ROUTLEDGE REVIVALS

Towards a Critical Sociology

An essay on commonsense and emancipation

Zygmunt Bauman

Routledge Revivals

Towards a Critical Sociology

For the better part of its history sociology shared with commonsense its assumption of the 'nature-like' character of society—and consequently developed as the science of unfreedom. In this powerful and engaging work, first published in 1976, Professor Bauman outlines the historical roots of such a science and describes how the contemporary trends in sociology emerging from phenomenology and existentialism did little to challenge this preoccupation. Rather, he claims, they deepened and extended it by stressing the key role of commonsense, particularly the ways in which it is sustained and embedded in the routines and assumptions of everyday life.

Professor Bauman sets out the form of a critical sociology, based on emancipatory reason. His main concerns are the 'validity' of commonsense and the truth of a theory which would resolve to transcend the limitations of commonsensical evidence. Aimed at human liberation, this book is designed to question the very same routines and assumptions of everyday life informed by commonsense.

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Zygmunt Bauman

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TOWARDS A CRITICAL SOCIOLOGY

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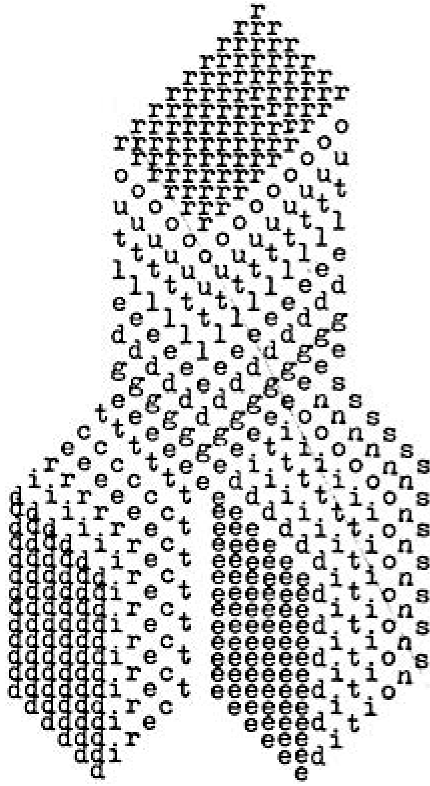

TOWARDS A CRITICAL SOCIOLOGY
An essay on commonsense and emancipation

ZYGMUNT BAUMN

If a decent society has been a possibility for at least a very long time, the real problem becomes to explain why humanity did not or perhaps could not want one

Barrington Moore, Jr

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Chapter 1

THE SCIENCE OF UNFREEDOM

‘SECOND NATURE’ DEFINED

Whatever may be currently said about the form sociology ought to take, sociology as we know it (and as it has been known ever since it was given this name) was born of the discovery of the ‘second nature’.

‘Nature’ is a cultural concept. It stands for that irremovable component of human experience which defies human will and sets un-encroachable limits to human action. Nature is, therefore, a by-product of the thrust for freedom. Only when men set out self-consciously to make their condition different from what they experience, do they need a name to connote the resistance they encounter. In this sense nature, as a concept, is a product of human practice which transcends the routine and the habitual, and sails on to uncharted waters, guided by an image of what-is-not-yet-but-ought-to-be.

The realm of unfreedom is the only immutable meaning of ‘nature’ which is rooted in human experience. All other features predicated upon the concept are once, or more than once, removed from the ‘directly given’, being outcomes of the theoretical processing of elementary experience. For instance, nature is the opposite of culture, in so far as culture is the sphere of human creativity and design; nature is inhuman, in so far as ‘being human’ includes setting goals and ideal standards; nature is meaningless, in so far as bestowing meanings is an act of will and the constitution of freedom; nature is determined, in so far as freedom consists in leaving determination behind.

Neither the images nor models of nature prevalent at any given time can be considered necessary attributes of the concept. The ‘thematic content’ of the concept (as Gerald Holton would put it) (1) has changed in the last century almost beyond recognition. The intrinsic order and harmony of the law-abiding cosmos has been replaced by an impenetrable labyrinth which, only thanks to the scientist’s chalk marks, becomes passable; discovery of the ‘objective order’ has been replaced by the imposition of intelligible order upon meaningless diversity. The one element which has survived, and, indeed, has emerged unscathed from all these ontological revo-lutions, is the experience of constraint effectively placed on human action and imagery. And this is, perhaps, the only ‘essence’ of nature, pared to the bones of theoretically unprocessed pristine experience.

There is, however, yet another sense in which nature can be conceived as a by-product of human practice. Nature is given to human experience as the only medium upon which human action is turned. It is present in human action from its very beginning, from its very conception as a design of a form yet to be objectified by action; nature is what mediates between the ideal design and its objectified replica. Human action would not be possible but for the presence of nature. Nature is experienced as much as the locus, as it is perceived

as the ultimate limit of human action. Men experience nature in the same dual, equivocal way in which the sculptor encounters his formless lump of stone: it lies in front of him, compliant and inviting, waiting to absorb and to incarnate his creative ideas—but its willingness to oblige is highly selective; in fact, the stone has made its own choice well before the sculptor grasps his chisel. The stone, one could say, has classified the sculptor's ideas into attainable and unattainable, reasonable and foolish. To be free to act, the sculptor must learn the limits of his freedom: he must learn how to read the map of his freedom charted upon the grain of the rock.

The two elements of experience which combine into the idea of nature are, in fact, in dialectical unity. There would be no discovery of constraints were there no action guided by images which transcend these constraints; but there would be no such action were not the human condition experienced as enclosed in such a tight frame. The two elements condition each other; more than that, they can present themselves to men either together or not at all. Constraint and freedom are married to each other for better or worse and their wedlock would be broken only if a return to the naive primaeval unity of man and his condition (rendering nature 'un-problematic' again) were conceivable. On the other hand, the two elements may be, and indeed are, perceived separately and hence articulated independently, if not in opposition to each other. Undialectically, each success lends epistemological support to the notion of freedom without constraint. Equally undialectically, every defeat lends plausibility to an idea of constraint which exists without being tested and brought into experiential relief by intractable human action. When processed theoretically, this original error has been forged time and again into a false dilemma. The dilemma itself remains constant as the existential experience itself, though its names vary as does the cultural code. It has been called individual and society, voluntarism and determinism, control and sys tem, and many other names. Whatever its names, however, it invariably leads on to the arid soil of undialectics on which the living tree of human experience can all but perish.

It is almost four centuries since Francis Bacon perceptively grasped the elusive dialectics of nature, as it appears to acting humans: Nature is only subdued by submission. At the time Bacon wrote these words the assumption that nature was something to be conquered the subdued did not require more arguing perhaps than other commonsensical beliefs did. By that time, Bacon's readers had emerged from that unproblematic 'unity of living and active humanity with the natural, inorganic conditions of their metabolic exchange with nature, and hence their appropriation of nature', which 'did not require explanation', as it was not a result of 'a historic process', (2) they had already found themselves, as a result of the history of their own making (though not of their own knowledge), face to face with the conditions of their metabolism, confronting them as 'something alien and objective'. (2) They had already set themselves individual goals which transcended their social conditions, and hence put the flexibility of those conditions to the test; in the process, they discovered this stubborn and stiff resistance from which they coined the image of Nature as an active, self-governing and self-sustained partner of their condition. Thus nature came to be 'directly given' in their experience. Bacon's was the resigned admission that nature was there to stay, and that its presence was not to be put in question. The conditions which made for this presence—the situation in which the individual makes his way through the social world alone, left to himself and forced into autonomy—were neither penetrated, nor considered problematic. Bacon combined a call to surrender with advice on how to make

the best of the situation which followed it. He suggested that serfdom could be turned into mastery; and knowledge was assigned the role of the magic wand which would accomplish the transformation. The structure of the stone is not of the sculptor's making; he can still make the stone accept his intentions, but only by learning what the stone will not accept. One has only to extend this metaphor so as to embrace the totality of the human condition. Life then becomes the art of the possible, and knowledge is there to teach us how to distinguish the possible from idle dreams.

