body of theoretical propositions. But there is no reason to assume that these modifications have to affect the totality of the adopted doctrine. There may be large elements in an ideology that bear no particular relationship to the legitimated interests, but that are vigorously affirmed by the "carrier" group simply because it has committed itself to the ideology. In practice this may lead power holders to support their ideological ex-

sympathize with the experts in the traditional definitions of reality when they think back nostalgically to the times when these definitions had a monopoly in the field. One historically important type of expert, possible in principle in any of the situations just discussed, is the intellectual,

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY whom we may define as an expert whose expertise is not wanted by the society at large.¹⁰³ This implies a redefinition of knowledge vis-d-vis the "official" lore, that is, it implies more than just a somewhat deviant interpretation of the latter. The intellectual is thus, by definition, a marginal type. Whether he was first marginal and then became an intellectual (as, for example, in the case of many Jewish intellectuals .in the modern West), or whether his marginality was the direct result of his intellectual aberrations (the case of the ostracized heretic), need not concern us here.¹⁰⁴ In either case, his social marginality expresses his lack of theoretical integration within the universe of his society. He appears as the counter-expert in the business of defining reality. Like the "official" expert, he has a design for society at large. But while the former's design is in tune with the institutional programs, serving as their theoretical legitimation, the intellectual 's exists in an institutional vacuum, socially objectivated at best in a subsociety of fellow-intellectuals. The extent to which such a subsociety is capable of surviving obviously depends on structural configurations in the larger society. It is safe to say that a certain degree of pluralism is a necessary condition. The intellectual has a number of historically interesting options open to him in his situation. He may withdraw into an intellectual subsociety, which may then serve as an emotional refuge and (more importantly) as the social base for the objectivation of his deviant definitions of reality. In other words, the intellectual may feel "at home" in the subsociety as he does not in the larger society, and at the same time be able subjectively to maintain his deviant conceptions, which the larger society nihilates, because in the subsociety there are others who regard these as reality. He will then develop various procedures to protect the precarious reality of the subsociety from the nihilating threats from the outside. On the theoretical level, these procedures will include the therapeutic defenses we have discussed previously. Practically, the most important procedure will be the limitation of all significant relationships to fellow-members of the subsociety. The outsider is avoided because he always embodies the threat of nihilation. The religious sect may be taken as the prototype

58 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY situations. Some will be those facing A and B in terms of their previous biographies, others may be the result of the natural, presocial circumstances of the situation. What will in all cases have to be habitualized is the communication process between A and B. Labor, sexuality and territoriality are other likely foci of typification and habitualization. In these various areas the situation of A and B is paradigmatic of the institutionalization occurring in larger societies. Let us push our paradigm one step further and imagine that the character of objective reality. Conversely, sectarian withdrawal is typical of situations in which previously objectivated definitions of reality disintegrate, that is, become deobjectivated in the larger society. The details of these processes belong to a historical sociology of religion, though it must be added that various secularised forms of sectarianism are a key characteristic of intellectuals in modern pluralistic society. A historically very important option, of course, is revolution. Here the intellectual sets out to realize his design for society in society. It is impossible to discuss here the various forms this option has taken historically, but one important theoretical point must be made. Just as the withdrawing intellectual needs others to assist him in maintaining his deviant definitions of reality as reality, so the revolutionary intellectual needs others to confirm his deviant conceptions. This requirement is much more basic than the obvious fact that no conspiracy can succeed without organization. The revolutionary intellectual must have others who maintain for him the reality (that is, the subjective plausibility in his own consciousness) of the revolutionary ideology. All socially meaningful definitions of reality must be objectivated by social processes. Consequently, subuniverses require subsocieties as their objectivating base, and counter-definitions of reality require counter-societies. Needless to add, any practical success of the revolutionary ideology will fortify the reality it possesses within the subsociety and within the consciousness of the subsociety's members. Its reality takes on massive proportions when entire social strata become its "carriers." The history of modern revolutionary movements affords many illustrations of the transformation of revolutionary intellectuals into "official" legitimators following the victory of such movements. This suggests not only that there is considerable historical variability in the social career of revolutionary intellectuals, but that different options and combinations may occur within the biography of individuals as well. In the foregoing discussion we have emphasized the structural aspects in the social existence of universe-maintaining

away. The objectivity of the social world means that it confronts man as something outside of: himself. The decisive question is whether he still retains the awareness that, however objectivated, the social world was made by men-and, therefore, can be remade by them. In other words, reification can be described as an extreme step in the process of objectivation, whereby the objectivated world loses its comprehensibility as a human enterprise and becomes fixated as a non-human, non-humanizable, inert facticity.⁶⁰ Typically, the real relationship between man and his world is reversed in consciousness. Man, the producer of a world, is apprehended as its product, and human activity as an epiphenomenon of non-human processes. Human meanings are no longer understood as world-producing but as being, in their turn, products of the "nature of things." It must be emphasized that reification is a modality of consciousness, more precisely, a modality of man's objectification of the human world. Even while apprehending the world in reified terms, man continues to produce it. That is, man is capable paradoxically of producing a reality that denies him.⁶¹ Reification is possible on both the pretheoretical and theoretical levels of consciousness. Complex reality that denies him.⁶¹ Reification is possible on both the pretheoretical and theoretical levels of consciousness. Complex theoretical systems can be described as reifications, though presumably they have their roots in pretheoretical reifications established in

in which the habitualized actions of two or more individuals interlock. Which actions just described to occur there must be a continuing social situation in which the habitualized actions of two or more individuals interlock. Which actions are likely to be reciprocally typified in this manner? The general answer is, those actions that are relevant to both A and B within their common situation. The areas likely to be relevant in this way will, of course, vary in different

232 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY makes them his own. And by this identification with significant others the child becomes capable of identifying himself, of acquiring a subjectively coherent and plausible identity. In other words, the self is a reflected entity, reflecting the attitudes first taken by significant others toward it; the individual becomes what he is addressed as by his significant others. This is not a one-sided, mechanistic process. It entails a dialectic between identification by others and self-identification, between objectively assigned and subjectively appropriated identity. The dialectic, which is present each moment the individual identifies with his significant others, is, as it were, the particularization in individual life of the general dialectic of society that has already been discussed. Although the details of this dialectic are, of course, of great importance for social psychology, it would exceed our present purpose if we were to follow up its implications for social-psychological theory.⁷ What is most important for our considerations here is the fact that the individual not only takes on the roles and attitudes of others, but in the same process takes on their world. Indeed, identity is objectively defined as location in a certain world and can be subjectively appropriated only along with that world. Put differently, all identifications take place within horizons that imply a specific social world. The child learns that he is what he is called. Every name implies a nomenclature, which in turn implies a designated social location.⁸ To be given an identity involves being assigned a specific place in the world. As this identity is subjectively appropriated by the child ("I am John Smith"), so is the world to which this identity points. Subjective appropriation of identity and subjective appropriation of the social world are merely different aspects of the same process of internalization, mediated by the same significant others. Primary socialization creates in the child's consciousness a progressive abstraction from the roles and attitudes of specific others to roles and attitudes in general. For example, in the internalization of norms there is a progression from "Mummy is angry with me now" to "Mummy is angry with me whenever I spill the soup." As additional significant others (father, grandmother, older sister, and so on) support the mother's negative attitude toward soup-spilling, the generality of the

of soups. The formation within consciousness of the generalized other marks a decisive phase in socialization. It implies the internalization of society as such and of the objective reality established therein, and, at the same time, the subjective establishment of a coherent and continuous identity. Society, identity and reality are subjectively crystallized in the same process of internalization. This crystallization is concurrent with the internalization of language. Indeed, for reasons evident from the foregoing observations on language, language constitutes both the most important content and the most important instrument of socialization. When the generalized other has been crystallized in consciousness, a symmetrical relationship is established between objective and subjective reality. What is real "outside" corresponds to what is real "within." Objective reality can readily be "translated" into subjective reality, and vice versa. Language, of course, is the principal vehicle of this ongoing translating process in both directions. It should, however, be stressed that the symmetry between objective and subjective reality cannot be complete. The two realities correspond to each other, but they are not coextensive. There is always more

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY objective reality "available" than is actually internalized in any individual consciousness, simply because the contents of socialization are determined by the social distribution of knowledge. No individual internalizes the totality of what is objectivated as reality in his society, not even if the society and its world are relatively simple ones. On the other hand, there are always elements of subjective reality that have not originated in socialization, such as the awareness of one's own body prior to and apart from any socially learned apprehension of it. Subjective biography is not fully social. The individual apprehends himself as being both inside and outside society.¹⁰ This implies that the symmetry between objective and subjective reality is never a static, once-for-all state of affairs. It must always be produced and reproduced in actu. In other words, the relationship between the individual and the objective social world is like an ongoing balancing act. The anthropological roots of this are, of course, the same as those we discussed in connection with the peculiar position of man in the animal kingdom. In primary socialization there is no problem of identification . There is no choice of significant others. Society presents the candidate for socialization with a predefined set of significant others, whom he must accept as such with no possibility of opting for another arrangement. *Hic Rhodus, hic salta*. One must make do with the parents that fate has regaled one with. This unfair disadvantage inherent in the situation of being a child has the obvious consequence that, although the child is not simply passive in the process of his socialization , it is the adults who set the rules of the game. The child can play the game with enthusiasm or with sullen resistance. But, alas, there is no other game around. This has an important corollary. Since the child has no choice in the selection of his significant others, his identification with them is quasi-automatic. For the same reason, his internalization of their particular reality is quasi-inevitable. The child does not internalize the world of his significant others as one of many possible worlds. He internalizes it as the world, the only existent and only conceivable world, the world tout court. It is for this reason that the world internalized in primary so-

SOCIETY AS SUBJECTIVE REALITY 135 cialization is so much more firmly entrenched in consciousness than worlds internalized in secondary socializations. However much the original sense of inevitability may be weakened in subsequent disenchantments, the recollection of a never-to-be-repeated certainty--the certainty of the first dawn of reality--still adheres to the first world of childhood. Primary socialization thus accomplishes what (in hindsight, of course) may be seen as the most important confidence trick that society plays on the individual--to make appear as necessity what is in fact a bundle of contingencies, and thus to make meaningful the accident of his birth. The specific contents that are internalized in primary socialization vary, of course, from society to society. Some are found everywhere. It is language that must be internalized above all. With language, and by means of it, various motivational and interpretative schemes are internalized as institutionally defined--wanting to act like a brave little boy, for instance, and assuming little boys to be naturally divided into the brave and the cowardly. These schemes provide the child with institutionalized programs for everyday life, some immediately applicable to him, others anticipating conduct socially defined for later biographical stages--the bravery that will allow him to get through a day beset with tests of will from one's peers and from all sorts of others, and also the bravery that will be required of one later--when one is initiated as a warrior, say, or when one might be called by the god. These programs, both the immediately applicable and the anticipatory, differentiate one's identity from that of others--such as girls, slave boys, or boys from another clan. Finally, there is internalisation of at least the rudiments of the legitimating apparatus; the child learns "why" the programs are what they are. One must be brave because one wants to become a real man; one must perform the rituals because otherwise: the gods will be angry; one must be loyal to the chief because only if one does will the gods support one in times of danger, and so on. In primary socialization, then, the individual's first world is constructed. Its peculiar quality of firmness is to be accounted for, at least in part, by the inevitability of the in-

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY individual's relationship to his very first significant others. The world of childhood, in its luminous reality, is thus conducive to confidence not only in the persons of the significant others but in their definitions of the situation. The world of childhood is massively and indubitably real." Probably this could not be otherwise at this stage in the development of consciousness . Only later can the individual afford the luxury of at least a modicum of doubt. And probably this necessity of a protorealism in the apprehension of the world pertains phylogenetically as well as ontogenetically.¹² In any case, the world of childhood is so constituted as to instill in the individual a nomic structure in which he may have confidence that "everything is all right"-to repeat what is possibly the most frequent sentence mothers say to their crying offspring. The later discovery that some things are far from "all right" may be more or less shocking, depending on biographical circumstances , but in either case the world of childhood is likely to retain its peculiar reality in retrospection. It remains the "home world," however far one may travel from it in later life into regions where one does not feel at home at all. Primary socialization involves learning sequences that are socially defined. At age A the child should learn X, at age B he should learn Y, and so on. Every such program entails some social recognition of biological growth and differentiation . Thus every program, in any society, must recognize that a one-year-old child cannot be expected to learn what a three-year-old can. Also, most programs are likely to define the matter differently for boys and girls. Such minimal recognition is, of course, imposed on society by biological facts. Beyond this, however, there is great socio-historical variability in the definition of the stages in the learning sequence. What is still defined as childhood in one society may be defined as well into adulthood in another. And the social implications of childhood may vary greatly from one society to another- for instance, in terms of emotional qualities, moral accountability , or intellectual capacities. Contemporary Western civilization (at least prior to the Freudian movement) tended to regard children as naturally "innocent" and "sweet"; other societies considered them "by nature sinful and unclean,"

an ontological and total status on a typification that is humanly produced and that; even as it is internalized, objectifies but a segment of the self.⁴ Once more, such reifications may range from the pretheoretical level of "what everybody knows about Jews" to the most complex theories of Jewishness as a manifestation of biology ("Jewish blood"), psychology ("the Jewish soul") or metaphysics ("the mystery of Israel"). The analysis of reification is important because it serves as a standing corrective to the reifying propensities of theoretical thought in general and sociological thought in particular. It is particularly important for the sociology of knowledge, because it prevents it from falling into an undialectical conception of the relationship between what men do and what they think. The historical and empirical application of historical and empirical application of the sociology of knowledge must take special note of the social circumstances that favor dereification—such as the overall col-

139 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY b. Secondary Socialization It is possible to conceive of a society in which no further socialization takes place after primary socialization. Such a society- would, of course, be one with a very simple stock of knowledge. All knowledge would be generally relevant, with different individuals varying only in their perspectives on it. This conception is useful in positing a limiting case, but there is no society known to us that does not have some division of labor and, concomitantly, some social distribution of knowledge; and as soon as this is the case, secondary socialization becomes necessary. Secondary socialization is the internalization of institutional or institution-based "subworlds." Its extent and character are therefore determined by the complexity of the division of labor and the concomitant social distribution of knowledge. Of course, generally relevant knowledge, too, may be socially distributed-for example, in the form of class- based "versions"-but what we have in mind here is the social distribution of "special knowledge"-knowledge that arises as a result of the division of labor and whose "carriers" are institutionally defined. Forgetting for a moment its other dimensions , we may say that secondary socialization is the acquisition of role-specific knowledge, the roles being directly or indirectly rooted in the division of labor. There is some justification for such a narrow definition, but this is by no means the whole story. Secondary socialization requires the acquisition of role-specific vocabularies, which means, for one thing, the internalization of semantic fields structuring routine interpretations and conduct within an institutional area. At the same time "tacit understandings," evaluations and affective colorations of these semantic fields are also acquired . The "subworlds" internalized in secondary socialization are generally partial realities in contrast to the "base- world" acquired in primary socialization. Yet they, too, are more or less cohesive realities, characterized by normative and affective as well as cognitive components. Furthermore, they, too, require at least the rudiments of a legitimating apparatus, often accompanied by ritual or ma-

by becoming capable of understanding and using this language. He can then communicate with his fellow-horsemen in allusions rich in meaning to them but quite obtuse to men in the infantry. It goes without saying that this process of internalization entails subjective identification with the role and its appropriate norms--"I am a horseman," "A horseman never lets the enemy see the tail of his mount," "Never let a woman forget the feel of the spurs," "A fast rider in war, a fast rider in gambling," and so forth. As the need arises, this body of meanings will be sustained by legitimations, ranging from simple maxims like the foregoing to elaborate mythological constructions. Finally, there may be a variety of representative ceremonies and physical objects--say, the annual celebration of the feast of the horse-god at which all meals are taken on horseback and newly initiated horsemen receive the horsetail fetishes they will henceforth carry around their necks. The character of such secondary socialization depends upon the status of the body of knowledge concerned within the symbolic universe as a whole. Training is necessary to learn to make a horse pull a manure cart or to fight on it in battle. But a society that limits its use of horses to the pulling of manure carts is unlikely to embellish this activity with elaborate rituals or fetishism, and the personnel to whom this

available social stock of knowledge. The social stock of knowledge includes knowledge of my situation and its limits. For instance, I know that I am poor and that, therefore, I cannot expect to live in a fashionable

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amination in Gaelic before being eligible for a position in the Irish civil service. Such stipulations are extrinsic to the knowledge pragmatically required for the performance of the roles of diviner, embalmer, or Irish civil servant. They are established institutionally to enhance the prestige of the roles in question or to meet other ideological interests. A grade-school education may 'be perfectly sufficient to grasp the curriculum of an embalming school, and Irish civil servants carry on their normal business in the English language. It may even happen that the learning sequences thus manipulated are pragmatically dysfunctional. For instance, it may be stipulated that a college background in "general culture" should precede the professional training of research sociologists, while their actual activities might in fact be more efficiently carried on if they were unburdened with "culture" of this sort. While primary socialization cannot take place without an emotionally charged identification of the child with his significant others, most secondary socialization can dispense with this kind of identification and proceed effectively with only the amount of mutual identification that enters into any communication between human beings. Put crudely, it is necessary to love one's mother, but not one's teacher. Socialization in latter life typically begins to take on an affect tivity reminiscent of childhood when it seeks radically to transform the subjective reality of the individual. This posits special problems that we shall analyze a little further on. In primary socialization the child does not apprehend his significant others as institutional functionaries, but as mediators of reality tout court; the child internalizes the world of his parents as the world, and not as the world appertaining to a specific institutional context. Some of the crises that occur after primary socialization are indeed caused by the recognition that the world of one's parents is not the only world there is, but has a very specific social location, perhaps even one with a pejorative connotation. For example, the older child comes to recognize that the world represented by his parents, the same world that he had previously taken for granted as inevitable reality, is actually the world of uneducated , lower-class, rural Southerners. In secondary socializa-

14.2 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY tion, the institutional contest is usually apprehended. Needless to say, this need not involve a sophisticated understanding of all the implications of the institutional context. Yet the Southern child, to stay within the same example, does apprehend his school teacher as an institutional functionary in a way he never did his parents, and he understands the teacher's role as representing institutionally specific meanings -such as those of the nation as against the region, of the national middle-class world as against the lower-class ambience of his home, of the city as against the countryside. Hence the social interaction between teachers and learners can be formalized. The teachers need not be significant others in any sense of the word. They are institutional functionaries with the formal assignment of transmitting specific knowledge . The roles of secondary socialization carry a high degree of anonymity; that is, they are readily detached from their individual performers. The same knowledge taught by one teacher could also be taught by another. Any functionary of this type could teach this type of knowledge. The individual functionaries may, of course, be subjectively differentiated in various ways (as more or less congenial, better or worse teachers of arithmetic, and so on), but they are in principle interchangeable. This formality and anonymity are, of course, linked with the affective character of social relations in secondary socialization . Their most important consequence, however, is to bestow on the contents of what is learned in secondary socialization much less subjective inevitability than the contents of primary socialization possess. Therefore, the reality accent of knowledge internalized in secondary socialization is more easily bracketed (that is, the subjective sense that these internal izations are real is more fugitive). It takes severe biographical shocks to disintegrate the massive reality internalized in early childhood; much less to destroy the realities internalized later. Beyond this, it is relatively easy to set aside the reality of the secondary intemalizations. The child lives willy-nilly in the world as defined by his parents, but he can cheerfully leave the world of arithmetic behind him as soon as he leaves the classroom. This makes it possible to detach a part of the self and its

SOCIETY AS SUBJECTIVE REALITY 14.3 concomitant reality as relevant only to the role-specific situation in question. The individual then establishes distance between his total self and its reality on the one hand, and the role-specific partial self and its reality on the other. It is important feat is possible only after primary socialization has taken place. Put: crudely once more, it is easier for the child "to hide" from his teacher than from his mother. Conversely, it is possible to say that the development of this capacity "to hide" is an important aspect of the process of growing into adulthood. The reality accent of knowledge internalized in primary socialization is given quasi-automatically. In secondary socialization it must be reinforced by specific pedagogic techniques, "brought home" to the individual. The phrase is suggestive. The original reality of childhood is "home." It posits itself as such, inevitably and, as it were, "naturally." By comparison with it, all later realities are "artificial." Thus the school teacher tries to "bring home" the contents he is imparting by making them vivid (that is, making them seem as alive as the "home world" of the child), relevant (that is, linking them to the relevance structures already present in the "home world") and interesting (that is, inducing the attentiveness of the child to detach itself from its "natural" objects to these more "artificial" ones). These maneuvers are necessary because an internalized reality is already there, persistently "in the way" of new internalizations. The degree and precise character of these pedagogic techniques will vary with the motivations the individual has for the acquisition of the new knowledge. The more these techniques make subjectively plausible a continuity between the original and the new elements of knowledge, the more readily they acquire the accent of reality. One learns a second language by building on the taken-for-granted reality of one's "mother tongue." For a long time, one continually retranslates into the original language whatever elements of the new language one is acquiring. Only in this way can the new language begin to have any reality. As this reality comes to be established in its own right, it slowly becomes possible to forego retranslation. One becomes capa-

loi THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY ble of "thinking in" the new language. Nevertheless, it is rare that a language learned in later life attains the inevitable, self-evident reality of the first language learned in childhood. Hence derives, of course, building from the "home reality, linking up with it as learning proceeds and only slowly breaking this linkage, appertain to other learning sequences in secondary socialization. The facts that the processes of secondary socialization do not presuppose a high degree of identification and its contents do not possess the quality of inevitability can be pragmatically useful because they permit learning sequences that are rational and emotionally controlled. But because the contents of this type of internalization have a brittle and unreliable subjective reality compared to the internalizations of primary socialization, in some cases special techniques must be developed to produce whatever identification and inevitability are deemed necessary. The need for such techniques may be intrinsic in terms of learning and applying the contents of internalization, or it may be posited for the sake of the vested interests of the personnel administering the socialization process in question. For example, an individual who wants to become an accomplished musician must immerse himself in his subject to a degree quite unnecessary for an individual learning to be an engineer. Engineering education can take place effectively through formal, highly rational, emotionally neutral processes. Musical education, on the other hand, typically involves much higher identification with a maestro and a much more profound ..ERR, COD:1..

as necessary . The relationship of the individual to the socializing personnel becomes correspondingly charged with "significance ," that is, the socializing personnel take on the character of significant others vis-d-vis the individual being socialized. The individual then commits himself in a comprehensive way to the new reality. He "gives himself' to music, to the revolution, to the faith, not just partially but with what is subjectively the whole of his life. The readiness to sacrifice oneself is, of course, the final consequence of this type of socialization. An important circumstance that may posit a need for such intensification is competition between the reality-defining personnel of various institutions. In the case of revolutionary training the intrinsic problem is the socialization of the individual in a counter-definition of reality-counter, that is, to the definitions of the "official" legitimators of the society. But there will also have to be intensification in the socialization of the musician in a society that offers sharp competition to the aesthetic values of the musical community. For example , it may be assumed that a musician in the making in contemporary America must commit himself to music with an emotional intensity that was unnecessary in nineteenth- century Vienna, precisely because in the American situation there is powerful competition from what will subjectively appear as the "materialistic" and "mass culture" world of the "rat race." Similarly, religious training in a pluralistic situa-

98 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY ing the shock that accompanies the passage from one reality to another.⁷² The provinces of meaning that would otherwise remain unintelligible enclaves within the reality of everyday life are thus ordered in terms of a hierarchy of realities, ipso facto becoming intelligible and less terrifying. This integration of the realities of marginal situations within the paramount reality of everyday life is of great importance, because these situations constitute the most acute threat to taken-for-granted, routinized existence in society. If one conceives of the latter as the "daylight side" of human life, then the marginal situations constitute a "night side" that keeps lurking ominously on the periphery of everyday consciousness. Just because the "night side" has its own reality, often enough of a sinister kind, it is a constant threat to the taken-for-granted, matter-of-fact, "sane" reality of life in society. The thought keeps suggesting itself (the "insane" thought par excellence) that, perhaps, the bright reality of everyday life is but an illusion, to be swallowed up at any moment by the howling nightmares of the other, the night-side reality. Such thoughts of madness and terror are contained by ordering all conceivable realities within the same symbolic universe that encompasses the reality of everyday life—to wit, ordering them in such a way that the latter reality retains its paramount, definitive (if one wishes, its "most real") quality. This nomic function of the symbolic universe for individual experience may be described quite simply by saying that it "puts everything in its right place." What is more, whenever one strays from the consciousness of this order (that is, when one finds oneself in the marginal situations of experience), the symbolic universe allows one "to return to reality"—namely, to the reality of everyday life. Since this is, of course, the sphere to which all forms of institutional conduct and roles belong, the symbolic universe provides the ultimate legitimation of the institutional order by bestowing upon it the primacy in the hierarchy of human experience. Apart from this crucially important integration of marginal realities, the symbolic universe provides the highest level of integration for the discrepant meanings actualized within everyday life in society. We have seen how meaningful integration of discrete sectors of institutionalized conduct takes

in which the habitualized actions of two or more individuals interlock. Which actions are likely to just described to occur there must be a continuing social situation in which the habitualized actions of two or more individuals interlock. Which actions are likely to be reciprocally typified in this manner? The general answer is, those actions that are relevant to both A and B within their common situation. The areas likely to be relevant in this way will, of course, vary in different

SOCIETY AS OBJECTIVE REALITY 107 deviant reality becomes the carrier of an alternative definition of reality.⁸¹ It is hardly necessary to belabor the point that such heretical groups posit not only a theoretical threat to the symbolic universe, but a practical one to the institutional order legitimated by the symbolic universe in question. The repressive procedures customarily employed against such groups by the custodians of the "official" definitions of reality need not concern us in this context. What is important for our considerations is the need for such repression to be legitimated, which, of course, implies the setting in motion of various conceptual machineries designed to maintain the "official" universe against the heretical challenge. Historically, the problem of heresy has often been the first impetus for the systematic theoretical conceptualization of symbolic universes. The development of Christian theological thought as a result of a series of heretical challenges to the "official" tradition provides excellent historical illustrations for this process. As in all theorizing, new theoretical implications within the tradition itself appear in the course of this process, and the tradition itself is pushed beyond its original form in new conceptualizations. For instance, the precise Christological formulations of the early church councils were necessitated not by the tradition itself but by the heretical challenges to it. As these formulations were elaborated, the tradition was maintained and expanded at the same time. Thus there emerged, among other innovations, a theoretical conception of the Trinity that was not only unnecessary but actually non-existent in the early Christian community. In other words, the symbolic universe is not only legitimated but also modified by the conceptual machineries constructed to ward off the challenge of heretical groups within a society. A major occasion for the development of universe-maintaining conceptualization arises when a society is confronted with another society having a greatly different history.⁸² The problem posed by such a confrontation is typically sharper than that posed by intrasocietal heresies because here there is an alternative symbolic universe with an "official" tradition whose taken-for-granted objectivity is equal to one's own. It is much less shocking to the reality status of one's own universe to have to deal with minority groups of

SOCIETY AS SUBJECTIVE REALITY 149 secondary socializations. It makes sense to die as a man, hardly to die as an assistant manager in the ladies' hosiery department. Again, where secondary internalizations are socially expected to have this degree of reality-persistence in the face of marginal situations, the concomitant socialization procedures will have to be intensified and reinforced in the manner discussed before. Religious and military processes of secondary socialization could again be cited in illustration. It is convenient to distinguish between two general types of reality-maintenance-routine maintenance and crisis maintenance . The former is designed to maintain the internalized reality in everyday life, the latter in situations of crisis. Both entail fundamentally the same social processes, though some differences must be noted. As we have seen, the reality of everyday life maintains itself by being embodied in routines, which is the essence of institutionalization. Beyond this, however, the reality of everyday life is ongoingly reaffirmed in the individual's interaction with others. Just as reality is originally internalized by a social process, so, it is maintained in consciousness by social processes. These latter processes are not drastically different from those of the earlier internalization. They also reflect the basic fact that subjective reality must stand in a relationship with an objective: reality that is socially defined. In the social process of reality maintenance it is possible to distinguish between significant others and less important others.¹⁸ In an important way all, or at least most, of the others encountered by the individual in everyday life serve to reaffirm his subjective reality. This occurs even in a situation as "non-significant" as riding on a commuter train. The individual may not know anyone on the train and may speak to no one. All the same, the crowd of fellow-commuters reaffirms the basic structure of everyday life. By their overall conduct the fellow-commuters extract the individual from the tenuous reality of early-morning grogginess and proclaim to him in no uncertain terms that the world consists of earnest men going to work, of responsibility and schedules, of the New Haven Railroad and the New York Times. The last, of course, reaffirms the widest co-ordinates of the individual's reality. From the weather report to the help-wanted ads it

they step -out of their front door. But the reality begins to be fairly reliable only in the anonymous community of the commuter train. It attains massivity as the train pulls into Grand Central Station. Ergo sum, the individual can now murmur to himself, and proceed to the office wide-awake and self-assured. It would, therefore, be a mistake to assume that only significant others serve to maintain subjective reality. But significant others occupy a central position in the economy of reality-maintenance. They are particularly important for the ongoing confirmation of that crucial element of reality we call identity. To retain confidence that he is indeed who he thinks he is, the individual requires not only the implicit confirmation of this identity that even casual everyday contacts will supply, but the explicit and emotionally charged confirmation that his significant others bestow on him. In the previous illustration, our suburbanite is likely to look to his family and other private associates within the family ambience (neighborhood, church, club, and the like) for such confirmation , though close business associates may also fulfill this function. If he moreover sleeps with his secretary, his identity is both confirmed and amplified. This assumes that the individual likes the identity being confirmed. The same process pertains to the confirmation of identities that the individual may not like. Even casual acquaintances may confirm his self-identification as a hopeless failure, but wife, children and secretary ratify this with undeniable finality. The process from objective reality-definition to subjective reality-maintenance is the same in both cases. The significant others in the individual's life are the prin-

significant others and the "chorus " in reality-maintenance is a dialectical one; that is, they interact with each other as well as with the subjective reality they serve to confirm. A solidly negative identification on the part of the wider milieu may eventually affect the identification offered by the significant others-when even the elevator operator fails to say "sir," the wife may give up her identification of her husband as a man of importance. Conversely, the significant others may eventually have an effect on the wider milieu-a "loyal" wife can be an asset in several ways as the individual seeks to get across a certain identity to his business associates. Reality-maintenance and reality-confirmation thus involve the totality of the individual's social situation, though the significant others occupy a privileged position in these processes. The relative importance of the significant others and the "chorus" can be seen most easily if one looks at instances of disconfirmation of subjective reality. A reality-disconfirming act by the wife, taken by itself, has far greater potency than a similar act by a casual acquaintance. Acts by the latter have to acquire a certain density to equal the potency of the former. The reiterated opinion of one's best friend that the news-

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lia get to the station," and "Fine, darling, have a good day at the office" implies an entire world within which these apparently simple propositions make sense. By virtue of this implication the exchange confirms the subjective reality of this world. If this is understood, one will readily see that the great part, if not all, of everyday conversation maintains subjective reality. Indeed, its massivity is achieved by the accumulation and consistency of casual conversation-conversation that can afford to be casual precisely because it refers to the routines of a taken-for-granted world. The loss of casualness signals a break in the routines and, at least potentially, a threat to the taken-for-granted reality. Thus one may imagine the effect on casualness of an exchange like this: "Well, it's time for me to get to the station," "Fine, darling, don't forget to take along your gun." At the same time that the conversational apparatus ongoingly maintains reality, it ongoingly modifies it. Items are dropped and added, weakening some sectors of what is still being taken for granted and reinforcing others. Thus the subjective reality of something that is never talked about comes to be shaky. It is one thing to engage in an embarrassing sexual act. It is quite another to talk about it beforehand or afterwards. Conversely, conversation gives firm contours to items previously apprehended in a fleeting and unclear manner. One may have doubts about one's religion; these doubts become real in a quite different way as one discusses them. One then "talks oneself into" these doubts; they are objectified as reality within one's own consciousness. Generally speaking, the conversational apparatus maintains reality by "talking through" various elements of experience and allocating them a definite place in the real world. This reality-generating potency of conversation is already given in the fact of linguistic objectification. We have seen how language objectifies the world, transforming the a rhei of experience into a cohesive order. In the establishment of this order language realizes a world, in the double sense of apprehending and producing it. Conversation is the actualizing of this realizing efficacy of language in the face-to-face situations of individual existence. In conversation the objectifications of language become objects of individual con