Since Bacon at least, knowledge has presided over the process of mediation between freedom and the limitations of human action. The most prestigious kind of knowledge of all (sometimes, indeed, portrayed as the only valid knowledge), science, has established itself in our culture as the study of the limits of human freedom, pursued in order to enhance the exploitation of the remaining field of action. Indeed, science has been constituted more by the elimination of the impossible, the suppression of the unrealistic, the exclusion of the morbid questions, than by the variegated and changing content of its positive preoccupations. Science, as we know it, can be defined as knowledge of unfreedom.

Hegel's celebrated definition of freedom as comprehended necessity aptly epitomized the subtle evolution of Bacon's idea in the process of its absorption by commonsensical lore. To be free means to know one's potentiality; knowing potentiality is a negative knowledge, i.e. knowledge of what one is prevented from doing. Proper knowledgo can assure that a man will never experience his constraints as oppression; it is the unknown, unsuspected necessity which is confronted as suffering, frustration, and humiliating dofeat. But it is only unenlightened action which exposes necessity as an alien, hostile, and thoroughly negative force. An informed action, on the contrary, needs necessity as its positive foundation. A genuinely free action would not be possible were there no necessity: free action means reaching one's ends by a chain of appropriate acts; but it is the necessary laws connecting acts with their effects, which make them 'appropriate' to the intended ends. And thus the mutual dependence between freedom and necessity has two complementary aspects. The negative aspect is revealed by ignorant action; it is most fully exposed by a blinded moth crashing against a windowpane. But for an informed action the necessary is no longer a negative force; on the contrary, it enters the action itself as an indispensable condition of its success. The moment it has become calculable—known—the necessary is a positive condition of freedom.

To Weber the necessary was the condition of rationality, Indeed, rational action required unfreedom for it to be possible at all. It is the rules, which confront each individual cog in the bureaucratic machine with all the merciless, indomitable power of nature—the rules which make the external walls of the action safely and predictably stable—which render bureaucracy rational, which permit the bureaucrats carefully to select means for the ends, secure in the knowledge that the means will indeed bring forth the objectives they wish, or are told, to achieve, The rational action commences when the rules are 'already there'; it does not account for the origins of rules, explain why rules remain strong, or why they take on the shape they possess. The question of the origins of rules, of the origins of the environmental necessity of bureaucratic action, cannot be phrased in the language of rationality. If asked, however, it will invite an answer similar to that given to the parallel question 'why is nature there?' It will inevitably point to the irrational as much as the latter question points to God. 'If rationality is embodied in administration.., legislative

force must be irrational.' (4) Inasmuch as science eliminates questions which lead to God, the scientifically informed action eliminates acts which lead to irrationality. Both employ nature, or nature-like necessity, as their lever. The price they willingly pay for the gain in efficiency is the agreement never to question its legitimacy. To be sure, this legitimacy cannot be questioned by science, just as it cannot be challenged by a rational action. Both are what they are in so far as nature remains the realm of omnipotent and unchallengeable necessity.

Thus freedom boils down, for all practical purposes, to the possibility of acting rationally. It is the rational action which embodies both the negative and the positive aspects of freedom. Only by acting rationally can one keep painful constraints at a safe distance, at which they can neither inflict pain not incur wrath; a man buttresses, simultaneously, his hopes and calculations on the secure foundations of immutable, and so comfortingly predictable, laws. Knowledge is the crucial factor in both aspects of this freedom-rationality. Knowledge means emancipation. It transforms fetters into tools of action, prison walls into horizons of freedom, fear into curiosity, hate into love. Knowing one's limits means reconciliation. There is no need to be scared now, and nature, once feared or painful if ignored, may be enthusiastically embraced as the house of freedom. Thus, it is Nature, the hostess, who sets the rules of the game, and who defines this freedom.

'Everything that can be, is' proclaimed Buffon in his 'Histoire naturelle'. 'Opposed to nature, contrary to reason'—was Diderot's logical conclusion in his 'Voyage de Bougainville'. The natural, for him, is not just the inevitable and unavoidable: it is the appropriate, the apposite, the good, the sacred, the undefiable. Nature supplies not just the boundaries of reasonable action and thought: it supplies reason itself. All valid knowledge is a reflection of nature. The power of man consists in his ability to 'know' what he cannot do. Science is there to teach him exactly this. This is the only way in which science 'is' power.

It took just one little step to cast this reflective knowledge already established in the role of the linchpin of freedom, as the pattern for settling human affairs. Nature is 'a living power, immense, which embraces everything, animates everything'—eulogized Buffon; including man himself—Hume added the finishing touch. And thus we learn from the 'Treatise of Human Nature' that the only science of man is Human Nature. In 'An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding' conclusions are drawn, which amount to no less than a unilateral declaration of independence proclaimed on behalf of sociology, the new science to come and to crown the rapidly rising edifice of human knowledge: 'There is a great uniformity among the actions of men, in all nations and ages'; 'human nature remains still the same, in its principles and operations'; 'Mankind are so much the same, in all times and places, that history informs us of nothing new or strange in this particular'. With such stubborn, unflinching uniformity extending over all time and all space, the use of nature's name to describe human properties is fully warranted. And since science is knowledge of what nature is not, a science of man and his affairs is feasible and, indeed, necessary, if men wish to attain freedom—both negative and positive—in determining their own conditions. It goes without saying that human nature, now scientifically revealed and laid bare, will determine the boundaries and the content of this freedom.

The study of human nature, however, posed a problem which had never been faced when non-human nature was the sole object of inquiry. The latter is continually at peace

with itself; it never rebels against its own laws—its harmony and uniformity have been pre-set and built into its very mechanism. As Hegel would have said, Nature (referring to non-human nature) has no history; to wit, it knows no individual, unique, wayward, out-of-the-ordinary events. This view of nature found its foremost expression, as Peter Gay recently pointed out, in the vehement passion with which the preachers on behalf of the Scientific Age fought the concept of miracle. To explain an inexplicable occurrence, Diderot 'would seek naturalistic reasons—a practical joke, a conspiracy, or perhaps his own madness'. To Hume, a miracle would have been 'a violation of the laws of nature, and such a violation is by definition impossible. If a miracle seems to occur, it must be treated either as a mendacious report or as a natural event for which, at present, no scientific explanation is available'.(5) There was, of course, no particular reason why this uncompromising attitude could not be extended to embrace the totality of human deeds. It was, in fact, extended in such a way, but much later, in the behaviouristic idiom of the science of man, which pushed the sober incredulity of science in general, tested on non-human objects, to its logical limits. Still, the behaviouristic programme, bold and iconoclastic as it seemed to those who drafted it and to those who opposed it alike, was by no means an odd denizen of the castle of science. No behaviourist denies that human action may be irrational; but the one thing every behaviourist will emphatically reject is the possibility of conduct, rational or irrational, which has no cause, i.e., which could be different from what it was, given the conditions under which it took place.

The only difference between human and non-human occurrences consists, therefore, in the following: in human affairs a dangerous and portentous chasm tends to appear, unknown to non-human nature, between human conduct and nature's commandments. In the case of nonhuman phenomena, nature itself, without human intervention, takes care of the harmony between the necessary and the actual, the identity of the real and the good; in the human case, however, the gap between the two must be bridged artificially, and requires sustained and conscious effort. (Adam, we remember, was the only creation of God, of whom He did not assert a fortiori: it was good…). As Louis de Bonald asserted in 'Théorie de l'education sociale et de l'administration publique', 'Nature creates society, men rule the government. Since Nature is essentially perfect, it creates, or intends to create, a perfect society; since he is essentially depraved, man plays havoc with administration or tends constantly to botch it'. Knowledge of natural verdicts, followed and supported by the respect for what is known, is the stuff of which the bridge linking the actual to the necessary, the real to the good, may and should be constructed.

In his selfishness, avarice, irrationality, foolishness, man is as 'determined' by his own nature as he is in the most glorious moments of the law-abiding citizen's euphoria. The second is not, therefore, automatically assured. It will not become the rule unless an effort is made to tip the balance towards the laws which Nature has fixed for the society.

And thus, for the first time, the individual's nature is pitted against the nature of the society. Emerging from the pre-modern 'natural unity' of man with his corporative society and thrown into a fluid, under-determined situation which called for choice and decision, men articulated their novel experience (or had it articulated for them) as the clash between the individual and the society. And so society took off on its long, and still continuing, career of the 'second nature', in which it is perceived by commonsensical wisdom as an alien, uncompromising, demanding and high-handed power—exactly like non-human

nature. To abide by the rules of reason, to behave rationally, to achieve success, to be free, man now had to accommodate himself to the 'second nature' as much as he had tried to accommodate himself to the first. He may be still reluctant to do this: people do time and again refuse to be reasonable. If it were the law of non-human nature which was challenged by man's default, nature itself would soon bring the delinquent into line. If, however, it were the law fixed by nature for humans which was defied, the task would have to be performed by humans. 'Whoever shall refuse to obey the general will', Jean Jacques Rousseau said in his 'Social Contract', 'must be constrained by the whole body of his fellow citizens to do so: which is no more than to say that it may be necessary to compel a man to be free.'

Who, however, is to do the compelling? And what power will lend legitimation to his act? Rousseau's answer is simultaneously pre-scientific (certainly pre-sociological) and anticipative of discoveries at which sociology will wearily arrive after a century or more of carefree, though dedicated, dalliance with the idea of an unproblematically nature-like society. Rousseau was in fact strikingly modern, by our own standards, in portraying the commanding authority of society as composed of the multitude of individual wills of 'homini socii', and in defining this authority, accordingly, as general will; it is the wording alone, not the substance, which will appear to us as archaic under closer scrutiny. He was, however, pre-scientific in pinning his hope of the ultimate reconciliation between unruly individual nature and the demands of the supra-individual entity on political action, leaving no room for the scholar, the pundit, the educator, or for that matter, for specifically scientific cognition. The one thing which really counts is the determination of the Sovereign, the Ruler, the Legislator to crush whatever resistance he may encounter on his way to 'change the very stuff of human nature; to transform each individual…. To take from a man his own proper powers, and to give him in exchange powers foreign to him as a person, which he can use only if he is helped by the rest of community'. It is still an exhortation to society to become a supreme and merciless (though benevolent) power, rather than a recognition that, indeed, it has become one, and has been one for a long time. And it is an expression of hope that the clash between human intentions and the mysterious, hostile force called society which people keep experiencing, is not, or should not be, a timeless condition; it can be explained away as a clash between 'wrong' intentions and 'badly' organized society; and such a clash, together with ensuing sufferings, may well disappear if the wrongs are done away with. 'Scientific sociology' will reject both assumptions. It will assume instead that society's being a supreme reality to men is not a matter of human, or even of super-human, choice. And it will accept that the tension between untamed human selfishness and the survival needs of the social totality (one which Blaise Pascal sought to reconcile by religious faith) is there to stay. Last but not least, having assigned to the 'second reality' the dignity of the only source of reason, it will deprive itself of the method of distinguishing between the good and the actual, slowly but surely blending the good and the real into one, until the idea of Truth as the locus of highest authority (and, for science, the only one) will declare the good off limits.

And so the ground will be swept clean for the triumphant ascent of the positive science of the social—that science which views 'society' as nature in its own right, as orderly and regular as the 'first nature' appears to the natural scientist, and legislating for human action as much as the 'first nature', thanks to the natural scientist. The post-revolutionary generation

of philosophers plunged into the new faith with the relish and impetuous intolerance of new converts. It fell upon Claude de Saint-Simon to articulate the catechism of the new creed:

> The supreme law of progress of the human spirit carries along and dominates everything; men are but its instruments. Although this force derives from us, it is no more in our power to withhold ourselves from its influence, or master its action, than to change at will the primary inpulse which makes our planet revolve around the sun. All we can do is to obey this law by accounting for the course it directs, instead of being blindly pushed by it; and, incidentally, it is precisely in this that the great philosophic development reserved for the present era will consist. ('L'organisateur')

The present era will be one of discovery rather than spurious invention. 'Nature has suggested to men, in each period, the most suitable form of government…. The natural course of things has created the institutions necessary for each age of the body social' ('Psychologie sociale'). And, therefore, the most important conclusion of all: 'One does not create a system of social organization. One perceives the new chain of ideas and interests which has been formed, and points it out—that is all' ('L'organisateur'). Almost a century later, aware of the tremendous explosion of social science these ideas ignited, Emile Durkheim will ask rhetorically:

> To think scientifically—is not it to think objectively, that is, to divest our notions of what is exclusively human in them in order to make them a reflection—as accurate as possible—of things as they are? Is it not, in a word, to make the human intelligence bow before facts?(6)

Two observations are appropriate at this point. From the start, the 'second nature' had been introduced to intellectual discourse not as an historical phenomenon, a puzzle to be explained, but as an aprioric assumption. To express the unqualified supremacy of society's revolutions over human will, Saint-Simon used no less grandiose a metaphor than that of the revolutions of celestial bodies, which at that time seemed entirely beyond the reach of human praxis. It had been accepted without question that their social world confronted men the way nature does—as something they could live with, and sometimes even turn to their advantage, but only if they unconditionally surrendered to its command. The intellectual curiosity of sociologists was subsequently drawn to disclosing the mechanism of this supremacy and assiduously recording the rules it posits. When human practice was brought into the focus of their attention, sociologists kept it consistently inside the analytical field already confined by the previously accepted premiss. This methodological decision contained, as we would later see, numerous advantages. It supplied the scholar with clear, unequivocal criteria of the normal, as distinct from the odd and irregular; the unproblematic as distinct from the problematic; the realistic as distinct from the utopian; the functional as distinct from the disruptive or deviant; the rational as distinct from the irrational. In short, it supplied sociologists with the totality of analytical concepts and models which constituted their discipline as an autonomous intellectual discourse. Within this discipline human practical activity was irrevocably assigned the role of dependent variable. On the other hand, the above-mentioned assumption offered the practitioners of the discourse it

generated a relatively wide territory of theoretical exploration and disagreement, which has sustained the intellectual versatility of the discipline without bringing it anywhere near a disturbance of communication such as could lead to a retrospective questioning of the initial assumption. The most vehement arguments rarely transgressed the boundary of legiti-mate discussion as drawn by the 'second nature' assumption. Sociologists quarrelled ferociously about the right answer to the question whose propriety they rarely doubted: what is this second nature, which brackets, and provides a framework for, human life activity?