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY tr The smile will become forced, and eventually is likely to be replaced by a pensive frown. In crisis situations the procedures are essentially the same as in routine maintenance, except that the reality- confirmations have to be explicit and intensive. Frequently, ritual techniques are brought into play. While the individual may improvise reality-maintaining procedures in the face of crisis, the society itself sets up specific procedures for situations recognized as involving the risk of a breakdown in reality . Included in these predefined situations are certain marginal situations, of which death is by far the most important. Crises in reality, however, may occur in a considerably wider number of cases than are posited by marginal situations. They may be either collective or individual, depending upon the character of the challenge to the socially defined reality. For example, collective rituals of reality-maintenance may be institutionalized for times of natural catastrophe, individual ones for times of personal misfortune. Or, to take another example, specific reality-maintaining procedures may be established to cope with foreigners and their potential threat to the "official" reality. The individual may have to go through an elaborate ritual purification after contact with a foreigner. The ablution is internalized as a subjective nihilation of the alternative reality represented by the foreigner. Taboos, exorcisms and curses against foreigners, heretics or madmen similarly serve the purpose of individual "mental hygiene." The violence of these defensive procedures will be proportional to the seriousness with which the threat is viewed. If contacts with the alternative reality and its representatives become frequent, the defensive procedures may, of course, lose their crisis character and become routinized. Every time one meets a foreigner, say, one must spit three times-without giving much further thought to the matter. Everything that has been said so far on socialization implies the possibility that subjective reality can be transformed. To be in society already entails an ongoing process of modification of subjective reality. To talk about transformation, then, involves a discussion of different degrees of modification . We will concentrate here on the extreme case, in which there is a near-total transformation; that is, in which the in-

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY within the group that embodies the plausibility structure and particularly upon the personnel assigned the task of re-socialization. The historical prototype of alternation is religious conversion . The above considerations can be applied to this by saying , *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. By *salus* we mean here (with due apologies to the theologians who had other things in mind when they coined the phrase) the empirically successful accomplishment of conversion. It is only within the religious community, the ecclesia, that the conversion can be effectively maintained as plausible. This is not to deny that conversion may antedate affiliation with the community-Saul of Tarsus sought out the Christian community after his "Damascus experience ." But this is not the point. To have a conversion experience is nothing much. The real thing is to be able to keep on taking it seriously; to retain a sense of its plausibility. This is where the religious community comes in. It provides the indispensable plausibility structure for the new reality. In other words, Saul may have become Paul in the aloneness of religious ecstasy, but he could remain Paul only in the context of the Christian community that recognized him as such and confirmed the "new being" in which he now located this identity. This relationship of conversion and community is not a peculiarly Christian phenomenon (despite the historically peculiar features of the Christian ecclesia). One cannot remain a Muslim outside the 'umma of Islam, a Buddhist outside the sangha, and probably not a Hindu anywhere outside India. Religion requires a religious community, and to live in a religious world requires affiliation with that community ?e The plausibility structures of religious conversion have been imitated by secular agencies of alternation. The best examples are in the areas of political indoctrination and psychotherapy?7 The plausibility structure must become the individual's world, displacing all other worlds, especially the world the individual "inhabited" before his alternation. This requires segregation of the individual from the "inhabitants" of other worlds, especially his "cohabitants" in the world he has left behind. Ideally this will be physical segregation. If that is not possible for whatever reasons, the segregation is posited by

FOUNDATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE IN EVERYDAY LIFE 35 access to his subjectivity even though I was sleeping when he threw it and never saw him because he fled after his near-hit. Indeed, if I leave the object where it is, I can look at it again the following morning, and again it expresses to me the anger of the man who threw it. What is more, other men can come and look at it and arrive at the same conclusion. In other words, the knife in my wall has become an objectively available constituent of the reality I share with my adversary and with other men. Presumably, this knife was not produced for the exclusive purpose of being thrown at me. But it expresses a subjective intention of violence, whether motivated by anger or by utilitarian considerations, such as killing for food. The weapon qua objet in the real world continues to express a general intention to commit violence that is recognizable by anyone who knows what a weapon is. The weapon, then, is both a human product and an objectivation of be legitimated is not only the new reality, but the stages by which it is appropriated and maintained, and the abandonment or repudiation of all alternative realities. The nihilating side of the conceptual machinery is particularly important in view of the dismantling problem that must be solved. The old reality, as well as the collectivities and significant others that previously mediated it to the individual, must be reinterpreted within the legitimating apparatus of the new reality. This reinterpretation brings about a rupture in the subjective biography of the individual in terms of "B.c." and "A.D.," "pre-Damas-

I THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY c " and "post-Damascus." Ever us
ything preceding the alternation is now apprehended as leading toward it
(as an "Old Testament," so to speak, or as t evangelii), everything
following it as flowing from its new reality. This involves a
reinterpretation of past biography in toto, following the formula "Then
I thought . . . now I know:" Frequently this includes the retrojection
into the past of present interpretative schemas (the formula for this
being, "I already knew then, though in an unclear manner . . . :") and
motives that were not subjectively present in the past but that are now
necessary for the reinterpretation of what took place then (the formula
being, "I really did this because . . . :'). Prealternation biography is
typically nihilated in toto by subsuming it under a negative category
occupying a strategic position in the new legitimating apparatus: "When
I was still living a life of sin," "When I was still caught in bourgeois
consciousness," "When I was still motivated by these unconscious
neurotic needs:' The biographical rupture is thus identified with a
cognitive separation of darkness and light. In addition to this
reinterpretation in toto there must be particular reinterpretations of
past events and persons with past significance. The alternating
individual would, of course, be best off if he could completely forget
some of these. But to forget completely is notoriously difficult. What
is necessary , then, is a radical reinterpretation of the meaning of
these past events or persons in one's biography. Since it is relatively
easier to invent things that never happened than to forget those that
actually did, the individual may fabricate and insert events wherever
they are needed to harmonize the remembered with the reinterpreted past.
Since it is the new reality rather than the old that now appears
dominatingly plausible to him, he may be perfectly "sincere" in such a
procedure-subjectively, he is not telling lies about the past but
bringing it in line with the truth that, necessarily, embraces both
present and past. This point, incidentally, is very important if one
wishes to understand adequately the motives behind the historically
recurrent falsifications and forgeries of religious documents. Persons,
too, particularly significant others, are reinterpreted in this fashion.
The latter now be~ come unwilling actors in a drama whose meaning is
neces-

SOCIETY AS SUBJECTIVE REALITY 161 sarily opaque to them; and, not surprisingly, they typically reject such an assignment. This is the reason prophets typically fare badly in their hometowns, and it is in this context that one may understand Jesus' statement that his followers must leave behind them their fathers and mothers. It is not difficult now to propose a specific "prescription" for alternation into any conceivable reality, however implausible from the standpoint of the outsider. It is possible to prescribe specific procedures for, say, convincing individuals that they can communicate with beings from outer space provided that and as long as they stay on a steady diet of raw fish. We can leave it to the imagination of the reader, if he is so inclined, reality. This reinterpretation brings about a rupture in the subjective biography of the individual in terms of "B.c." and "A.D.," "pre-Damas-

16z THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY maintaining consistency between the earlier and later elements of subjective reality. This problem, not present in this form in re-socialization, which ruptures the subjective biography and reinterprets the past rather than correlating the present with it, becomes more acute the closer secondary socialization gets to re-socialization without actually becoming it. Re-socialization is a cutting of the Gordian knot of the consistency problem by giving up the quest for consistency and reconstructing reality de novo. The procedures for maintaining consistency also involve a tinkering with the past, but in a less radical manner-an approach dictated by the fact that in such cases there is usually a continuing association with persons and groups who were significant before. They continue to be around, are likely to protest too fanciful reinterpretations, and must themselves be convinced that such transformations as have taken place are plausible. For example, in the case of transformations occurring in conjunction with social mobility, there are readymade interpretative schemes that explain what has happened to all concerned without positing a total metamorphosis of the individual concerned. Thus the parents of such an upwardly mobile individual will accept certain changes in the latter's demeanor and attitudes as a necessary, possibly even desirable, accompaniment of his new station in life. "Of course," they will agree, Irving has had to de-emphasize his Jewishness now that he has become a successful doctor in suburbia; "of course" he dresses and speaks differently; "of course" he now votes Republican; "of course" he married a Vassar girl-and perhaps it will also become a matter of course that he only rarely comes to visit his parents. Such interpretative schemes, which are ready-made in a society with high upward mobility and already internalized by the individual before he himself is actually mobile, guarantee biographical continuity and smooth inconsistencies as they arise.³⁰ Similar procedures take place in situations where transformations are fairly radical but defined as temporary in duration -for example, in training for short-term military service or in cases of short-term hospitalization.⁸¹ Here the difference from full re-socialization is particularly easy to see-by comparing what happens with training for career military service

SOCIETY AS SUBJECTIVE REALITY 16)3 or with the socialization of chronic patients. In the former instances, consistency with the previous reality and identity (existence as a civilian or as a healthy person) is already posited by the assumption that one will eventually return to these.

Broadly speaking, one may say that the procedures involved are of opposite character. In re-socialization the past is reinterpreted to conform to the present reality, with the tendency to retroject into the past various elements that were subjectively unavailable at the time. In secondary socialization the present is interpreted so as to stand in a continuous relationship with the past, with the tendency to minimize such transformations as have actually taken place. Put differently, the reality-base for re-socialization is the present, for secondary socialization the past. 2. INTERNALIZATION AND SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Socialization always takes place in the context of a specific social structure. Not only its contents but also its measure of "success" have social-structural conditions and social- structural consequences. In other words, the micro-sociological or social-psychological analysis of phenomena of internalization must always have as its background a macro-sociological understanding of their structural aspects 82 On the level of theoretical analysis attempted here we cannot enter into a detailed discussion of the different empirical relationships between the contents of socialization and social- structural configurations.83 Some general observations may, however, be made on the social-structural aspects of the "success " of socialization. By "successful socialization" we mean the establishment of a high degree of symmetry between objective and subjective reality (as well as identity, of course). Conversely, "unsuccessful socialization" is to be understood in terms of asymmetry between objective and subjective reality. As we have seen, totally successful socialization is anthropologically impossible. Totally unsuccessful socialization is, at the very least, extremely rare, limited to cases of individuals with whom even minimal socialization fails be-

SOCIETY AS SUBJECTIVE REALITY 167 special sons of the gods. At this point an individual assigned to the leper category may discover "hidden depths" within himself. The question "Who am I?" becomes possible simply because two conflicting answers are socially available—the crazy old woman's ("You are a leper") and that of the colony's own socializing personnel ("You are a son of god"). As the individual accords a privileged status within his consciousness to the colony's definitions of reality and of himself, a rupture occurs between his "visible" conduct in the larger community and his "invisible" self-identification as someone quite different. In other words, a cleavage appears between "appearance" and "reality" in the individual's self-apprehension. He no longer is what he is supposed to be. He acts the leper—he is a son of god. If we are to push the example one step further, to the point when this cleavage becomes known to the non-leprous community, it is not difficult to see that the community's reality, too, will be affected by this change. Minimally, it will no longer be so easy to recognize the identity of those defined as lepers—one will no longer be sure whether an individual so defined identifies himself in the same way or not. Maximally, it will no longer objectivation, lead to the establishment of explicit links between the significant themes that have their roots in the several institutions. In this sense, the theoretical character of symbolic universes is indubitable, no matter how unsystematic or illogical such a universe may seem to an "unsympathetic" outsider. However, one may and typically does live naively within a symbolic universe. Whereas the establishment of a symbolic universe presupposes theoretical reflection on the part of somebody (to whom the world or, more specifically, the institutional order appeared problematic), everybody may "inhabit" that universe in a taken-for-granted attitude. If the institutional order is to be taken for granted in its totality as a meaningful whole, it must be legitimated by "placement" in a symbolic universe. But, other things being equal, this universe itself does not require further legitimation. To begin with, it was the institutional order, not the symbolic universe, that appeared problematic and to

the peer group is concerned, he concerned, he is ready for his first serious test of courage by stealing an automobile. It goes without saying that such situations are fraught with possibilities of internal conflict and guilt. Presumably all men, once socialized, are potential "traitors to themselves." The internal problem of such "treason," however, becomes much more complicated if it entails the further problem of which "self" is being betrayed at any particular moment, a problem posited as soon as identification with different significant others includes different generalized others. The child is betraying his parents as he prepares for the mysteries and his nurse as he trains for knighthood, just as he betrays his peer group by being a "square" young scholar and his parents by stealing an automobile, with each betrayal concomitant with "treason to himself" insofar as he has identified with the two discrepant worlds. We have discussed the various options open to him in our previous analysis of alternation, although it will be clear that these options have a different subjective reality when they are already internalized in primary socialization. It is safe to assume that alternation remains a lifelong threat to whatever subjective reality emerges from such conflict as the result of whatever options,

SOCIETY AS SUBJECTIVE REALITY 171 a threat posited once and for all with the introduction of the alternating possibility into primary socialization itself. The possibility of "individualism" (that is, of individual choice between discrepant realities and identities) is directly linked to the possibility of unsuccessful socialization. We have argued that unsuccessful socialization opens up the question of "Who am I?" In the social-structural context in which unsuccessful socialization becomes so recognized, the same question arises for the successfully socialized individual by virtue of his reflection about the unsuccessfully socialized. He will sooner or later encounter those with "hidden selves," the "traitors," those who have alternated or are alternating between discrepant worlds. By a kind of mirror effect the question may come to apply to himself, first according to the formula 'nere, but for the grace of God, go I," eventually perhaps by the formula "If they, why not I?" This opens a Pandora's box of "individualistic" choices, which eventually become generalized regardless of whether one's biographical course was determined by the "right" or the "wrong" choices. The "individualist" emerges as a specific social type who has at least the potential to migrate between a number of available worlds and -who has deliberately and awarely constructed a self out of the "material" provided by a number of available identities. A third important situation leading to unsuccessful socialization arises when there are discrepancies between primary and secondary socialization. The unity of primary socialization is maintained, but in secondary socialization, alternative realities and identities appear as subjective options. The options are, of course, limited by the social-structural context of the individual. For example, he may want to become a knight, but his social position makes this a foolish ambition. When secondary socialization has been differentiated to the point where subjective disidentification from one's "proper place" in society becomes possible, and when at the same time the social structure does not permit the realization of the subjectively chosen identity, an interesting development occurs. The subjectively chosen identity becomes a fantasy identity, objectified within the individual's consciousness as his "real self." It may be assumed that people always have dreams of

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY If one is mindful of this dialectic one can avoid the misleading notion of "collective identities" without having recourse to the uniqueness, *sub specie aeternitatis*, of individual existence.^{4u} Specific historical social structures engender identity types, which are recognizable in individual cases. In this sense one may assert that an American has a different identity than a Frenchman, a New Yorker than a Midwesterner, an executive than a hobo, and so forth. As we have seen, orientation and conduct in everyday life depend upon such typifications. This means that identity types can be observed in everyday life and that assertions like the ones above can be verified-or refuted-by ordinary men endowed with commonsense. The American who doubts that the French are different can go to France and find out for himself. Clearly the status of such typifications is not comparable to that of the constructs of the social sciences, nor does the verification and refutation follow the canons of scientific method. We must leave aside the methodological problem of what the precise relationship is between everyday-life typifications and scientific constructs (a Puritan knew himself to be a Puritan and was recognized as one by, say, Anglicans without much deliberation; the social scientist, however, who wishes to check Max Weber's thesis about the Puritan ethic must follow somewhat different and more complex procedures in order to "recognize" the empirical referents of the Weberian ideal type). The point of interest in the present context is that identity types are "observable" and "verifiable" in pretheoretical, and thus prescientific experience. Identity is a phenomenon that emerges from the dialectic between individual and society. Identity types, on the other hand, are social products tout court, relatively stable elements of objective social reality (the degree of stability being, of course, socially determined in its turn). As such, they are the topic of some form of theorizing in any society, even if they are stable and the formation of individual identities is relatively unproblematic. Theories about identity are always embedded in a more general interpretation of reality; they are "built into" the symbolic universe and its theoretical legitimations, and vary with the character of the latter. Identity remains unintelligible unless it is located in a world. Any