Second—in passing, and perhaps without noticing it—the programme sketched by Saint-Simon and later subscribed to in practice, if not in words, by several successive generations of sociologists, was logically founded on two acts of conflation of problems, the identity of which is by no means self-evident, and, therefore, must be demonstrated to be accepted. First, it has been assumed that the status of the 'we' or 'men' is nothing more than the status of the 'I'or 'man'. The product of multiplication may be larger than its factors, but it belongs to the same set of unmbers as its factors; the act of multiplication does not endow the product with attributes which cannot be traced back and ascribed to the factors themselves. In the later development of sociology, the powerful current of behavioural pluralism (aptly called this by Don Martindale) accepted this idiom literally, lock, stock, and barrel. Most 'holists', with Durkheim as their most prominent spokesman and pattern-setter, having anchored the 'second nature' to the 'group', hastened to emphasize that the group 'is not reducible' to its members, however numerous they may be. In practice, they have been willing to accede the group's reducibility in all respects but one; no number of individuals, however large, can stand up to the power of the group and defy its supremacy. In short, the 'group' is nature all right, and its laws, even if—in some intricate way—of human making, are not subject to human deliberate manipulation. Both currents, therefore, agreed to conflate the 'we' with the 'I', and consequently felt free to reason from one to the other. Thus Saint Simon, in a somewhat crude version of later, subtler exercises, takes the problem of the individual's experience of his impotence against society as being identical to, and conjointly explicable with, the assumed impotence of society ('men') against its own 'supreme laws of progress' ('the group'). This something which makes us and me alike in experiencing our and my impotence, stands, in a sense, above the realm of human—individual or collective—action. Laws are as they are, and to ascribe their content to somebody's intentional activity would be equal to surreptitiously reviving magical thinking in the guise of scholarship. 'Positive consciousness', contrary to Comte's hopes, did not remove God from the human universe and its conditions of intelligibility. It only gave God a new name.

On the other hand, there is a conflation of the task placed before the student of human affairs with the alleged existential status of man in society. Summing up Saint-Simon's programme, Durkheim called the scholars of the social to 'bow before facts'. These facts, in Durkheim's vocabulary, are moral commands, constitutive of the 'collective consciousness' of 'the group'. But this is precisely what any man, in Durkheim's view (and in view of most sociologists) is doomed to do all his life. The 'second nature' transcends human intelligence, represented at its highest in the activity of scholars, as uncompromisingly and relentlessly as it does the practical potential of the individual. However faithful sociologists remain to Kant's warning against drawing norms from facts, this is exactly what they do in the case under discussion: 'the fact' is, that society is to men a 'second nature', i.e., as unchallengeable

and beyond their control as non-human nature is; therefore, the 'norm' for the scholar is to treat society as such, to wit, not to attempt anything other than a 'reflection—as accurate as possible—of things as they are'. Criteria of realism and rationality are identical in both cases; scholars must succumb to the same limitations which befall all humans, whether or not they exercise their intellectual powers in reflection upon their predicament. Thinking does not engender a qualitatively distinct situation. If anything, it helps the 'second nature' to actualize its intrinsic tendencies more smoothly and with less suffering than otherwise would have been the case. It makes men (us? me?) more free by reconciling them to the necessities built into their social situation,

Nobody perhaps has done more for establishing the case for 'second nature', so understood, than Auguste Comte. The disciple of Saint-Simon plunged into the task of spelling out his teacher's implicit ideas and their consequences with a pristine enthusiasm and fearlessness which can only really be understood against the background of unknown whirlwinds and underwater reefs which obstructed the way ahead. To Comte above all belongs the merit of singling out 'the social' as a separate, autonomous, and in a sense crucial dimension of human situation. The idea of merciless regularity ingrained in human affairs, which transcends individual fate and is powerful enough to confound most ingenious schemes, was not new when Comte entered the debate. At least a century before, in 'The Spirit of the Laws', Montesquieu kept asking the crucial question upon which sociology as a positive science was to be built: 'Who can be guarded against events that incessantly arise from the nature of things?' It was clear to him, as it was to the rest of 'les philosophes', that 'amidst such an infinite diversity of laws and manners' men 'were not solely conducted by the caprice of fancy'. To be sure, the various elements of the idea of regularity, later to be set apart and analysed separately, were still intertangled in a way defying what would be, from the modern perspective, meaningful discussion. Even if he distinguished between the problems, Montesquieu could not quite decide whether the regularity he sensed consisted in the virtual elimination of freak, inexplicable acts of un-restrained fancy—in the essential determination of all human conduct, however bizarre it may seem to an uninformed eye; or, rather, in the presence of an inexorable force of super-human logic which individuals and nations do defy time and again only to lick their wounds, if they are lucky enough not to perish as a result. But, whatever the meaning implied, the intuitively felt regularity was situated, neatly and squarely, at the level which we would describe to-day as political action. This led to two important consequences. First, the idiom of political action was that of an end-organized, motivated human action, set upon the achievement of specified states. Whether we describe the motives in terms of personality traits, like avarice, conceit, or envy, or in terms of objectified interests, like intended unity of nation or enhancement of its glory, the motives as such remain in the centre of our attention—simultaneously the object of investigation and the tool of explanation. It is therefore extremely difficult to divest the discussion of political phenomena of the concept of will, intentions, goals—which, to be con-ceived of as regular in a way transcending individual idiosyncrasy, have to be referred to phenomena located somewhere beyond the political sphere proper. Second, it follows from the foregoing remarks that in so far as the perception of human affairs remains squashed into the idiom of political action, the naming of regularities presents well-nigh insuperable obstacles. Historical analogy, examples from which to draw lessons, were in fact the closest approximation to the idea of regularity the pre-sociological discussion of

human affairs ever reached. It attained its unsurpassable heights in the work of Machiavelli, with the vision of history as a game whose outcome is essentially undetermined in advance; a game, however, in which some stratagems are 'truer to the logic of the situation' than others and therefore can and should be scrupulously learnt and applied by all who wish to master necessity. The repeatability of historical occurrences was thereby translated as the perpetual efficacy of specific moves which, however, could still be employed at will. Within the political idiom, considered in isolation from the further reaches of the human situation, the game model is perhaps the closest conceivable approximation of the idea of implanted, 'objectified' regularity. Any further development of the idea requires the introduction of additional analytical dimensions.

It fell to Comte to trigger off the long, still unfinished process of 'peeling the onion' of the human predicament in search of the situs of the 'second nature'. As Ronald Fletcher recently aptly observed:

> Comte was not opposed to constitution-making or to the clarification of moral ideals, but he believed that many more dimensions were active in society—practical economic activities, property formation, conflicts of class interests, scientific investigation, changes in religious belief and behaviour, etc.—and that only with a sound knowledge of all these social processes could statesmanship be sound. For him, therefore, a sufficient study of 'political orders' had to be a thorough study of social systems.(7)

Comte postulated the 'second layer' beneath the surface of political events: the 'second nature' extends below the level of political history, to which the eyes of his predecessors had been fixed. To it belongs the 'social' level, the locus of regularity and permanence hidden behind the apparently random series of political happenings. The choice, still shunned or unnoticed by the generation of Montesquieu, was finally made: this concealed 'social nature' comes to the surface, enters the realm of human conduct not necessarily as a behaviour-determining factor (individual acts may well be, for all the scholar should care, 'undetermined' in the sense of being caused by factors unfit for scientific, always law-seeking, treatment), but as the ultimate limitation of all human freedom of action and the supreme judge of 'realism', i.e., the viability, of all human intentions. The 'social nature' is simply that supreme force which will always gain the upper hand however viciously individual humans or human groups attempt to get the better of it.