SOCIETY AS SUBJECTIVE REALITY 175 theorizing about: identity-and about specific identity types- must therefore occur within the framework of the theoretical interpretations within which it and they are located. We will return to this point presently. It should be stressed again that we are here referring to theories about identity as a social phenomenon; that is, without prejudice as to their acceptability to modern science. Indeed, we will refer to such theories as "psychologies" and will include any theory about identity that claims to explain the empirical phenomenon in a comprehensive fashion, whether or not such an explanation is "valid" for the contemporary scientific discipline of that name. If theories about identity are always embedded in the more comprehensive theories about reality, this must be understood in terms of the logic underlying the latter. For example, a psychology interpreting certain empirical phenomena as possession by demoniacal beings has as its matrix a mythological theory of the cosmos, and it is inappropriate to interpret it in a non-mythological framework. Similarly, a psychology interpreting the same phenomena in terms of electrical disturbances of the brain has as its background an overall scientific theory of reality, both human and non-human, and derives its consistency from the logic underlying this theory. Put simply, psychology always presupposes cosmology. This point can be well illustrated by reference to the much used psychiatric term "reality-oriented."⁴¹ A psychiatrist trying to diagnose an individual whose psychological status is in doubt asks him questions to determine the degree of his "reality-orientedness." This is quite logical; from a psychiatric viewpoint there is obviously something problematic about an individual who does not know what day of the week it is or who readily admits he has talked with departed spirits. Indeed, the term "reality-oriented" itself can be useful in such a context. The sociologist, however, has to ask the additional question, "Which reality?" Incidentally, this addition is not irrelevant psychiatrically. The psychiatrist will certainly take it into account, when an individual does not know the day of the week, if he has just arrived by jet plane from another continent. He may not know the day of the week simply because he is still "on another time"-Calcutta time, say, instead

) THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY of Eastern Standard Time. If the psychiatrist has any sensitivity to the socio-cultural context of psychological conditions he will also arrive at different diagnoses of the individual who converses with the dead, depending on whether such an individual comes from, say, New York City or from rural Haiti. The individual could be "on another reality" in the same socially objective sense that the previous one was "on another time." In other words, questions of psychological status cannot be decided without recognizing the reality-definitions that are taken for granted in the social situation of the individual. To put it more sharply, psychological status is relative to the social definitions of reality in general and is itself socially defined 42 The emergence of psychologies introduces a further dialectical relationship between identity and society-the relationship between psychological theory and those elements of subjective reality it purports to define and explain. The level of such theorizing may, of course, vary greatly, as in the case of all theoretical legitimations. What has been said previously about the origins and phases of legitimating theories applies here with equal validity, but with one not unimportant difference. Psychologies pertain to a dimension of reality that is of the greatest and most continuous subjective relevance for all individuals. Therefore the dialectic between theory and reality affects the individual in a palpably direct and intensive manner. When psychological theories attain a high degree of intellectual complexity they are likely to be administered by personnel specially trained in this body of knowledge. Whatever the social organization of these specialists may be, psychological theories re-enter everyday life by providing the interpretative schemes for disposing of problematic cases. Problems arising out of the dialectic between either subjective identity and social identity-assignments, or identity and its biological substratum (of which more later), can be classified according to theoretical categories-which is, of course, the presupposition for any therapy. The psychological theories then serve to legitimate the identity-maintenance and identity-repair procedures established in the society, providing the theoretical linkage between identity and world, as

SOCIETY AS SUBJECTIVE REALITY 177 these are both socially defined and subjectively appropriated. Psychological theories may be empirically adequate or inadequate, by which we do not mean their adequacy in terms of the procedural canons of empirical science, but rather, as interpretative schemes applicable by the expert or the layman to empirical phenomena in everyday life. For example, a psychological theory positing demoniacal possession is unlikely to be adequate in interpreting the identity problems of middle-class, Jewish intellectuals in New York City. These people simply do not have an identity capable of producing phenomena that could be so interpreted. The demons, if such there are, seem to avoid them. On the other hand, psychoanalysis is unlikely to be adequate for the interpretation of identity problems in rural Haiti, while some sort of Voudun psychology might supply interpretative schemes with a high degree of empirical accuracy. The two psychologies demonstrate their empirical adequacy by their applicability in therapy, but neither thereby demonstrates the ontological status of its categories. Neither the Voudun gods nor libidinal energy may exist outside the world defined in the respective social contexts. But in these contexts they do exist by virtue of social definition and are internalized as realities in the course of socialization. Rural Haitians are possessed and New York intellectuals are neurotic. Possession and neurosis are thus constituents of both objective and subjective reality in these contexts. This reality is empirically available in everyday life. The respective psychological theories are empirically adequate in precisely the same sense. The problem of whether or how psychological theories could be developed to transcend this socio-historical relativity need not concern us here. Insofar as psychological theories are adequate in this sense, they are capable of empirical verification. Again, what is at issue is not verification in the scientific sense, but testing in the experience of everyday social life. For example, it may be proposed that individuals born on certain days of the month are likely to be possessed, or that individuals with domineering mothers are likely to be neurotic. Such propositions are empirically verifiable to the extent that they belong to adequate theories, in the afore-mentioned sense. Such verification may be undertaken by participants as well as by outside

a psychology by definition pertains to identity, its internalization is likely to be accompanied by identification, hence is ipso facto likely to be identity-forming. In this close nexus between internalization and identification, psychological theories differ considerably from other types of theory. Not surprisingly, since problems of unsuccessful socialization are most conducive to this kind of theorizing, psychological theories are more apt to have socializing effects. This is not the same thing as saying that psychologies are self-verifying. As we have indicated, verification comes by confronting psychological theories and psychological reality as empirically available. Psychologies produce a reality, which in turn serves as the basis for their verification. In other words, we are dealing here with dialectics , not tautology.

SOCIETY AS SUBJECTIVE REALITY 175 The rural Haitian who internalizes Voudun psychology will become possessed as soon as he discovers certain well-defined signs. Similarly, the New York intellectual who internalizes Freudian psychology will become neurotic as soon as he diagnoses certain well-known symptoms. Indeed, it is possible that, given a certain biographical context, signs or symptoms will be produced by the individual himself. The Haitian will, in that case, produce not symptoms of neurosis but signs of possession, while the New Yorker will construct his neurosis in conformity with the recognized symptomatology. This has nothing to do with "mass hysteria," much less with malingering, but with the imprint of societal identity types upon the individual subjective reality of ordinary people with commonsense. The degree of identification will vary with the conditions of internalization, as previously discussed, depending, for instance, on whether it takes place in primary or secondary socialization. The social establishment of a psychology, which also entails the accordance of certain social roles to the personnel administering the theory and its therapeutic application, will naturally depend upon a variety of socio-historical circumstances. But the more socially established it becomes, the more abundant will be the phenomena it serves to interpret. If we posit the possibility that certain psychologies come to be adequate in the course of a realizing process, we imply the question of why as-yet-inadequate theories (as they would have to be in the earlier stages of this process) arise in the first place. Put more simply, why should one psychology replace another in history? The general answer is that such a change occurs when identity appears as a problem, for whatever reasons. The problem may arise out of the dialectic of psychological reality and social structure. Radical changes in social structure (such as, for instance, the changes wrought about by the Industrial Revolution) may result in concomitant changes in the psychological reality. In that case, psychological theories may arise because the old ones no longer adequately explain the empirical phenomena at hand. Thinking about identity will then seek to take cognizance of transformations of identity that have actually occurred, and will be itself transformed in the process. On the -`

same time. The continuing coexistence of man's animality and his sociality may be profitably observed at any conversation over dinner. It is possible to speak of a dialectic between nature and society .44 This dialectic is given in the human condition and manifests itself anew in each human individual. For the individual, of course, it unfolds itself in an already structured socio-historical situation. There is an ongoing dialectic, which comes into being with the very first phases of socialization and continues to unfold throughout the individual's existence in society, between each human animal and its socio-historical situation. Externally, it is a dialectic between the individual's biological substratum and his socially produced identity. In the external aspect, it is still possible to say that the organism posits limits to what is socially possible. As English ..ERR, COD:1..

technological arrangements). Social order is not part of the "nature of things," and it cannot be derived from the "laws of nature."¹⁴ Social order exists only as a product of human activity. No other ontological status may be ascribed to it without hopelessly obfuscating its empirical manifestations. Both in its genesis (social order is the result of past human activity) and its existence in any instant of time (social order exists only and insofar as human activity continues to produce it) it is a human product. While the social products of human externalization have a character sui generis as against both their organismic and their environmental context, it is important to stress that externalization as such is an anthropological necessity.¹⁵ Human being is impossible in a closed sphere of quiescent interiority . Human being must ongoingly externalize itself in activity. This anthropological necessity is grounded in man's biological equipment.¹⁶ The inherent instability of the human organism makes it imperative that man himself provide a stable environment for his conduct. Man himself must specialize and direct his drives. These biological facts serve as a necessary presupposition for the production of social order. In other words, although no existing social order can be derived from biological data, the necessity for social order as such stems from man's biological equipment. To understand the causes, other than those posited by the biological constants, for the emergence, maintenance and transmission of a social order one must undertake an analysis that eventuates in a theory of institutionalization.

one inquires into the ways in which the individual, in his total social activity, relates to the collectivity in question. Such an inquiry will, of necessity, be an exercise in role analysis 42 e. Scope and Modes of Institutionalization So far we have discussed institutionalization in terms of essential features that may be taken as sociological constants. Obviously we cannot in this treatise give even an overview of the countless variations in the historical manifestations and combinations of these constants—a task that could be achieved only by writing a universal history from the point of view of sociological theory. There are, however, a number of historical variations in the character of institutions that are so important for concrete sociological analyses that they should be at least briefly discussed. Our focus will, of course, continue to be on the relationship between institutions and knowledge. In investigating any concrete institutional order, one may ask the following question: What is the scope of institutionalization within the totality of social actions in a given collectivity? In other words, is the scope of institutionalization within the totality of social actions in a given collectivity? In other words, how large is the sector of institutionalized activity as compared with the sector that is left uninstitutionalized?43 Clearly there is historical variability in this matter, with different societies allowing more or less room for uninstitutionalized actions. An important general

CONCLUSION 187 merely heuristic status, it all too frequently ends by confusing its own conceptualizations with the laws of the universe. In contrast to some of the dominant fashions of theorizing in contemporary sociology, the ideas we have tried to develop posit neither an ahistorical "social system" nor an ahistorical "human nature." The approach we have employed here is both non-sociologicistic and non-psychologicistic. We cannot agree that sociology has as its object the alleged "dynamics" of social and psychological "systems," placed post hoc into a dubious relationship (incidentally, the intellectual itinerary of these two terms is worthy of a study in the empirical sociology of knowledge). The insight into the dialectic between social reality and individual existence in history is by no means new. It was, of course, most powerfully introduced into modern social thought by Marx. What is needed, however, is to bring to bear a dialectical perspective upon the theoretical orientation of the social sciences. Needless to say, we do not have in mind some doctrinaire: introduction of Marxian ideas into sociological theory. Nor is there any point in the mere assertion that the afore-mentioned dialectic, in fact and generally, does exist. What is needed is to proceed from such an assertion to a specification of the dialectical processes in a conceptual framework that is congruent with the great traditions of sociological thought. Mere rhetoric about dialectics, such as is commonly engaged in by doctrinaire Marxists, must appear to the sociologist as just another form of obscurantism. And yet we are convinced that only an understanding of what Marcel Mauss called the "total social fact" will protect the sociologist against the distortive reifications of both sociologism and psychologism. It is against the background of an intellectual situation in which this double danger is very real that we wish our treatise to be understood. Our undertaking has been theoretical. Yet theory, in any empirical discipline, must be relevant in a double fashion to the "data" defined as pertinent to that discipline. It must be congruent with them, and it must be geared to further empirical inquiry. There is a vast area of empirical problems that opens up for the sociology of knowledge. This is not the place to provide a catalogue of what we consider to be the

CONCLUSION 189 the same, we do, not underestimate the merit of "positivism," broadly understood, in redefining the canons of empirical investigation for the social sciences. The sociology of knowledge understands human reality as socially constructed reality. Since the constitution of reality has traditionally been a central problem of philosophy, this understanding has certain philosophical implications. Insofar as there has been a strong tendency for this problem, with all the questions it involves, to become trivialized in contemporary philosophy, the sociologist may find himself, to his surprise perhaps, the inheritor of philosophical questions that the professional philosophers are no longer interested in considering. In various sections of this treatise, especially in the analysis of the foundations of knowledge in everyday life and in the discussion of objectivation and institutionalization in relation to the biological presuppositions of human existence, we have given some indication of the contributions sociologically oriented thought may make to philosophical anthropology. In sum, our conception of the sociology of knowledge implies a specific conception of sociology in general. It does not imply that sociology is not a science, that its methods should be other than empirical, or that it cannot be "value-free." It does imply that sociology takes its place in the company of the sciences that deal with man as man; that it is, in that specific sense, a humanistic discipline. An important consequence of this conception is that ..ERR, COD:1..

Notes I INTRODUCTION: THE PROBLEM OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE 1. Cf. Max Scheler, *Die Wissensformen und die Gesellschaft* (Bern, Francke, 1960). This volume of essays, first published in 1925, contains the basic formulation of the sociology of knowledge in an essay entitled "Probleme einer Soziologie des Wissens," which was originally published a year earlier. 2. Cf. Wilhelm Windelband and Heinz Heimsoeth, *Lehrbuch der Geschichte der Philosophie* (Tübingen, Mohr, 1960), pp. 113-114. Cf. Albert Salomon, *In Praise of Enlightenment* (New York, Meridian Books, 1963); Hans Barth, *Wahrheit und Ideologie* (Zürich, Manesse, 1945); Werner Stark, *The Sociology of Knowledge* (Chicago, Free Press of Glencoe, 1958), pp. 46 ff.; Kurt Lenk (ed.), *Ideologie* (Neuwied/Rhein, Luchterhand, 1961), pp. 13 ff. 3. Cf. Karl Marx, *Die Frühschriften* (Stuttgart, Kröner, 1953) and *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844* will be found on pp. 225 ff. 4. On Marx's Unterbau/Überbau scheme, cf. Karl Kautsky, "Verhältnis von Unterbau und Überbau," in Iring Fetscher (ed.), *Der Marxismus* (Munich, Piper, 1962), pp. 160 ff.; Antonio Labriola, "Die Vermittlung zwischen Basis und Überbau," *ibid.*, pp. 167 ff.; Jean-Yves Calvez, *La pensée de Karl Marx* (Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1956), pp. 424 ff. The most important twentieth-century reformulation of the problem is that by György Lukács, in his *Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein* (Berlin, 1923), today more readily accessible in the French translation, *Histoire et conscience de classe* (Paris, Editions de Minuit, 1960). Lukács' understanding of Marx's concept of dialectics is all the more remarkable as it antedated by almost a decade the rediscovery of the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*. 5. The most important works of Nietzsche for the sociology of knowledge are *The Genealogy of Morals* and *The Will to Power*. For secondary discussions, cf. Walter A. Kaufmann, *Nietzsche* (New York, Meridian Books, 1956); Karl Löwith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche* (English translation-New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964).