The whole of Comte's work can be interpreted as a consistent attempt to establish the case for a 'social nature' which makes its way through the fits and starts of political history, and for social scientists as the sole interpreters of this nature and, therefore, the indispensable messengers of its commands. Comte conceived of human deeds as links in the 'great chain of being', which begins with the blind and automatic unravelling of natural forces. Only some human actions can indeed attach themselves to this chain, and the condition of doing so is their conformity to 'natural trends'; wayward, off-the-mark, refractory acts will inevitably end at the graveyard of abortive, misconceived or ignorant ventures into the realm of the impossible. Comte urged that we consider 'the artificial and voluntary order as a prolongation of the natural and involuntary order towards which all human societies naturally tend in all their aspects, so that every truly rational political institution, if it is to have real and lasting social efficiency, must rest on a preliminary exact

analysis of the natural tendencies which alone can furnish its authority with firm roots; in a word, order is to be considered as something to be projected, not created, for this would be impossible'. Men may create their artificial order only if they comprehend the natural one (the alternative would be, presumably, the costly and painful method of trial and error)—they are, in a truly Hegelian fashion, free when knowing and accepting the necessary. Otherwise they are in for bitter frustration:

> The principle of the limitation of political action establishes the only true and exact point of contact between social theory and social practice… Political intervention can effect nothing either for order or for progress except by basing itself on the tendencies of the political life of organism, so as to assist by well-chosen means its spontaneous development.(8)

This view was indeed part and parcel, if not the most prominent distinctive feature, of the genuine 'Zeitgeist', shared across the board by thinkers of all shades of political denomination. In his usual caustic and succint style, Joseph de Maistre declared in his 'Quatre Chapitres sur la Russie', that 'what is called Nature is what one cannot oppose without risking his own perdition'. While Louis de Bonald chimed in: 'Sooner or later Nature will claim its possession' ('Théorie du pouvoir politique et religieux dans la société civile'). What Comte contributed on his own, besides obsessively and repetitively harping on the motif with which everybody else at the time concerned themselves, was pinpointing this 'Nature', whose defiance equals perdition, as a supra-individual 'Spiritual Power' with a developmental logic of its own: 'Temporal power cannot be replaced by a power of a different nature without an analogous transformation in the spiritual power, and vice versa'.(9)

Comte was too preoccupied with the task of demonstrating that the 'second nature' is to be reckoned with when facile schemes of transforming human life by promulgating new laws or putting new men in power are contemplated, that he had no time nor intention to venture very far beyond this vague 'spiritual power'. To Comte, this was a simple notion, hardly requiring any further elaboration or refinement. The spectacular successes of scientific discovery of the time seemed to the members of the intellectual micro-comunity cogent and powerful enough a force to blaze new trials for mankind ag a whole, and hence 'spiritual power' looked capable of reaching directly into the conditions of social life. The very process of 'reaching' did not concern Comte as a difficult problem in its own right. Perhaps Comte was still a faithful disciple of the Enlightenment, to which he time and again angrily reacted and whose reckless reformatory zeal he was so keen to castigate: he still saw the drama of human progress as the struggle of knowledge against ignorance, truth against prejudice. Truth, once promulgated, would easily hold its own, just as, in its absence, the false, vitiated images of the world preached by established churches had dominated the social fabric. This view, as it were, squared well with the other motif of Comte's writing—establishing 'savants' in the role of the new spiritual leaders of sociology, to take over social power (as distinct from the secondary political power) from the shaking hands of the clergy who had outlived their theological age. Of the approaching 'positive' era of human history Comte wrote:

> Scientific men can alone construct this system, since it must flow from their positive knowledge of the relations that subsist between the external world and man. This great

> operation is indispensable in order to constitute the class of engineers into a distinct corporation, serving as a permanent and regular communication between the Savants and Industrialists in reference to all special works.

A better, truer, more efficient knowledge will defeat and chase away its less perfect versions as easily as a harder rock will bruise and cut a softer one. 'When experience has at last convinced society that the only road to riches lies through peaceful activity, or works of industry, the direction of affairs properly passes to the industrial capacity'. The accolade of 'savants' will be a simple natural consequence of the new heights attained by the 'social spirit':

> When politics shall have taken the rank of a positive science, the public should and must accord to publicists the same confidence in their department, which it now concedes to astronomers in astronomy, to physicians in medicine, etc.; with the difference however that the public will be exclusively entitled to point out the end and the aim of the work.(10)

In this respect as well Comte was a loyal heir to the Enlightenment. Pascal's 'homo duplex'—the selfish beast tamed and held at bay by a super-human power—was very much an axiom to 'les philosophes', who never neglected an opportunity to manifest their disdain for the ignorant, mentally inept masses. However self-propelling a truth may be when proclaimed, its discovery is an elitarian matter. The passion-ridden, myopic, egostic multitude cannot approach the truth unhelped. To lay bare blinkering human passions one must first relinquish one's own (remember Durkheim's 'divesting our notions of what is exclusively human in them') and purify oneself of crippling loyalties. It takes super-human power to catch a glimpse of the Truth. Rousseau sketched its essential marks:

> In order to discover what social regulations are best suited to nations, there is needed a superior intelligence which can survey all the passions of mankind, though itself exposed to none: an intelligence having no contact with our nature, yet knowing it to the full: an intelligence, the well-being of which is independent of our own, yet willing to be concerned with it.(11)

These words were intended by Rousseau as a description of God. Imperceptibly, 'savants' slipped into the mould carved for the Supreme Being. Purification of passions has always been a vital component of any rite of consecration. To approach the Absolute, humans were expected to wash away the earthly dust which covered their bodies and their souls. 'Renouncing contact with one's nature' had sacred significance and hallowing potential. By putting them in the position of supreme judges, hovering high above the vale of morbid passion, Comte consecrated 'savants'.

'SECOND NATURE' DEIFIED

It was left to Durkheim to deify society. Durkheim picked up the task where Comte abandoned it. While accepting in full, as proven, that 'spiritual power' is indeed the 'second nature' people experience as the limits of their freedom, Durkheim proceeded to ask—and possibly to answer—the question Comte had not considered puzzling or worth asking: what is the 'substance' of the 'second nature' and why is its hold on human conduct so effective?

Durkheim's ideas of social reality were begotten in the conditions of rapid though thorough secularization of French social and political life, with both the sway of institutionalized religion and the powerful 'imperial' legitimation of state power petering out and loosing their grip. The question of how society can survive, as an integrated and solidary unit, without its traditional adhesive, became both perplexing and topical. To restore shattered self-confidence by discovering a new cogent answer to the 'quod iuris' of national society became, so to speak, the patriotic order of the day. It was Durkheim who most earnestly answered the challenge.

On the face of it, Durkheim stripped bare and exposed the 'social nature of God', having shown that in all times, even in the most devoutly religious eras, God was nothing more than society in disguise, society's commands made sacred and therefore awe-inspiring and fearsome. Therefore, the disappearance of God and his quiverful of thunderbolts may be considered as a minor irritant. Society will eventually emerge unscathed from the supposed disaster—if anything, rejuvenated and reinforced, being able to confront its members undisguised and to pass its sentences in its own name. But when viewed from another perspective—that of the ground on which the artlessly secular commands of human society may be obeyed with the same compliance and self-abandonment as the holy orders used to be—the same reasoning appears in a different light. Instead of secularizing God, Durkheim deified society. Time and again Durkheim sees and admits the truth: 'Kant postulates God, since without this hypothesis morality is unintelligible. We postulate a society specifically distinct from individuals, since otherwise morality has no object and duty no roots.'(12) To Durkheim, 'between God and society lies the choice.' Since the choice has to be made if morality-bound social order is to be salvaged from the wreckage of religious rule, 'I see in the Divinity only society transfigured and symbolically expressed.' On the other end of the communication channel, however, the message somewhat modifies its content: it is not necessary to call society factitious names; it may and should be divined under its own name. The will of the society is sufficient 'ratio' for moral commandments, and the same respect and obedience society has always received, though in a ritual mask, is now due to it in the same measure when it stares at us bare-faced.

In fact, though Durkheim's description of the 'second nature' is incomparably richer and more dense than Comte's, it does not go strikingly far beyond the Christian, and particularly Jewish theological predication of God. Society is what 'imposes itself from without upon the individual'; what imposes itself with 'irresistible force'; what 'surpasses the individual'; what is 'good and desirable for the individual who cannot exist without it or deny it without denying himself'; what is 'a personality qualitatively different from the individual personalities of which it is composed'; what is 'the authority which demands to be respected even by reason. We feel that it dominates not only our sensitivity, but the whole of our nature, even our rational nature.' Durkheim's society shares with the God of theologians its negative predication (more powerful than men, infallible unlike men, good unlike mean individuals, etc.) and its specific 'underdetermination': characteristic resistance to the attribution of traits which could lend Him, or it, a measure of sensual tangibility. Occasionally, Durkheim indulges in what can be considered only as genuine theological style, thus confirming, though in a paradoxical way, that God and his society differ in names only:

> Society commands us because it is exterior and superior to us; the moral distance between it and us makes it an authority before which our will defers. But as, on the other hand, it is within us and 'is' us, we love and desire it, albeit with a 'sui generis' desire since, whatever we do, society can never be ours in more than a part and dominates us infinitely…. If you analyse man's constitution you will find no trace of this sacredness with which he is invested…. This character has been added to him by society.

And, finally, with a truly mystical self-abandonment:

> The individual submits to society and this submission is the condition of his liberation…. By putting himself under the wing of society, he makes himself also, to a certain extent, dependent upon it. But this is a liberating experience.(13)

There is all the difference one can conceive of between the sobriety of Durkheim and the religious fervour of Pascal, Durkheim's occasional sallies into sanctimony notwithstanding. But, on the whole Durkheim's work may be considered as an attempt to re-phrase the old Pascal dilemma of 'homo duplex' in times when the grip of the Church over human minds was rapidly failing in strength. Or, rather, to foreclose for the 'secular' society the passion-ridden idiom heretofore usurped by theology. Pascal's dilemma in fact inspires and informs the totality of Durkheim's explorations. Indeed, some of Durkheim's notoriously elusive suggestions (including the most irritating of all, 'l'âme', 'mentalité', or 'conscience collective') seem bizarre only if considered outside the context of the continuous Pascalian tradition in French intellectual life. There are, we are told by Pascal, two inviolable constant truths:

> One is that man in the state of his creation, or in the state of grace, is exalted above the whole of nature, made like unto God and sharing in His divinity. The other is that in the state of corruption and sin he has fallen from that first state and has become like the beasts… Let us then conceive that man's condition is dual. Let us conceive that man infinitely transcends man, and that without the aid of faith he would remain inconceivable to himself, for who cannot see that unless we realize the duality of human nature we remain invincibly ignorant of the truth about ourselves.

To escape from this duality of existence, the source of permanent sufferings and the tormenting clash between beastly instincts and moral conscience, one has to embrace God—one has, in fact, to surrender, willingly and zealously, to His divine grace.

> True conversion consists in self-annihilation before the universal being whom we have so often vexed and who is perfectly entitled to destroy us at any moment, in recognizing that we can do nothing without Him and that we have deserved nothing but His disfavour… He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit, we love ourselves because we are members of Christ. We love Christ because he is the body of which we are members. All are one. One is in the other….(14)

Durkheim will 'secularize' Pascal: 'To love society is to love both something beyond us and something in ourselves. We could not wish to be free of society without wishing to

finish our existence as men.'(15) In Pascal, society was personified. In Durkheim, it has been reified. In both cases it has remained deified.

The concept of society was introduced by Durkheim almost on the strength of definition. With his essence torn apart into bits he cannot reconcile on his own, man becomes humanized only when he surrenders to society. There is, in fact, no way to define 'being human' other than by referring back to the definition currently imposed by a given society. A statement 'this is a bad society' is inexpressible within Durkheimian logic; society may be inefficient, poorly organized, as happens in the case of 'anomie'—the failure of society to get its message through or to supply goods made desirable by its norms. But society cannot be bad; how could it be, if it is the only foundation, measure, and authority behind morality, the knowledge of good and evil. 'It is impossible to desire a morality other than that endorsed by the condition of society at a given time. To desire a morality other than that implied by the nature of society is to deny the latter and, consequently, oneself'. There is no detached, independent scale of values with which the morality sanctioned by a given society can be gauged and evaluated, and thus there is no logic in which the sentence 'this society is bad' would make sense. Man, therefore, can be a moral being only as a result of his obedience to his society. Social conformity and humanity conflate.

The alternative is not a 'better society' (this would be meaningless), but devolution to animal life.

> Imagine a being liberated from all external restraint, a despot still more absolute than those of which history tells us, a despot that no external power can restrain or influence. By definition, the desires of such a being are irresistible. Shall we say, then, that he is all-powerful? Certainly not, since he himself cannot resist his desires. They are masters of him, as of everything else. He subimits to then; he does not dominate them.

And so the choice is between two kinds of unfreedom: the beastly and the human one. This is the meaning of the 'liberating surrender' to the domination of the society. Surrendering, men sacrifice only their inferior, animal freedom, the corrupt part—as Pascal would say—of their personality. Instead, they are given the opportunity to display their human side in the only available form of humanity, as forged by the particular group from which it is acquired.

Now, becoming human is not necessarily an inherent desire of men. At any rate, it is too serious a business to be left to the free choice of individuals. As Rousseau would say, men 'must be forced to be human.' In Durkheim's words, 'society can neither create itself nor recreate itself without at the same time creating an ideal.' While man 'could not be a social being, that is to say, he could not be a man, if he had not acquired' it. (16) Society, which—being coterminous with morality—is the good incarnate, and simultaneously the supreme judge of it, has the right (one would say, the moral right) to coerce its members into moral, 'ergo' human, existence, by making then live up to its moral standards, whether specific individuals desire it or not. In 'Odysseus und die Schweine, oder das Unbenhangen an der Kultur', Lion Feuchtwanger mused on the frightening possibility that Odysseus' sailors, once transformed into pigs by treacherous Circe, liked what they experienced and refused to be returned to the human shape. For all Durkheim's discourse can articulate, it might quite easily have been so, without in the least undermining the 'necessity' of

society or putting in question its moral legitimacy. Religion, for from being a bastard of human prejudice and a gaoler of the human mind, supplies the best pattern of this unquestionable moral legitimacy being exercized properly, with humane means matching humane ends. Whenever 'intervention of the group', which results in imposing 'uniformly upon particular wills and intelligences' 'a 'type' of thought and action' takes on a form of religious ritual, 'there is no question of exercizing a physical constraint upon blind and, incidentally, imginary forces, but rather of reaching individual consciousnesses, of giving them a direction and of disciplining then.' (17) In an ideally functioning, technically wholesome society, men would, in Irving Hallowell's words, 'want to act as they have to act and at the same time find gratification in acting according to the requirements of the culture' (18)—or, as Erich From put it, social necessities would be transmitted into character traits. (19)

By a curious distortion of perspective, it has become universally accepted in the folkloristic versions of Durkheim, that his major methodological postulate was that ideas are things and should be explored accordingly. Phrased in such a form, culled literally, but out of context, from Durkheim's writings, this postulate looks simply like another positivist profession of faith—an appeal to study social affairs in the same way as natural scientists investigate the natural. This is not, however, the meaning bestowed on the notorious statement by the logic of Durkheim's theoretical preoccupation. Before Durkheim asked the question of how things human were to be explored, he had first inquired into the nature of things human. The original inspiration, the springboard of the whole Durkheimian theoretical system, had been obtained from the problem set aside by Comte as, allegedly, self-evident and presenting no difficulty: what is this something, which is not present in non-human nature, yet confronts human beings with the overwhelming power typical of natural things? What is this something, which is experienced with the thoroughness and resilience of things, yet bears none of the features we use to predicate of 'ordinary things'? The answer—the really important one—was: ideas. It is ideas which confront us as if they were things. This allegedly revolutionary postulate, that ideas should be treated as things in the course of the scientific investigation, followed with a virtually tautological automaticity: of course, things ought to be studied as things; since it has been revealed that one sub-class of things consists of societally supported ideas, it is a matter of the simplest syllogism to draw the conclusion: ideas ought to be studied as things. Durkheim did not bother with trying to prove the major premiss (this has been awarded an axiomatic status by commonsense), nor the conclusion (this did not require any proof, following, as it were, from its premisses on the strength of logical rules). His attention was instead focussed on the minor premiss: some things are ideas; this he, indeed, worked hard to prove. The distinctive feature of Durkheimian sociology—one which has been taken over and absorbed by most of twentieth. century sociology—was the decoding of the experience of the 'second nature' as a set of commonly held ideas, which impose themselves with invincible force thanks to the fact that they define the meaning of being human, moral, and good.