1955); George B. de Huszar (ed.), *The Intellectuals* (New York, Free Press of Glencoe, 1960) . 91. On ultimate legitimations strengthening institutional "inertia" (Simmel's "faithfulness"), compare both Durkheim and Pareto. 92. It is precisely at this point that any functionalist interpretation of institutions is weakest, tending to look for practicalities that are not in fact existing. 93. On the Brahman/Kshatriya conflict, compare Weber's work on the sociology of religion in India. 94. On the social validation of propositions that are hard to

NOTES 193 14. Cf. Merton, op. cit., PP- 439 ff- 15. Cf. Talcott Parsons, "An Approach to the Sociology of Knowledge," Transactions of the Fourth World Congress of Sociology (Louvain, International Sociological Association, .1959), Vol. IV, pp. 25 ff.; "Culture and the Social System," in Parsons et al. (eds.), Theories of Society (New York, Free Press, x96.1), Vol. II, pp- 963 ff. 16. Cf. Talcott Parsons, The Social System (Glencoe, Ill., Free Press, 1951). PP- 326 ff. 17. Cf. C. Wright Mills, Power, Politics and People (New York, Ballantine Books, 1963), PP- 453 ff- 18. Cf. Theodor Geiger, Ideologie und Wahrheit (Stuttgart, Humboldt, 1953);; Arbeiten zur Soziologie (Neuwied/Rhein, Luchterhand , 1962), pp. 412 ff. 19. Cf. Ernst Topitsch, Vom Ursprung und Ende der Metaphysik (Vienna, Springer, 1958); Sozialphilosophie zwischen Ideologie und Wissenschaft (Neuwied/Rhein, Luchterhand, 1961). An important influence on Topitsch is the Kelsen school of legal positivism. For the implications of the latter for the sociology of knowledge, cf. Hans Kelsen, Aufsdtze zur Ideologiekritik (Neuwied/Rhein, Luchterhand, 1964). 20. Cf. Daniel Bell, The End of Ideology (New York, Free Press of Glencoe, 1960); Kurt Lenk (ed.), Ideologie; Norman Birnbaum (ed.), The Sociological Study of Ideology (Oxford, Blackwell, 1962). 21. Cf. Stark, op. cit. 22. Alfred Schutz, Collected Papers, Vol. I (The Hague, Nijhoff, 1962), p. 149. Italics ours. 23. Ibid., Vol. 11 (1964), p. 121. 24. For discussions of the implications of Durkheimian sociology for the sociology of knowledge, cf. Gerard L. DeGr6, Society and Ideology (New York, Columbia University Bookstore, 1943) - 54 ff.; Merton, op. cit.; Georges Gurvitch, "Probl s de la sociologie de la connaissance," Trait e sociologie (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1960), Vol. II, pp. 103 fE. 25. The closest approach, to our knowledge, of symbolic- interactionism to the problems of the sociology of knowledge may be found in Tamotsu Shibutani, "Reference Groups and Social Control ," in Arnold Rose (ed.), Human Behavior and Social Processes (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1962), pp. 128 ff. The failure to make the connection between Meadian social psychology and the sociology of knowledge, on the part of the symbolic-interactionists, is of course related to the limited "diffusion" of the sociology of knowledge in America, but its more important theoretical foundation is to be

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY sought in the fact that both Mead himself and his later followers did not develop an adequate concept of social structure. Precisely for this reason, we think, is the integration of the Meadian and Durkheimian approaches so very important. It may be observed here that, just as the indifference to the sociology of knowledge on the part of American social psychologists has prevented the latter from relating their perspectives to a macro-sociological theory, so is the total ignorance of Mead a severe theoretical defect of neo-Marxist social thought in Europe today. There is considerable irony in the fact that, of late, neo-Marxist theoreticians have been seeking a liaison with Freudian psychology (which is fundamentally incompatible with the anthropological presuppositions of Marxism), completely oblivious of the existence of a Meadian theory of the dialectic between society and the individual that would be immeasurably more congenial to their own approach. For a recent example of this ironic phenomenon, cf. Georges Lapassade, *L'entr dans la vie* (Paris, Editions de Minuit, 1963), an otherwise highly suggestive book that, as it were, cries out for Mead on every page. The same irony, albeit in a different context of intellectual segregation, pertains to the recent American efforts for a rapprochement between Marxism and Freudianism. One European sociologist who has drawn heavily and successfully upon Mead and the Meadian tradition in the construction of sociological theory is Friedrich Tenbruck. Cf. his *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* (Habilitationsschrift, University of Freiburg, to be published shortly), especially the section entitled "Realit " In a different systematic context than ours, but in a manner quite congenial to our own approach to the Meadian problematic, Tenbruck discusses the social origin of reality and the social-structural bases for the maintenance of reality. 26. Talcott Parsons, *The Structure of Social Action* (Chicago, Free Press, 1949), P-v- z7. Emile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method* (Chicago, Free Press, 1950), p. 14- 28, Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1947), p. 101. I. THE FOUNDATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE IN EVERYDAY LIFE 1. This entire section of our treatise is based on Alfred Schutz and Thomas Luckmann, *Die Strukturen der Lebenswelt*, now being prepared for publication. In view of this, we have refrained from providing individual references to the places in Schutz's published work where the same problems are discussed. Our argument here is based on Schutz, as developed by Luckmann in the afore-mentioned work, in toto. The reader wishing to acquaint himself with Schutz's

"extrauterine Fr hr." 6. The term "significant others" is taken from Mead. For Mead's theory of the ontogenesis of the self, cf. his *Mind, Self and Society* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1934). A useful compendium of Mead's writings is Anselm Strauss (ed.), *George Herbert Mead on Social Psychology* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1964). For a suggestive secondary discussion, cf. Maurice Natanson, *The Social Dynamics of George H. Mead* (Washington, Public Affairs Press, X956). 7. There is a fundamental dichotomy between the conception of man as a self-producing being and a conception of "human nature."

NOTES 197 sociologique. The anthropological necessity of externalization was developed by both Hegel and Marx. 16. The biological foundation of externalization and its relationship to the emergence of institutions was developed by Gehlen. 17- The term "'stock of knowledge" is taken from Schutz. 18. Gehlen refers to this point in his concepts of Trieb schuss and Entlastung. iq. Gehlen refers to this point in his concept of Hintergrundserf ng. 20. The concept of the definition of the situation was formed by W. I. Thomas and developed throughout his sociological work. 21. We are aware of the fact that this concept of institution is broader than the prevailing one in contemporary sociology. We think that such a broader concept is useful for a comprehensive analysis of basic social processes. On social control, cf. Friedrich Tenbruck , "Soziale Kontrolle," Staatslexikon der Goerres-Gesellscha f t (x962), and Heinrich Popitz, "Soziale Normen," European Journal of Sociology. 22. The tern "taking the role of the other" is taken from Mead. We are here taking Mead's paradigm of socialization and applying it to the broader problem of institutionalization. The argument combines key features of both Mead's and Gehlen's approaches. 23, Simmel's analysis of the expansion from the dyad to the triad is important in this connection. The following argument combines Simmers and Durkheim's conceptions of the objectivity of social reality. 24. In Durkheim's terms this means that, with the expansion of the dyad into a triad and beyond, the original formations become genuine "social facts," that is, they attain chos 25. Jean Piaget's concept of infantile "realism" may be compared here. 26. For an analysis of this process in the contemporary family, cf. Peter L. Berger and Hansfried Kellner, "Marriage and the Construction of Reality," Diogenes 46 (1964), 1 ff. 27. The preceding description closely follows Durkheim's analysis of social reality. This does not contradict the Weberian conception of the meaningful character of society. Since social reality always originates in meaningful human actions, it continues to carry meaning even if it is opaque to the individual at a given time. The original may be reconstructed, precisely by means of what Weber called Verstehen. 28. The term "objectivation" is derived from the Hegelian/ Marxian Versachlichung. 29. Contemporary American sociology tends towards leaving out

SOCIETY AS OBJECTIVE REALITY 57 common?z While this reciprocal typification is not yet institutionalization (since, there only being two individuals, there is no possibility of a typology of actors), it is clear that institutionalization is already present in nucleo. At this stage one may ask what gains accrue to the two individuals from this development. The most important gain is that each will be able to predict the other's actions. Concomitantly, the interaction of both becomes predictable. The "There he goes again" becomes a "There we go again." This relieves both individuals of a considerable amount of tension. They save time and effort, not only in whatever external tasks they might be engaged in separately or jointly, but in terms of their respective psychological economies. Their life together is now defined by a widening sphere of taken-for-granted routines. Many actions are possible on a low level of attention. Each action of one is no longer a source of astonishment and potential danger to the other. Instead, much of what goes on takes on the triviality of what, to both, will be everyday life. This means that the two individuals are constructing a background, in the sense discussed before, which will serve to stabilize both their separate actions and their interaction. The construction of this background of routine in turn makes possible a division of labor between them, opening the way for innovations, which demand a higher level of attention. The division of labor and the innovations will lead to new habitualizations, further widening the background common to both individuals. In other words, a social world will be in process of construction, containing within it the roots of an expanding institutional order. Generally, all actions repeated once or more tend to be habitualized to some degree, just as all actions once or more tend to be habitualized to some degree, just as all actions observed by another necessarily involve some typification on his part. However, for the kind of reciprocal typification just described to occur there must be a continuing social situation in which the habitualized actions of two or more individuals interlock. Which actions are likely to be reciprocally typified in this manner? The general answer is, those actions that are relevant to both A and B within their common situation. The areas likely to be relevant in this way will, of course, vary in different

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY 54. Weber repeatedly refers to various collectivities as "carriers" (Träger) of what we have called here subuniverses of meaning, especially in his comparative sociology of religion. The analysis of this phenomenon is, of course, related to Marx's Unterbau/Überbau scheme. 55. The pluralistic competition between subuniverses of meaning is one of the most important problems for an empirical sociology of knowledge of contemporary society. We have dealt with this problem elsewhere in our work in the sociology of religion, but see no point in developing an analysis of this in the present treatise. 56. This proposition can be put into Marxian terms by saying that there is a dialectical relationship between substructure (Unterbau) and superstructure (Überbau)-a Marxian insight that has been widely lost in main-line Marxism until very recently. The problem of the possibility of socially detached knowledge has, of course, been a central one for the sociology of knowledge as defined by Scheler and Mannheim. We are not giving it such a central place for reasons inherent in our general theoretical approach. The important point for a theoretical sociology of knowledge is the dialectic between knowledge and its social base. Questions such as Mannheim's concerning the "unattached intelligentsia" are applications of the sociology of knowledge to concrete historical and empirical phenomena. Propositions about these will have to be made on a level of much lesser theoretical generality than interests us here. Questions concerning the autonomy of social-scientific knowledge, on the other hand, should be negotiated in the context of the methodology of the social sciences. This area we have excluded in our definition of the scope of the sociology of knowledge, for theoretical reasons stated in our introduction. 57- This is the phenomenon commonly called "cultural lag" in American sociology since Ogburn. We have avoided this term because of its evolutionistic and implicitly evaluative connotation. 58. Reification (Verdinglichung) is an important Marxian concept, particularly in the anthropological considerations of the Friihgeschichte, then developed in terms of the "fetishism of commodities" in *Das Kapital*. For more recent developments of the concept in Marxist theory, cf. Gy Lukács, *Histoire et conscience de classe*, pp. 109 ff.; Lucien Goldmann, *Recherches dialectiques* (Paris, Gallimard, 1959), pp. 64 ff.; Joseph Gabel, *La fausse conscience* (Paris, Editions de Minuit, 1962), and *Formen der Entfremdung* (Frankfurt, Fischer, 1964). For an extensive discussion of the applicability of the concept within a non-doctrinaire sociology of knowledge, cf. Peter L. Berger and Stanley Poulberg, "Reification and the Sociological Critique of Consciousness," *History and Theory* IV: 2, 198 ff. (1965).

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY and their relationship to each other, and Sartre's concept of "totalization," have been very relevant for our argument at this point. 70. The term "marginal situation" (Grenzsituation) was coined by Karl Jaspers. We are using the term in a manner quite different from Jaspers'. 72- Our argument here is influenced by Durkheim's analysis of anomie. We are more interested, though, in the nomic rather than the anomic processes in society. 72. The paramount status of everyday reality was analyzed by Schutz. Cf. especially the article "On Multiple Realities," *Collected Papers*, Vol. I, pp. 207 ff. 73. The precariousness of subjective identity is already implied in Mead's analysis of the genesis of the self. For developments of this analysis, cf. Anselm Strauss, *Mirrors and Masks* (New York, Free Press of Glencoe, 1959); Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Garden City, N. Y., Doubleday-Anchor, 1959). 74. Heidegger gives the most elaborate analysis in recent philosophy of death as the marginal situation par excellence. Schutz's concept of the "fundamental anxiety" refers to the same phenomenon. Malinowski's analysis of the social function of funerary ceremonialism is also relevant at this point. 75- The use of certain perspectives on "anxiety" (Angst) developed by existential philosophy makes it possible to place Durkheim's analysis of anomie in a broader anthropological frame of reference. 76. Cf. Ldvi-Strauss, *op. cit.* 77. On collective memory, cf. Maurice Halbwachs, *Les cadres sociaux de la m ire* (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1952). Halbwachs also developed his sociological theory of memory in *La m ire collective* (1950) and in *La topographie l ndaire des Evangiles en Terre Sainte* (1941)- 78- The concepts of "predecessors" and "successors" are derived from Schutz. 79. The conception of the transcending character of society was especially developed by Durkheim. 80. The conception of "projection" was first developed by Feuerbach, then, albeit in greatly different directions, by Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud. 81. Compare again Weber's concept of "carrier" (Trdger). 82. The analyses of "culture contact" in contemporary American cultural anthropology are relevant here. 83. Compare the concept of "culture shock" in contemporary American cultural anthropology. 84. Marx developed in considerable detail the relationship between material power and "conceptual success." Cf. the well-known

NOTES 203 formulation of this in *The German Ideology*: "Die Gedanken der herrschenden Klasse sind in jeder Epoche die herrschenden Gedanken " (Friedrichschriften, Kröner edition, p- 373)- 85. Pareto comes closest to the writing of a history of thought in sociological terms, which makes Pareto important for the sociology of knowledge regardless of reservations one may have about his theoretical frame of reference. Cf. Brigitte Berger, *Vilfredo Pareto and the Sociology of Knowledge* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Neat School for Social Research, 1964)- 86. This may be reminiscent of Auguste Comte's 'law of the three stages." We cannot accept this, of course, but it may still be useful in suggesting that consciousness develops in historically recognizable stages, though they cannot be conceived of in Comte's manner. Our own understanding of this is closer to the Hegelian/ Mandan approach to the historicity of human thought. 87. Both L -Bruhl and Piaget suggest that mythology constitutes a necessary stage in the development of thought. For a suggestive discussion of the biological roots of mythological/magical thought, cf. Arnold Gehlen, *Studien zur Anthropologie und Soziologie* (Neuwied/Rhein, Luchterhand, 1963), pp. 79 ff. 88. Our conception of mythology here is influenced by the work of Gerardus van der Leeuw, *Mircea Eliade and Rudolf Bultmann*. 89. On the continuity between social and cosmic orders in mythological consciousness, compare again the work of Eliade and Voegelin. 90. It will be clear from our theoretical presuppositions that we cannot here go in any detail into the questions of the "sociology of intellectuals." In addition to Mannheim's important work in this area (to be found especially in *Ideology and Utopia* and *Essays on the Sociology of Culture*), cf. Florian Znaniecki, *The Social Role of the Man of Knowledge* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1940); Theodor Geiger, *Aufgaben und Stellung der Intelligenz in der Gesellschaft* (Stuttgart, 1949); Raymond Aron, *L'opium des intellectuels* (Paris, 1955); George B. de Huszar (ed.), *The Intellectuals* (New York, Free Press of Glencoe, 1960) . 91. On ultimate legitimations strengthening institutional "inertia" (Simmel's "faithfulness"), compare both Durkheim and Pareto. 92. It is precisely at this point that any functionalist interpretation of institutions is weakest, tending to look for practicalities that are not in fact existing. 93. On the Brahman/Kshatriya conflict, compare Weber's work on the sociology of religion in India. 94. On the social validation of propositions that are hard to

NOTES 205 III. SOCIETY AS SUBJECTIVE REALITY 1. Our conception of "understanding the other" is derived from both Weber and Schutz. 2. Our definitions of socialization and its two subtypes closely follow current usage in the social sciences. We have only adapted the wording to conform to our overall theoretical framework. 3. Our description here, of course, leans heavily on the Meadian theory of socialization. 4. The concept of "mediation" is derived from Sartre, who lacks, however, an adequate theory of socialization. 5. The affective dimension of early learning has been especially emphasized by Freudian child psychology, although there are various findings of behavioristic learning theory that would tend to confirm this. We do not imply acceptance of the theoretical presuppositions of either psychological school in our argument here. 6. Our conception of the reflected character of the self is derived from both Cooley and Mead. Its roots may be found in the analysis of the "social self" by William James (Principles of Psychology). 7. Although this could not be developed here, enough may have been said to indicate the possibility of a genuinely dialectical social psychology. The latter would be equally important for philosophical anthropology as for sociology. As far as the latter is concerned, such a social psychology (fundamentally Meadian in orientation, but with the addition of important elements from other streams of social-scientific thought) would make it unnecessary to seek theoretically untenable alliances; with either Freudian or behavioristic psychologism. 8. On nomenclature, cf. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *La Pensée Sauvage*, pp. 215-53 ff. 9. The concept of the "generalized other" is used here in a fully Meadian sense. 10. Compare Georg Simmel on the self-apprehension of man as both inside and outside society. Plessner's concept of "eccentricity" is again relevant here. 11. Compare Piaget on the massive reality of the child's world. 12. Compare Lévi-Bruhl on the phylogenetic analogue to Piaget's infantile "realism." 13. Cf. Philippe Ariès *Centuries of Childhood* (New York, Knopf, 1962). 14. Compare here the cultural-anthropological analyses of "rites of passage" connected with puberty. 15. The concept of "role distance" is developed by Erving Goffman, particularly in *Asylums* (Garden City, N. Y., Doubleday-