This central idea of Durkheimian sociology has been subsequently presented (in what is perhaps a modernized, but surely an obfuscating version) as the view that what integrates society into a system confronting the individual as an autonomous, and superior, force, is universal allegiance to the so-called 'central cluster of values'—a dehydrated, hygienic brand of 'conscience collective'. If pared to its bare essence and purified of

essence-obscuring jargon, the idea becomes strikingly simple (simultaneously revealing its otherwise concealed self-limitation): society, being the only setting for the human existence of 'homo sapiens', is therefore its members' con-formity to the central, society-anchored ideals. Therefore, if society does not perish, it is because of members' conformity to these ideals. And this is good and desirable. (Let us notice, in the anticipation of further discuion, two of the self-imposed limitations of this reasoning: First, the existence of society serves anthropological needs, needs of men as members of the human species; hence, by definition, it is extra-historical and extra-partisan. Second, the justified need of 'a' society has been tacitly identified with the need of 'the' society, society which happens to define at the moment the meaning of being human This specific society is, of course, a historical phenomenon. But having related it to an anthropological, extra-historical need, this theoretical perspective presents the historical as the natural. Not so much by an explicit statement to this effect, but by denying the possibility of defining the meaning of 'being human' in terms not supplied and not legitimized by the society currently in existence).

The history of much post-Durkheimian sociology has boiled down to an immanent critique of this simple, perhaps simplistic answer to the question about the nature of society's coercive power. Durkheim's successors could not be satisfied for long with the generality of Durkheim's answer, as Durkheim himself could not quite swallow the generality of Comte's; hence they attempted to dissect, cut and divide the 'central cluster' into its constituent parts, unexplored by Durkheim, and to reveal the morphology of the central ideals' ascendancy over human individuals. This critique was immanent, since never once has the central pillar of Durkheimian sociology been questioned: that what is 'thing-like' in the experience dubbed 'society' are ideas, and that, consequently, society remaining itself is above all an affair which takes place in the space stretching between minds. Nor was the question of the price of 'being human' in the form so defined ever asked.

To give only the most original and sophisticated examples of the immanent critique, let us consider those modifications of the central theme which were introduced by Shils, Parsons, and Goffman.

In Shils's work, the role of central ideals (values) in sustaining and upholding the social whole is not denied; but it is postulated that for their constraining impact on individuals' behaviour to be effective, other factors ought to mediate, to which Durkheim paid little or no attention. It is therefore suggested that the mental grip of society over individuals has in fact a two-tier structure, aptly expressed in the concept of centre and periphery. The central belief system of a society—so Shils tells us—is a high-level abstraction which can be apprehended only by way of a rather intellectually demanding philosophical analysis. But ordinary people are not philosophers; hence they come into the immediate presence of central values only on relatively few ceremonial occasions. As long as these events last, the massive emotional attachment to central values is brought to a high pitch, loyalty is refreshed, hardened and reinforced, but not necessarily translated into mundane precepts relevant to the daily routine and able therefore to safeguard everyday conformity. It is personal ties, primordial bonds (like kinship or quasi-kinship loyalties), partial responsibilities held in diverse corporate bodies—rather than ceromonially evoked beliefs—which secure the upholding of central values by the routine, institutionalized activity of the multitude of men. So it is, in fact, the dense fabric of close relationships (face-to-face or formalized and role-related), and immediate tasks at hand, which channel human routine behaviour into

conformity with central values, while the values themselves remain, from the perspective of ordinary men, inconspicuous, unobtrusive, even invisible. And so the image of social integration, which Durkheim proposed to stretch over the whole of society, is compressed by Shils to the central nucleus of the social system. It is this central sphere alone which consciously and articulately sustains and is sustained by the crucial ideals of society. The peripheral sphere is not riveted to the central hub by ideological loyalty, but tacked to it by numerous strings of personal and not-so-personal bonds.

The strings which keep society together on various tiers are therefore different; but all are spun of the same yarn of ideas. Shils points out the insufficiency of the 'central ideals' concept as an explanation of the persistence of 'social reality'. But other concepts, which he introduces to support and to complement Durkheimian legacy, are made of the same raw material, and the 'some things are ideas' postulate remains in full force. Only splinters of central ideals must be absorbed by all for society to survive; but they have to be buttressed by a plethora of other ideals, like kinship or organizational loyalty (all of which are, of course, ideas which act like things), to serve their function.

The picture of a multi-tier structure of the value-based superiority of society (which Shils came across in his war-time study of German POW, and made public in 'BJS' in 1957) has been drawn in more detail by Talcott Parsons—in his theory of the levels of organization of social structure. (20) As we know, the entire Parsonian theory of society is organized around the concept of binding normative patterns, whose compelling influence on individual behaviour is achieved and continually sustained by the twin effort of 'pattern maintenance and tension-management' (preventive and penal action against deviation as well as positive inducement of conforming conduct), and 'integration' (mostly processes commonly described under the heading of socialization). Normative patterns, as in Durkheim, reflect requirements of the social whole; they specify those aspects of individual behaviour which are relevant to the common good and which must be observed if society is to survive. Only if it succeeds in subordinating individual actions to such normative patterns, does society create a viable environment in which social action is possible. Normative patterns specify, one could say, the most general and necessary conditions of social existence.

In his theory of the hierarchical organization of the social structure Parsons spells out the essential difference between his notion of normative patterns and Durkheimian 'ideals' embodied in 'l'âme collective'. Normative patterns do not refer necessarily directly to the collective, societal aims, to the necessity of sustaining togetherness, communal co-operation, etc. Through their own hierarchical structure they ultimately point precisely in this direction; but, particularly in their lower, more specific and particularistic ramifications, they may well conceal this final target, visible only when seen from the top—in the scores of pernickety instructions apparently unconcerned with the welfare of the totality.

> The most general values of the highest level are articulated at successively lower levels so that normas governing specific actions at the lowest level may be spelled out… At the lower levels, norms and values apply only to special categories of units of the social structure, unless they are the normas most general to all 'good citizens' and therefore are couched mainly in terms of a personality reference.