206 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALM Anchor, x961). Our analysis suggests that such distance is only possible with regard to realities internalized in secondary socialization. If it extends to the realities internalized in primary socialization, we are in the domain of what American psychiatry calls "psychopathy," which implies a deficient formation of identity. A very interesting farther point suggested by our analysis concerns the structural limits within which a "Goffmanian model" of social interaction may be viable-to wit, societies so structured that decisive elements of objectivated reality are internalized-in-secondary socialization processes. This consideration, incidentally, should make us careful not to equate Coffman's "model" (which is very useful, let it be added, for the analysis of just described to occur there must be a continuing social situation in which the habitualized actions of two or more individuals interlock. Which actions are likely to be reciprocally typified in this manner? The general answer is, those actions that are relevant to both A and B within their common situation. The areas likely to be relevant in this way will, of course, vary in different

NOTES 193 14. Cf. Merton, op. cit., PP- 439 ff- 15. Cf. Talcott Parsons, "An Approach to the Sociology of Knowledge," Transactions of the Fourth World Congress of Sociology (Louvain, International Sociological Association, .1959), Vol. IV, pp. 25 ff.; "Culture and the Social System," in Parsons et al. (eds.), Theories of Society (New York, Free Press, x96.1), Vol. II, pp- 963 ff. 16. Cf. Talcott Parsons, The Social System (Glencoe, Ill., Free Press, 1951). PP- 326 ff. 17. Cf. C. Wright Mills, Power, Politics and People (New York, Ballantine Books, 1963), PP- 453 ff- 18. Cf. Theodor Geiger, Ideologie und Wahrheit (Stuttgart, Humboldt, 1953);; Arbeiten zur Soziologie (Neuwied/Rhein, Luchterhand , 1962), pp. 412 ff. 19. Cf. Ernst Topitsch, Vom Ursprung und Ende der Metaphysik (Vienna, Springer, 1958); Sozialphilosophie zwischen Ideologie und Wissenschaft (Neuwied/Rhein, Luchterhand, 1961). An important influence on Topitsch is the Kelsen school of legal positivism. For the implications of the latter for the sociology of knowledge, cf. Hans Kelsen, Aufsdtze zur Ideologiekritik (Neuwied/Rhein, Luchterhand, 1964). 20. Cf. Daniel Bell, The End of Ideology (New York, Free Press of Glencoe, 1960); Kurt Lenk (ed.), Ideologie; Norman Birnbaum (ed.), The Sociological Study of Ideology (Oxford, Blackwell, 1962). 21. Cf. Stark, op. cit. 22. Alfred Schutz, Collected Papers, Vol. I (The Hague, Nijhoff, 1962), p. 149. Italics ours. 23. Ibid., Vol. 11 (1964), p. 121. 24. For discussions of the implications of Durkheimian sociology for the sociology of knowledge, cf. Gerard L. DeGr6, Society and Ideology (New York, Columbia University Bookstore, 1943) - 54 ff.; Merton, op. cit.; Georges Gurvitch, "Probl s de la sociologie de la connaissance," Trait e sociologie (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, lg60), Vol. II, pp. 103 fE. 25. The closest approach, to our knowledge, of symbolic- interactionism to the problems of the sociology of knowledge may be found in Rose (ed.), Human Behavior and Social .Processes. 32. Our argument implies the necessity of a macro-sociological background for analyses of internalization, that is, of an understanding of the social structure within which internalization occurs. American social psychology today is greatly weakened by the fact that such a background is widely lacking. 33- Cf. Gerth and Mills, op. cit. Also cf. Tenbcuck, op. cit., who assigns a prominent place to the structural bases of personality in his typology of primitive, traditional and modem societies. 34- This has the! important implication that most psychological models, including those of contemporary scientific psychology, have limited socio-historical applicability. It further implies that a sociological psychology will at the same time have to be a historical psychology. 35. Cf. Erving Coffman, Stigma (Englewood Cliffs, N. J., Prentice-Hall, x963). Also, cf. A. Kardiner and L. Ovesey, The Mark of Oppression (New York, Norton, xg5x). 36. Cf. Donald W. Cory, The Homosexual in America (New York, Greenberg, 1951). 37- We would stress here once more the social-structural condi-

Research, Spring 1965, 26 ff. 43- Cf. *ibid.* 44- The dialectic between nature and society here discussed is in no way to be equated with the "dialectic of nature," as developed by Engels and later Marxism. The former underlines that man's relationship to his own body (as to nature in general) is itself a specifically human one. The latter, on the contrary, projects specifically human phenomena into non-human nature and then proceeds to theoretically dehumanize man by looking upon him as but the object of natural forces or laws of nature. 45. For this possibility of a discipline of "sociosomatics," cf. Georg Simmel, *op. cit.*, pp. 483 ff. (the essay on the "sociology of the senses"); Marcel Mauss, *Sociologie et anthropologie* (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1950), pp. 365 ff. (the essay on the "techniques of the body"); Edward T. Hall, *The Silent Language* (Garden City, N. Y., Doubleday, 1959). The sociological analysis of sexuality would probably provide the richest empirical material for such a discipline . 46. This was understood very well in Freud's conception of socialization . It was greatly underestimated in the functionalist adaptations of Freud, from Malinowski on. 47- Compare here Henri Bergson (especially his theory of *dur* , Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Alfred Schutz, and Jean Piaget. 48. Compare here both Durkheim and Plessner, as well as Freud.

46 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY astrology may be highly relevant for economics, speech analysis of individuals. I do not share my knowledge equally with all my fellowmen, and there may be some knowledge that I share with no one. I share my professional expertise with colleagues, but not with my family, and I may share with nobody my knowledge of how to cheat at cards. The social distribution of knowledge of certain elements of everyday reality can become highly complex and even confusing to the outsider. I not only do not possess the knowledge supposedly required to cure me of a physical ailment, I may even lack the knowledge of which one of a bewildering ..ERR, COD:1.. 1125, Scheler, Max, 4, 7, 8-9, 10--11, 197 1121, 198 nao, 2061121, 14. 101111. los nio. 1061111. 2071133 lm W I omas, ., 197 ..o 2041195 Schelsky, Helmut, 208 1138 Tes, Ferdinand, 199 1146 Schelting, Alexander von, Topitsch, Ernst, 12, 193

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v1 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY repetitiveness inevitable. Thus some problems are viewed within phenomenological brackets in Section I, taken up again in Section II with these brackets removed and with an is pliantly expansive so as to allow me to objectify a great variety of experiences coming my way in the course of my life. Language also typifies experiences, allowing me to subsume them under broad categories in terms of which they have meaning not only to myself but also to my fellowmen. As it typifies, it also anonymizes experiences, for the typified experience can, in principle, be duplicated by anyone falling into the category in question. For instance, have a quarrel with my mother-in-law. This concrete and subjectively unique experience is typified linguistically under the category of "mother-in-law trouble." In this typification it makes sense to myself, to others, and, presumably, to my mother-in-law. The same typification, however, entails anonymity. Not only I but anyone (more accurately, anyone in the category of son-inlaw) can have "mother-in-law trouble." In this way, my biographical experiences are ongoingly subsumed under general orders of meaning that are both objectively and subjectively real. Because of its capacity to transcend the "here and now," language bridges different zones within the reality of everyday life and integrates them into a meaningful whole. The transcendences have spatial, temporal and social dimensions. Through language I can transcend the gap between my manipulatory zone and that of the other, I can synchronize my biographical time sequence with his; and I can converse with him about individuals and collectivities with whom we are not at present in face-to-face interaction. As a result of these transcendences language is capable of "making present" a variety of objects that are spatially, temporally and socially absent from the "here and now." Ipso facto a vast accumulation of experiences and meanings can become objectified in the "here and now." Put simply, through language an entire world can be actualized at any moment. This transcending and integrating power of language is retained when I am not actually conversing with another. Through linguistic objectification , even when "talking to myself" in solitary thought, an entire world can be appresented to me at any moment. As

Introduction: The Problem of the Sociology of Knowledge The basic contentions of the argument of this book are implicit in its title and subtitle, namely, that reality is socially constructed and that the sociology of knowledge must analyze the processes in which this occurs. The key terms in these contentions are "reality" and "knowledge," terms that are not only current in everyday speech, but that have behind them a long history of philosophical inquiry. We need not enter here into a discussion of the semantic intricacies of either the everyday or the philosophical usage of these terms. It will be enough, for our purposes, to define "reality" as a quality appertaining to phenomena that we recognize as having a being independent of our own volition (we cannot "wish them away"), and to define "knowledge" as the certainty that phenomena are real and that they possess specific characteristics. It is in this (admittedly simplistic) sense that the terms have relevance both to the man in the street and to the philosopher. The man in the street inhabits a world that is "real" to him, albeit in different degrees, and he "knows," with different degrees of confidence, that this world possesses such and such characteristics. The philosopher, of course, will raise questions about the ultimate status of both this "reality" and this "knowledge." What is real? How is one to know? These are among the most ancient questions not only of philosophical inquiry proper, but of human thought as such. Precisely for this reason the intrusion of the sociologist into this time-honored intellectual territory is likely to raise the eyebrows of the man in the street and even more likely to enrage the philosopher. It is, therefore, important that we: clarify at the beginning the sense in which we use these terms in the context of sociology, and that we immediately disclaim any pretension to the effect that so-

Z THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY ciology has an answer to these ancient philosophical preoccupations . If we were going to be meticulous in the ensuing argument , we would put quotation marks around the two aforementioned terms every time we used them, but this would be stylistically awkward. To speak of quotation marks, however , may give a clue to the peculiar manner in which these terms appear in a sociological context. One could say that the sociological understanding of "reality" and "knowledge" falls somewhere in the middle between that of the man in the street may believe that he possesses "freedom of the will" and that he is therefore "responsible " for his actions, at the same time denying this "freedom" and this "responsibility" to infants and lunatics. The philosopher, by whatever methods, will inquire into the ontological and epistemological status of these conceptions. Is man free? What is responsibility? Where are the limits of responsibility? How can one know these things? And so on. Needless to say, the sociologist is in no position to supply

INTRODUCTION 3 answers to these questions. What he can and must do, however, is to ask :how it is that the notion of "freedom" has come to be taken for granted in one society and not in another, how its "reality" is maintained in the one society and how, even more interestingly, this "reality" may once again be lost to an individual or to an entire collectivity. Sociological interest in questions of "reality" and "knowledge " is thus initially justified by the fact of their social relativity . What is "real" to a Tibetan monk may not be "real" to an American businessman. The "knowledge" of the criminal differs from the "knowledge" of the criminologist. It follows that specific agglomerations of "reality" and "knowledge" pertain to specific social contexts, and that these relationships will have to be :included in an adequate sociological analysis of these contexts. The need for a "sociology of knowledge" is thus already given with the observable differences between societies in term, of what is taken for granted as "knowledge" in them. Beyond this, however, a discipline calling itself by this name will leave to concern itself with the general ways by which "realities" are taken as "known" in human societies. In other words, a "sociology of knowledge" will have to deal not only with the empirical variety of "knowledge" in human societies, but also with the processes by which any body of "knowledge" comes to be socially established as "reality." It is our contention, then, that the sociology of knowledge must concern itself with whatever passes for "knowledge" in a society, regardless of the ultimate validity or invalidity (by whatever criteria) of such "knowledge." And insofar as all human "knowledge" is developed, transmitted and maintained in social situations, the sociology of knowledge must seek to understand the processes by which this is done in such a way that a taken-for-granted "reality" congeals for the man in the street. In other words, we contend that the sociology of knowledge is concerned with the analysis of the social construction o f reality. This understanding of the proper field of the sociology of knowledge differs from what has generally been meant by this discipline since it was first so called some forty years ago. Before we begin our actual argument, therefore, it will be useful to look briefly at the previous development of the

4 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY discipline and to explicate in what way, and why, we have felt it necessary to deviate from it. The term "sociology of knowledge" (Wissenssoziologie) was coined by Max Scheler.¹ The time was the 1920S, the place was Germany, and Scheler was a philosopher. These three facts are quite important for an understanding of the genesis and further development of the new discipline. The sociology of knowledge originated in a particular situation of German intellectual history and in a philosophical context. While the new discipline was subsequently introduced into the sociological context proper, particularly in the English-speaking world, it continued to be marked by the problems of the particular intellectual situation from which it arose. As a result the sociology of knowledge remained a peripheral concern among sociologists at large, who did not share the particular problems that troubled German thinkers in the 1920s. This was especially true of American sociologists, who have in the main looked upon the discipline as a marginal specialty with a persistent European flavor. More importantly, however, the continuing linkage of the sociology of knowledge with its original constellation of problems has been a theoretical weakness even where there has been an interest in the discipline. To wit, the sociology of knowledge has been looked upon, by its protagonists and by the more or less indifferent sociological public at large, as a sort of sociological gloss on the history of ideas. This has resulted in considerable myopia regarding the potential theoretical significance of the sociology of knowledge. There have been different definitions of the nature and scope of the sociology of knowledge. Indeed, it might almost be said that the history of the subdiscipline thus far has been the history of its various definitions. Nevertheless, there has been general agreement to the effect that the sociology of knowledge is concerned with the relationship between human thought and the social context within which it arises. It may thus be said that the sociology of knowledge constitutes the sociological focus of a much more general problem, that of the existential determination (Seinsgebundenheit) of thought as such. Although here the social factor is concentrated upon, the theoretical difficulties are similar to those

INTRODUCTION 5 that have arisen, when other factors (such as the historical, the psychological or the biological) have been proposed as determinative of human thought. In all these cases the general problem has been the extent to which thought reflects or is independent of the proposed determinative factors. It is likely that the prominence of the general problem in recent German philosophy has its roots in the vast accumulation of historical scholarship that was one of the greatest intellectual fruits of the nineteenth century in Germany. In a way unparalleled in any other period of intellectual history the past, with all its amazing variety of forms of thought, was "made present" to the contemporary mind through the efforts of scientific historical scholarship. It is hard to dispute the claim of German scholarship to the primary position in this enterprise. It should, consequently, not surprise us that the theoretical problem thrown up by the latter should be most sharply sensed in Germany. This problem can be described as the vertigo of relativity. The epistemological dimension of the problem is obvious. On the empirical level it led to the concern to investigate as painstakingly as possible the concrete relationships between thought and its historical situations. If this interpretation is correct, the sociology of knowledge takes up a problem originally posited by historical scholarship—in a narrower focus, to be sure, but with an interest in essentially the same questions? Neither the general problem nor its narrower focus is new. An awareness of the social foundations of values and world views can be found in antiquity. At least as far back as the Enlightenment this awareness crystallized into a major theme of modern Western thought. It would thus be possible to make a good case: for a number of "genealogies" for the central problem of the sociology of knowledge. It may even be said that the problem is contained in part in Pascal's famous statement that what is truth on one side of the Pyrenees is error on the other.⁴ Yet the immediate intellectual antecedents of the sociology of knowledge are three developments in nineteenth-century German thought—the Marxian, the Nietzschean, and the historicist. It is from Marx: that the sociology of knowledge ..ERR, COD:1..

6 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY his social being. be sure, there has been much debate as to just what kind of determination Marx had in mind. It is safe to say that much of the great "struggle with Marx" that characterized not only the beginnings of the sociology of knowledge but the "classical age" of sociology in general (particularly as manifested in the works of Weber, Durkheim and Pareto) was really a struggle with a faulty interpretation of Marx by latter-day Marxists. This proposition gains plausibility when we reflect that it was only in 1932 that the very important Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 were rediscovered and only after World War II that the full implications of this rediscovery could be worked out in Marx research. Be this as it may, the sociology of knowledge inherited from Marx not only the sharpest formulation of its central problem but also some of its key concepts, among which should be mentioned particularly the concepts of "ideology" (ideas serving as weapons for social interests) and "false consciousness" (thought that is alienated from the real social being of the thinker). The sociology of knowledge has been particularly fascinated by Marx's twin concepts of "substructure/superstructure" (Unterbau/Überbau). It is here particularly that controversy has raged about the correct interpretation of Marx's own thought. Later Marxism has tended to identify the "substructure" with economic structure tout court, of which the "superstructure" was then supposed to be a direct "reflection" (thus Lenin, for instance). It is quite clear now that this misrepresents Marx's thought, as the essentially mechanistic rather than dialectical character of this kind of economic determinism should make one suspect. What concerned Marx was that human thought is founded in human activity ("labor," in the widest sense of the word) and in the social relations brought about by this activity. "Substructure" and "superstructure" are best understood if one views them as, respectively, human activity and the world produced by that activity.⁶ In any case, the fundamental "sub/superstructure" scheme has been taken over in various forms by the sociology of knowledge, beginning with Scheler, always with an understanding that there is some sort of relationship between thought and an "underlying" reality other than thought. The

more or less intelligent speculation, has barely begun. We would hope that the clarification of the theoretical perspective of the sociology of knowledge we have attempted here points to problems for such research that are easily ignored in other theoretical perspectives. To give but one example, the present interest on the part of social scientists in theories derived from psychoanalysis would take on a very different coloration as soon as these theories were not regarded, positively or negatively, as propositions of "science," but analyzed as legitimations of a very peculiar and probably highly significant construction of reality in modern society. Such analysis, of course, would bracket the question of the "scientific validity" of these theories and simply look upon them as data for an understanding of the subjective and objective reality from which they emerged and which, in turn, they influence. We have expressly refrained from following up the methodological implications of our conception of the sociology of knowledge. It should be clear, however, that our approach is non-positivistic, if positivism is understood as a philosophical position defining the object of the social sciences in such a way as to legislate away their most important problems. All

H THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY transcend the relativity of specific historically and socially located viewpoints. The sociology of knowledge was to serve as an instrument toward this aim, its main purpose being the clearing away of the difficulties raised by relativism so that the real philosophical task could proceed. Scheler's sociology of knowledge is, in a very real sense, ancilla philosophicae, and of a very specific philosophy to boot. In line with this orientation, Scheler's sociology of knowledge is essentially a negative method. Scheler argued that the relationship between "ideal factors" (Idealfaktoren) and "real factors" (Realfaktoren), terms that are clearly reminiscent of the Marxian "sub/superstructure" scheme, was merely a regulative one. That is, the "real factors" regulate the conditions under which certain "ideal factors" can appear in history, but cannot affect the content of the latter. In other words, society determines the presence (Dasein) but not the nature (Sosein) of ideas. The sociology of knowledge, then, is the procedure by which the socio-historical selection of ideational contents is to be studied, it being understood that the contents themselves are independent of socio-historical causation and thus inaccessible to sociological analysis. If one may describe Scheler's method graphically, it is to throw a sizable sop to the dragon of relativity, but only so as to enter the castle of ontological certitude better. Within this intentionally (and inevitably) modest framework Scheler analyzed in considerable detail the manner in which human knowledge is ordered by society. He emphasized that human knowledge is given in society as an a Priori to individual experience, providing the latter with its order of meaning. This order, although it is relative to a particular socio-historical situation, appears to the individual as the natural way of looking at the world. Scheler called this the "relative-natural world view" (relativnat che Weltanschauung) of a society, a concept that may still be regarded as central for the sociology of knowledge. Following Scheler's "invention" of the sociology of knowledge , there was extensive debate in Germany concerning the validity, scope and applicability of the new discipline." Out of this debate emerged one formulation that marked the transposition of the sociology of knowledge into a more nar-

as characteristic not only of an opponent's but of one's own thought as well. With the general concept of ideology the level of the sociology of knowledge is reached-the understanding that no human thought (with only the afore-mentioned exceptions) is immune to the ideologizing influences of its social context.

10 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY By this expansion of the theory of ideology Mannheim sought to abstract its central problem from the context of political usage, and to treat it as a general problem of epistemology and historical sociology. Although Mannheim did not share Scheler's ontological ambitions, he too was uncomfortable with the pan-ideologism into which his thinking seemed to lead him. He coined the term "relationism" (in contradistinction to "relativism") to denote the epistemological perspective of his sociology of knowledge-not a capitulation of thought before the socio-historical relativities, but a sober recognition that knowledge must always be knowledge from a certain position. The influence of Dilthey is probably of great importance at this point in Mannheim's thought-the problem of Marxism is solved by the tools of historicism. Be this as it may, Mannheim believed that ideologizing influences, while they could not be eradicated completely, could be mitigated by the systematic analysis of as many as possible of the varying socially grounded positions. In other words, the object of thought becomes progressively clearer with this accumulation of different perspectives on it. This is to be the task of the sociology of knowledge, which thus is to become an important aid in the quest for any correct understanding of human events. Mannheim believed that different social groups vary greatly in their capacity thus to transcend their own narrow position. He placed his major hope in the "socially unattached intelligentsia" (freischwebende Intelligenz, a term derived from Alfred Weber), a sort of interstitial stratum that he believed to be relatively free of class interests. Mannheim also stressed the power of "utopian" thought, which (like ideology) produces a distorted image of social reality, but which (unlike ideology) has the dynamism to transform that reality into its image of it. Needless to say, the above remarks can in no way do justice to either Scheler's or Mannheim's conception of the sociology of knowledge. This is not our intention here. We have merely indicated some key features of the two conceptions, which have been aptly called, respectively, the "moderate" and "radical" conceptions of the sociology of knowledge.¹³ What is remarkable is that the subsequent development of the so-

INTRODUCTION 11 ciology of knowledge has, to a large extent, consisted of critiques and modifications of these two conceptions. As we have already pointed out, Mannheim's formulation of the sociology of knowledge has continued to set the terms of reference for the discipline in a definitive manner, particularly in English-speaking sociology. The most important American sociologist to have paid serious attention to the sociology of knowledge has been Robert Merton.¹⁴ His discussion of the discipline, which covers two chapters of his major work, has served as a useful introduction to the field for such American sociologists as have been interested in it. Merton constructed a paradigm for the sociology of knowledge, restating its major themes in a compressed and coherent form. This construction is interesting because it seeks to integrate the approach of the sociology of knowledge with that of structural-functional theory. Merton's own concepts of "manifest" and "latent" functions are applied to the sphere of ideation, the distinction being made between the intended, conscious functions of ideas, and the unintended, unconscious ones. While Merton concentrated on the work of Mannheim, who was for him the sociologist of knowledge par excellence, he stressed the significance of the Durkheim school and of the work of Pitirim Sorokin. It is interesting that Merton apparently failed to see the relevance to the sociology of knowledge of certain important developments in American social psychology, such as reference-group theory, which he discusses in a different part of the same work. Talcott Parsons has also commented on the sociology of knowledge.¹⁵ His comment, however, is limited mainly to a critique of Mannheim and does not seek an integration of the discipline within Parsons' own theoretical system. In the latter, to be sure, the "problem of the role of ideas" is analyzed at length, but in a frame of reference quite different from that of either Scheler's or Mannheim's sociology of knowledge. We would, therefore, venture to say that neither Merton nor Parsons has gone in any decisive way beyond the sociology of knowledge as formulated by Mannheim. The same can be said of their critics. To mention only the most vocal one, C. Wright Mills dealt with the sociology of knowl-

12 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY edge in his earlier writing, but in an expository manner and without contributing to its theoretical development. 17 An interesting effort to integrate the sociology of knowledge with a neo-positivist approach to sociology in general is that of Theodor Geiger, who had a great influence on Scandinavian sociology after his emigration from Germany. 18 Geiger returned to a narrower concept of ideology as socially distorted thought and maintained the possibility of overcoming ideology by careful adherence to scientific canons of procedure. The neo-positivist approach to ideological analysis has more recently been continued in German-speaking sociology in the work of Ernst Topitsch, who has emphasized the ideological roots of various philosophical positions. 19 Insofar as the sociological analysis of ideologies constitutes an important part of the sociology of knowledge as defined by Mannheim, there has been a good deal of interest in it in both European and American sociology since World War II. 20 Probably the most far-reaching attempt to go beyond Mannheim in the construction of a comprehensive sociology of knowledge is that of Werner Stark, another continental scholar who has taught in England and the United States. 21 Stark goes farthest in leaving behind Mannheim's focus on the problem of ideology. The task of the sociology of knowledge is not to be the debunking or uncovering of socially produced distortions, but the systematic study of the social conditions of knowledge as such. Put simply, the central problem is the sociology of truth, not the sociology of error. Despite his distinctive approach, Stark is probably closer to Scheler than to Mannheim in his understanding of the relationship between ideas and their social context. Again, it is obvious that we have not tried to give an adequate historical overview of the history of the sociology of knowledge. Furthermore, we have so far ignored developments that might theoretically be relevant to the sociology of knowledge but that have not been so considered by their own protagonists. In other words, we have limited ourselves to developments that, so to speak, sailed under the banner "sociology of knowledge" (considering the theory of ideology to be a part of the latter). This has made one fact very clear. Apart from the epistemological concern of some sociologists

INTRODUCTION 15 thing that Passes for "knowledge" in society. As soon as one states this, one realizes that the focus on intellectual history is ill-chosen, or rather, is ill-chosen if it becomes the central focus of the sociology of knowledge. Theoretical thought, "ideas," Weltanschauungen are not that important in society. Although every society contains these phenomena, they are only part of the sum of what passes for "knowledge." Only a very limited group of people in any society engages in theorizing, in the business of "ideas," and the construction of Weltanschauungen. But everyone in society participates in its "knowledge" in one way or another. Put differently, only a few are concerned with the theoretical interpretation of the world, but everybody lives in a world of some sort. Not only is the focus on theoretical thought unduly restrictive for the sociology of knowledge, it is also unsatisfactory because even this part of socially available "knowledge" cannot be fully understood if it is not placed in the framework of a more general analysis of "knowledge." To exaggerate the importance of theoretical thought in society and history is a natural failing of theorizers. It is then all the more necessary to correct this intellectualistic misapprehension. The theoretical formulations of reality, whether they be scientific or philosophical or even mythological, do not exhaust what is "real" for the members of a society. Since this is so, the sociology of knowledge must first of all concern itself with what people "know" as "reality" in their everyday, non- or pre-theoretical lives. In other words, commonsense "knowledge" rather than "ideas" must be the central focus for the sociology of knowledge. It is precisely this "knowledge" that constitutes the fabric of meanings without which no society could exist. The sociology of knowledge, therefore, must concern itself with the social construction of reality. The analysis of the theoretical articulation of this reality will certainly continue to be a part of this concern, but not the most important part. It will be clear that, despite the exclusion of the epistemological/methodological problem, what we are suggesting here is a far-reaching redefinition of the scope of the sociology of knowledge, much wider than what has hitherto been understood as this discipline.

16 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY The question arises as to what theoretical ingredients ought to be added to the sociology of knowledge to permit its redefinition in the above sense. We owe the fundamental insight into the necessity for this redefinition to Alfred Schutz. Throughout his work, both as philosopher and as sociologist, Schutz concentrated on the structure of the commonsense world of everyday life. Although he himself did not elaborate a sociology of knowledge, he clearly saw what this discipline would have to focus on: All typifications of common-sense thinking are themselves integral elements of the concrete historical sociocultural Lebenswelt within which they prevail as taken for granted and as socially approved. Their structure determines among other things the social distribution of knowledge and its relativity and relevance to the concrete social environment of a concrete group in a concrete historical situation. Here are the legitimate problems of relativism, historicism, and of the so-called sociology of knowledge.²² And again: Knowledge is socially distributed and the mechanism of this distribution can be made the subject matter of a sociological discipline. True, we have a so-called sociology of knowledge. Yet, with very few exceptions, the discipline thus misnamed has approached the problem of the social distribution of knowledge merely from the angle of the ideological foundation of truth in its dependence upon social and, especially, economic conditions, or from that of the social implications of education, or that of the social role of the man of knowledge. Not sociologists but economists and philosophers have studied some of the many other theoretical aspects of the problem.²³ While we would not give the central place to the social distribution of knowledge that Schutz implies here, we agree with his criticism of "the discipline thus misnamed" and have derived from him our basic notion of the manner in which the task of the sociology of knowledge must be redefined. In

SOCIETY AS SUBJECTIVE REALITY 133 norm is subjectively extended. The decisive step comes when the child recognizes that everybody is against soup-spilling, and the norm is generalized to "One does not spill soup"- "one" being himself as part of a generality that includes, in principle, all of society insofar as it is significant to the child. This abstraction from the roles and attitudes of concrete significant others is called the generalized other.⁹ Its formation within consciousness means that the individual now identifies not only with concrete others but with a generality of others, that is, with a society. Only by virtue of this generalized identification does his own self-identification attain stability and continuity. He now has not only an identity vis-d-vis this or that significant other, but an identity in general, which is subjectively apprehended as remaining the same no matter what others, significant or not, are encountered. This newly coherent identity incorporates within itself all the various internalized roles and attitudes-including, among many other things, the self-identification as a the internalization of social reality, are greatly influenced by George work by the so-called symbolic-interactionist school of American sociology.² >We shall indicate in the footnotes how these various ingredients are used in our theoretical formation. We fully realize, of course, that in this use we are not and cannot be faithful to the original intentions of these several streams of social theory themselves. But, as we have already stated, our purpose here is not exegetical, nor even synthesis for the sake of synthesis. We are fully aware that, in various places, we do violence to certain thinkers by integrating their thought into a theoretical formation that some of them might have found quite alien. We would say in justification that historical gratitude is not in itself a scientific virtue. We may cite here some remarks by Talcott Parsons (about whose theory we have serious misgivings, but whose integrative intention we fully share) The primary aim of the study is not to determine and state in summary form what these writers said or believed about the subjects they wrote about. Nor is it to inquire directly with reference to each proposition of their "theories" whether what they have said is tenable in the light of present sociological and related knowledge It is a study in social theory, not theories. Its

18 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY interest is not in the separate and discrete propositions to be found in the works of these men, but in a single body of systematic theoretical reasoning? Our purpose, indeed, is to engage in "systematic theoretical reasoning." It will already be evident that our redefinition of its nature and scope would move the sociology of knowledge from the periphery to the very center of sociological theory. We may assure the reader that we have no vested interest in the label "sociology of knowledge." It is rather our understanding of sociological theory that led us to the sociology of knowledge and guided the manner in which we were to redefine its problems and tasks. We can best describe the path along which we set out by reference to two of the most famous and most influential "marching orders" for sociology. One was given by Durkheim in *The Rules of Sociological Method*, the other by Weber in *Wirtschaft and Gesellschaft*. Durkheim tells us: "The first and most fundamental rule is: Consider social facts as things."²⁷ And Weber observes: "Both for sociology in the present sense, and for history, the object of cognition is the subjective meaning-complex of action."²⁸ These two statements are not contradictory. Society does indeed possess objective facticity. And society is indeed built up by activity that expresses subjective meaning. And, incidentally, Durkheim knew the latter, just as Weber knew the former. It is precisely the dual character of society in terms of objective facticity and subjective meaning that makes its "reality sui generis," to use another key term of Durkheim's. The central question for sociological theory can then be put as follows: How is it possible that subjective meanings become objective facticities? Or, in terms appropriate to the afore-mentioned theoretical positions: How is it possible that

v1 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY repetitiveness inevitable. Thus some problems are viewed within phenomenological brackets in Section I, taken up again in Section II with these brackets removed and with an interest in their empirical genesis, and then taken up once more in Section III on the level of subjective consciousness. We have tried to make this book as readable as possible, but not in violation of its inner logic, and we hope that the reader is pliantly expansive so as to allow me to objectify a great variety of experiences coming my way in the course of my life. Language also typifies experiences, allowing me to subsume them under broad categories in terms of which they have meaning not only to myself but also to my fellowmen. As it typifies, it also anonymizes experiences, for the typified experience can, in principle, be duplicated by anyone falling into the category in question. For instance, have a quarrel with my mother-in-law. This concrete and subjectively unique experience is typified linguistically under the category of "mother-in-law trouble." In this typification it makes sense to myself, to others, and, presumably, to my mother-in-law. The same typification, however, entails anonymity. Not only I but anyone (more accurately, anyone in the category of son-inlaw) can have "mother-in-law trouble." In this way, my biographical experiences are ongoingly subsumed under general orders of meaning that are both objectively and subjectively real. Because of its capacity to transcend the "here and now," language bridges different zones within the reality of everyday life and integrates them into a meaningful whole. The transcendences have spatial, temporal and social dimensions. Through language I can transcend the gap between my manipulatory zone and that of the other, I can synchronize my biographical time sequence with his; and I can converse with him about individuals and collectivities with whom we are not at present in face-to-face interaction. As a result of these transcendences language is capable of "making present" a variety of objects that are spatially, temporally and socially absent from the "here and now." Ipso facto a vast accumulation of experiences and meanings can become objectified in the "here and now." Put simply, through language an entire world can be actualized at any moment. This transcending and integrating power of language is retained when I am not actually conversing with another. Through linguistic objectification, even when "talking to myself" in solitary thought, an entire world can be appresented to me at any moment. As

have remarked before , in this the sociology of knowledge mention only the three most important empirical disciplines that have caused trouble for epistemology. The logical structure of this trouble is basically the same in all cases: How can I be sure, say, of my sociological analysis of American middle-class mores in view of the fact that the categories I use for this analysis are conditioned by historically relative forms of thought, that I myself and everything I think is determined by my genes and by my ingrown hostility to my fellowmen, and that, to cap it all, I am myself a member of the American middle class? Far be it from us to brush aside such questions. All we would contend here is that these questions are not themselves part of the empirical discipline of ..ERR, COD:1..

Preface The present volume is intended as a systematic, theoretical treatise in the sociology of knowledge. It is not intended, therefore, to give a historical survey of the development of this discipline, or to engage in exegesis of various figures in this or other developments in sociological theory, or even to show how a synthesis may be achieved between several of these figures and developments. Nor is there any polemic intent here. Critical comments on other theoretical positions have been introduced (not in the text, but in the Notes) only where they may serve to clarify the present argument. The core of the argument will be found in Sections II and III ("Society as Objective Reality" and "Society as Subjective Reality"), the former containing our basic understanding of the problems of the sociology of knowledge, the latter applying this understanding to the level of subjective consciousness and thereby building a theoretical bridge to the problems of social psychology. Section I contains what might best be described as philosophical prolegomena to the core argument, in terms of a phenomenological analysis of the reality of everyday life ("The Foundations of Knowledge in Everyday Life"). The reader interested only in the sociological argument proper may be tempted to skip this, but he should be warned that certain key concepts employed throughout the argument are defined in Section I. Although our interest is not historical, we have felt obliged to explain why and in what way our conception of the sociology of knowledge differs from what has hitherto been generally understood by this discipline. This we do in the Introduction. At the end, we make some concluding remarks to indicate what we consider to be the "pay-off" of the present enterprise for sociological theory generally and for certain areas of empirical research. The logic of our argument makes a certain measure of

v1 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY repetitiveness inevitable. Thus some problems are viewed within phenomenological brackets in Section I, taken up again in Section II with these brackets removed and with an interest in their empirical genesis, and then taken up once more in Section III on the level of subjective consciousness. We have tried to make this book as readable as possible, but not in violation of its inner logic, and we hope that the reader will understand the reasons for those repetitions that could not be avoided. Ibn ul-'Arabi, the great Islamic mystic, exclaims in one of his poems-"Deliver is pliantly expansive so as to allow me to objectify a great variety of experiences coming my way in the course of my life. Language also typifies experiences, allowing me to subsume them under broad categories in terms of which they have meaning not only to myself but also to my fellowmen. As it typifies, it also anonymizes experiences, for the typified experience can, in principle, be duplicated by anyone falling into the category in question. For instance, have a quarrel with my mother-in-law. This concrete and subjectively unique experience is typified linguistically under the category of "mother-in-law trouble." In this typification it makes sense to myself, to others, and, presumably, to my mother-in-law. The same typification, however, entails anonymity. Not only I but anyone (more accurately, anyone in the category of son-inlaw) can have "`mother-in-law trouble." In this way, my biographical experiences are ongoingly subsumed under general orders of meaning that are both objectively and subjectively real. Because of its capacity to transcend the "here and now," language bridges different zones within the reality of everyday life and integrates them into a meaningful whole. The transcendences have spatial, temporal and social dimensions. Through language I can transcend the gap between my manipulatory zone and that of the other, I can synchronize my biographical time sequence with his; and I can converse with him about individuals and collectivities with whom we are not at present in face-to-face interaction. As a result of these transcendences language is capable of "making present" a variety of objects that are spatially, temporally and socially absent from the "here and now." Ipso facto a vast accumulation of experiences and meanings can become objectified in the "here and now." Put simply, through language an entire world can be actualized at any moment. This transcending and integrating power of language is retained when I am not actually conversing with another. Through linguistic objectification , even when "talking to myself" in solitary thought, an entire world can be appresented to me at any moment. As

INTRODUCTION 7 fascination of the scheme prevailed despite the fact that much of the sociology of knowledge was explicitly formulated in opposition to Marxism and that different positions have been taken within it regarding the nature of the relationship between the two components of the scheme. Nietzschean ideas were less explicitly continued in the sociology of knowledge, but they belong very much to its general intellectual background and to the "mood" within which it arose. Nietzsche's anti-idealism, despite the differences in content: not unlike Marx's in form, added additional perspectives on human thought as an instrument in the struggle for survival and power? Nietzsche developed his own theory of "false consciousness" in his analyses of the social significance of deception and self-deception, and of illusion as a necessary condition of life. Nietzsche's concept of "resentment" as a generative factor for certain types of human thought was taken over directly by Scheler. Most generally, though, one can say that the sociology of knowledge represents a specific application of what Nietzsche aptly called the "art of mistrust." Historicism, especially as expressed in the work of Wilhelm Dilthey, immediately preceded the sociology of knowledge. The dominant theme here was an overwhelming sense of the relativity of all perspectives on human events, that is, of the inevitable historicity of human thought. The historicist insistence that no historical situation could be understood except in its own terms could readily be translated into an emphasis on the social situation of thought. Certain historicist concepts, such as "situational determination" (*Standortsgebundenheit*) and "seat in life" (*Sitz im Leben*) could be directly translated as referring to the "social location" of thought. More generally, the historicist heritage of the sociology of knowledge predisposed the latter toward a strong interest in history and the employment of an essentially historical method—a fact, incidentally, that also made for its marginality in the milieu of American sociology. Scheler's interest in the sociology of knowledge, and in sociological questions generally, was essentially a passing episode during his philosophical career.¹⁰ His final aim was the establishment of a philosophical anthropology that would

that this particular constellation has dominated the sociology of knowledge so far. We would argue that, as a result, the full theoretical significance of the 86 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY credit is not liquidated in the competitive body of knowledge. In contemporary society, we continue to have such conflicts (socio-economic as well as cognitive) between orthodox medicine and such rivals as chiropractic, homeopathy or Christian Science. In advanced industrial societies, with their immense economic surplus allowing large numbers of individuals to devote themselves full-time to even the obscurest pursuits, pluralistic competition between subuniverses of meaning of every conceivable sort becomes the normal state of affairs. With the establishment of subuniverses of meaning a variety of perspectives on the total society emerges, each viewing the latter from the angle of one subuniverse. The chiropractor has a different angle on society than the medical school professor, the poet than the businessman, the Jew than the gentile, and so on. It goes without saying that this multiplication of perspectives greatly increases the problem of establishing a stable symbolic canopy for the entire society. Each perspective, with whatever appendages of theories or even Weltanschauungen, will be related to the concrete social interests of the group that holds it. This does not mean, however, that the various perspectives, let alone the theories or Weltanschauungen, are nothing but mechanical reflections of the social interests. Especially on the theoretical level it is quite possible for knowledge to attain a great deal of detachment from the biographical and social interests of the knower. Thus there may be tangible social reasons why Jews have become preoccupied with certain scientific enterprises, but it is impossible to predict scientific positions in terms of their being held by Jews or non-Jews. In other words, the scientific universe of meaning is capable of attaining a good deal of autonomy as against its own social base. Theoretically, though in practice there will be great variations, this holds with any body of knowledge, even with cognitive perspectives on society. What is more, a body of knowledge, once it is raised to the level of a relatively autonomous subuniverse of meaning, has the capacity to act back upon the collectivity that has produced it. For instance, Jews may become social scientists because they have special problems in society as Jews. But once they have been initiated into the social-scientific universe of

PREFACE Vii How much we owe to the late Alfred Schutz will become clear in various parts of the following treatise. However, we would like to acknowledge here the influence of Schutz's teaching and writing on our thinking. Our understanding of Weber has profited immensely from the teaching of Carl Mayer (Graduate Faculty, New School for Social Research), as that of Durkheim and his school has from the interpretations of Albert Salomon (also of the Graduate Faculty). Luckmann, recollecting many fruitful conversations during a period of joint teaching at Hobart College and on other occasions, wishes to express his appreciation of the thinking of Friedrich Tenbruck (now at the University of Frankfurt). Berger would like to thank Kurt Wolff (Brandeis University) and Anton Zijderveld (University of Leiden) for their continuing critical interest in the progress of the ideas embodied in this work. It is customary in projects of this sort to acknowledge various intangible contributions of wives, children and other private associates of more doubtful legal standing. If only to contravene this custom, we have been tempted to dedicate this book to a certain Jodler of Brand/Vorarlberg. However, we wish to thank Brigitte Berger (Hunter College) and Benita Luckmann (University of Freiburg), not for any scientifically irrelevant: performances of private roles, but for their critical observations as social scientists and for their steadfast refusal to be easily impressed. Peter L. Berget' GRADUATE FACULTY NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH Thomas Luckmann UNIVERSITY OF FRANKFURT

INTRODUCTION 13 of knowledge, the empirical focus of attention has been almost exclusively on the sphere of ideas, that is, of theoretical thought. This is also true of Stark, who subtitled his major work on the sociology of knowledge or in any other area. We consider the sociology of knowledge to be part of the empirical discipline of sociology. Our purpose here is, of course, a theoretical one. But our theorizing refers to the empirical discipline in its concrete problems, not to the philosophical investigation of the foundations of the empirical discipline. In sum, our enterprise is one of sociological theory, not of the methodology of sociology. Only in one section of our treatise (the one immediately following this introduction) do we go beyond sociological theory proper, but this is done for reasons that have little to do with epistemology, as will be explained at the time. We must also, however, redefine the task of the sociology of knowledge on the empirical level, that is, as theory geared to the empirical discipline of sociology. As we have seen, on this level the sociology of knowledge has been concerned with intellectual history, in the sense of the history of ideas. Again, we would stress that this is, indeed, a very important focus of sociological inquiry. Furthermore, in contrast with our exclusion of the epistemological/methodological problem, we concede that this focus belongs with the sociology of knowledge. We would argue, however, that the problem of "ideas," including the special problem of ideology, constitutes only part of the larger problem of the sociology of knowledge, and not a central part at that. The sociology of knowledge must concern itself with every-

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY A TREATISE IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF
KNOWLEDGE P[1] [RL.BERGER AND THOMAS ~UCKMNN~ ANCHOR BOOKS A DIVISION OF
RANDOM HOUSE, INC. New York

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SOCIETY AS OBJECTIVE REALITY 57 common?z While this reciprocal typification is not yet institutionalization (since, there only being two individuals, there is no possibility of a typology of actors), it is clear that institutionalization is already present in nucleo. At this stage one may ask what gains accrue to the two individuals from this development. The most important gain is that each will be able to predict the other's actions. Concomitantly, the interaction of both becomes predictable. The "There he goes again" becomes a "There we go again." This relieves both individuals of a considerable amount of tension. They save time and effort, not only in whatever external tasks they might be engaged in separately or jointly, but in terms of their respective psychological economies. Their life together is now defined by a widening sphere of taken-for-granted routines. Many actions are possible on a low level of attention. Each action of one is no longer a source of astonishment and potential danger to the other. Instead, much of what goes on takes on the triviality of what, to both, will be everyday life. This means that the two individuals are constructing a background, in the sense discussed before, which will serve to stabilize both their separate actions and their interaction. The construction of this background of routine in turn makes possible a division of labor between them, opening the way for innovations, which demand a higher level of attention. The division of labor and the innovations will lead to new habituations, further widening the background common to both individuals. In other words, a social world will be in process of construction, containing within it the roots of an expanding institutional order. Generally, all actions repeated once or more tend to be habitualized to some degree, just as all once or more tend to be habitualized to some degree, just as all actions observed by another necessarily involve some typification on his part. However, for the kind of reciprocal typification just described to occur there must be a continuing social situation in which the habitualized actions of two or more individuals interlock. Which actions are likely to be reciprocally typified in this manner? The general answer is, those actions that are relevant to both A and B within their common situation. The areas likely to be relevant in this way will, of course, vary in different

14 THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY The sociology of knowledge, along with the other epistemological troublemakers among the empirical sciences, will "feed" problems to this methodological inquiry. It cannot solve these problems within its own proper frame of reference. We therefore exclude from the sociology of knowledge the epistemological and methodological problems that bothered both of its major originators. By virtue of this exclusion we are setting ourselves apart from both Scheler's and Mannheim's conception of the discipline, and from the later sociologists of knowledge (notably those with a neo-positivist orientation) who shared the conception in this respect. Throughout the present work we have firmly bracketed any epistemological or methodological questions about the validity of sociological analysis, in the sociology of knowledge itself or in any other area. We consider the sociology of knowledge to be part of the empirical discipline of sociology. Our purpose here is, of course, a theoretical one. But our theorizing refers to the empirical discipline in its concrete problems, not to the philosophical investigation of the foundations of the empirical discipline. In sum, our enterprise is one of sociological theory, not of the methodology of sociology. Only in one section of our treatise (the one immediately following this introduction) do we go beyond sociological theory proper, but this is done for reasons that have little to do with epistemology, as will be explained at the time. We must also, however, redefine the task of the sociology of knowledge on the empirical level, that is, as theory geared to the empirical discipline of sociology. As we have seen, on this level the sociology of knowledge has been concerned with intellectual history, in the sense of the history of ideas. Again, we would stress that this is, indeed, a very important focus of sociological inquiry. Furthermore, in contrast with our exclusion of the epistemological/methodological problem, we concede that this focus belongs with the sociology of knowledge. We would argue, however, that the problem of "ideas," including the special problem of ideology, constitutes only part of the larger problem of the sociology of knowledge, and not a central part at that. The sociology of knowledge must concern itself with every-

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The authors open up vistas which provide a major breakthrough in the sociology of knowledge and sociological theory generally." -George Simpson, American Sociological Review COVER UEt11(,N BY ELLEN ELCHLEPP
US \$11.95 / \$17.95 CAN ISBN 0-385-05898-5

SOCIETY AS SUBJECTIVE REALITY

lia get to the station," and "Fine, darling, have a good day at the office" implies an entire world within which these apparently simple propositions make sense. By virtue of this implication the exchange confirms the subjective reality of this world. If this is understood, one will readily see that the great part, if not all, of everyday conversation maintains subjective reality. Indeed, its massivity is achieved by the accumulation and consistency of casual conversation-conversation that can afford to be casual precisely because it refers to the routines of casual precisely because it refers to the routines of a taken-for-granted world. The loss of casualness signals a break in the routines and, at least potentially, a threat to the taken-for-granted reality. Thus one may imagine the effect on casualness of an exchange like this: "Well, it's time for me to get to the station," "Fine, darling, don't forget to take along your gun." At the same time that the conversational apparatus ongoingly maintains reality, it ongoingly modifies it. Items are dropped and added, weakening some sectors of what is still being taken for granted and reinforcing others. Thus the subjective reality of something that is never talked about comes to be shaky. It is one thing to engage in an embarrassing sexual act. It is quite another to talk about it beforehand or afterwards. Conversely, conversation gives firm contours to items previously apprehended in a fleeting and unclear manner. One may have doubts about one's religion; these doubts become real in a quite different way as one discusses them. One then "talks oneself into" these doubts; they are objectified as reality within one's own consciousness. Generally speaking, the conversational apparatus maintains reality by "talking through" various elements of experience and allocating them a definite place in the real world. This reality-generating potency of conversation is already given in the fact of linguistic objectification. We have seen how language objectifies the world, transforming the a rhei of experience into a cohesive order. In the establishment of this order language realizes a world, in the double sense of apprehending and producing it. Conversation is the actualizing of this realizing efficacy of language in the face-to-face situations of individual existence. In conversation the objectifications of language become objects of individual con

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