In this way the most general and crucial norms, bearing directly on the survival of the society, are translated into secular, mundane briefings. The majestic structure of the social system may be sustained without an explicit appeal to sacred sanctions. It is buttressed by the routine, habitualized observance of commonplace usages rather than by the universal internalization of, and loyalty to, the loftier and more abstract articulations of the central value cluster. In effect, the individual may well be unaware of the more remote, system-related consequences of his daily conduct. From his limited vantage point, only a branch or two and a dozen twigs are visible, while the rest of the tree may escape his notice without impairing the smooth running of his everyday routine. It is left to the social analyst to reproduce theoretically the fine tissue of dovetailing normative patterns, to make explicit their implicit function, to show how indispensable they are for social action and, indeed, the social existence of human beings. We recognize the traditional role of the priest—the interpreter of the intrinsic, though concealed, wisdom of the Creation, the preacher of the good which consists in the surrender and the joy which can be derived from enthusiastically embraced necessity. The scholastic principle 'ens et bonum convertuntur' supplies adhesive for the weaker joints of the theory: one cannot envisage existence without society, hence it is good that society survives; it can survive only if consensus is secured; this consensus is laboriously pieced together from apparently petty trivialities; let us, therefore, learn to see through them, let us learn to perceive higher reasons in lowly routines, vital functions in vexing nibblings, the noble in the menial. The overall effect of Parsonian 'hierarchization of consensus'—his linking of the narrowest precepts to the survival of society, his firm supposition that any specific demand coming from 'outside' the actor's ends and motives, however difficult and incredible it may seem, can be shown in principle to derive from the most crucial commands of society's survival—amounts to a wholesale hallowing and ennobling in a truly Leibnizian manner, of everything experienced in social life as real, including its most unsightly aspects.

The common assumption of both Durkheim and Parsons is that if a meaningful (human, in the case of Durkheim; effective, in the case of Parsons) action of an individual is to be possible at all, the same normative patterns or ideals must motivate and constrain the behaviour of all the individuals partaking of the action. What is necessary, is—in the words of W.I.Thomas, to whom Parsons repeatedly acknowledged his intellectual debit—'a group-organization embodied in a socially systematized scheme of behaviour imposed as rules upon individuals' ('The Polish Peasant in Europe and America'). Orderly, planned, organized, effective—indeed, free—human action hinges on the successful enforcing of institutionalized patterns, (even if they materialize, 'surface on the phenomenal level', through the psyche of individual actors, they still constitute an external reality, a 'second nature' from the actors' point of view) being, as they are, imperative and, within the limits of the intended action, unavoidable. It is this indomitable 'second nature' which safeguards the complementarity of expectations—this paramount condition of human action.

> There is double contingency inherent in interaction. On the one hand, ego's gratifications are contingent on ego's selection among available alternatives. But in turn, alter's reaction will be contingent on ego's selection and will result from a complementary selection on alter's part. Because of this double contingency, communication, which is the precondition of cultural patterns, could not exist without both generalization from the particularity of

> the specific situations (which are never identical for ego and alter) and stability of meaning which can be only assured by 'conventions' observed by both parties. (21)

Throughout his work, Parsons appeals to the pan-human fear of uncertainty, unpredictability, of the bizarre, the extra-ordinary and the surprising. Such fear, very much an anthropological phenomenon (in the sense of being associated inexorably with all and any human action), is double-pronged: the terror of 'things' going wild and responding to routine and skilful handling in an unusual, unforeseeable way, and the horror of 'persons' confounding all expectations by using an unreadable symbolic code or attaching inscrutable meanings to known signs. It is this fear which the smoothly and coherently articulated society promises to dispel. It offers freedom from fear in exchange for conformity to 'conventions'.

One of these conventions, and a paramount one at that, is the division of roles and their differential treatment. Role-requirements are on the whole clear-cut. They spell out the expected responses to ordinary stimuli. When known to both protagonists of an interaction, they will provide the sought-after 'stability of meaning' during the exchange. The partners enter their interaction 'pre-fabricated', processed by society, with the meanings of their acts firmly attached to their possible actions well in advance, as the appurtenances of the assumed role. Meanings are not negotiable, they are given from the start or some time before the start, and the only outcome of a departure will be a distortion of communication. But then all the frightening spectres of a dis orderly, unpredictable world will promptly return. They are kept at a safe distance only inasmuch as everybody holds on to the role he has been allotted; and unqualified acceptance of one's share in the essentially unequal allocation of rewards society is able to offer is the 'conditio sine qua non' of an orderly world.

Such attractiveness as the Parsonian version of Durkheim's idiom possessed can be ascribed to the irresistibly facile solution it offers to the haunting feeling of uncertainty emitted by the opacity of human condition. Docility is the only price one is asked to pay for one's security; and the goods (only if everybody else respects his debts) will be surely delivered on payment. At the same time, the costs of insolvency have been raised to nebulous heights; the choice is now between order and chaos, security and pandemonium, quiet haven and uncharted turbulent waters. When faced with such a choice, it is easier to remain docile and to accept one's share, however inferior and unjust it may seem: there is, it seems, no alternative. The Parsonian model of 'social nature' suppresses the alternative, which is the most important distinctive function of all conservative, dominant ideologies. By presenting this suppression as, in its essence, a matter of values people respect and obey, he adds cogency to ideological attractions: the idea is attuned to the established formula of wisdom and legitimacy.

Coercion is necessary—this is the central message of Parsonian theory. It has, to be sure, a reassuring quality, as any science-backed statement reaffirming intuitive hunches of comnonsense will inevitably have. The Durkheim-Parsons line in sociology is an elaboration of the leading themes of commonsensical experience and, within the horizons of this experience, the only intelligible elaboration, When the life situation of men is constituted by market exchange, considered to be the only mechanism through which conditions of individual survival may be furnished, the individual can-not but keep trying to reorganize his social environment in tune with his interests and ensuing desires; but so will everybody else. The resulting world would be at best technically untenable, at worse a

hell painted by a surrealist, if it were not for some form of coercion or another. One can say that this market-type of freedom requires coercion as its necessary supplement; without it, it would never furnish conditions sufficient for the survival of the society or, indeed, of the individual. Parsons's message is not, therefore, a lie. On the contrary, it sums up what seems to be a fair and conscientious description of the society as it is and as we know it. In so far as we live and wish to remain alive in a society organized as 'an opportunity-structure for the fulfilment of an egoistic individualism' (22) we view as a nightmare (and call it 'jungle law') the absence of coercive power strong enough to curb the very egoistic individualism we crave to fulfil. If there is a contradiction between these desires, it is by no means caused by the frailties of human reason and cannot be corrected by improving on human logic: it is, in fact, a reflection of the genuine incompatibility between equally powerful commands of the existential situation—a situation from which there is neither a good nor unambiguous way out. And so coercion is unavoidable. The only choice available within the horizon drawn by the institutionalized market, is that between 'hard' and 'soft' coercion; at least since the time of Kant, we have been keen scrupulously to distinguish between compulsion coming 'from without' and that coming 'from within', and to evaluate them differently. We prefer internalized coercion to that which is brutally external, reaching for physical force where indoctrination failed. In this sense, Parsons has given us the description of the good society: a description which we may consider realistic because it does not transcend the horizon of the present, but which depicts society as it might be, rather than the one which is. The DurkheimParsons society is founded entirely on 'soft' coercion; it is a successful society, which thanks to the triumph of its moral power can well-nigh renounce its physical force. This society may be seen as the utopian projection of the liberal market principle. For this reason—while eliminating alternatives to this principle from the range of options considered as feasible and worthy of informed argument—it may play a critical role, acting toward pushing the 'humanization' of an essentially inhuman predicament to its accessible limits. It is, therefore, a 'reformatory within conservative' attitude, embedded and codified in a vision of social reality which posits coercion as inevitable, but coercion's more unsightly forms as superfluous. Its utopian edge may be brought into relief when people face the uglier alternative struggling for actualization; hence the celebration of 'Durksonianism' inspired by the discovery of Nazi and Stalinist horrors; and the embracing of 'Durksonianism' by the mildly critical, mildly conservative 'middle-stream' intellectual movement in the Communist East.

One version of the Durkheimian idiom, however, draws the immanent critique of 'conscience collective' to its limits by bringing to light the oppressiveness contained in the 'soft' form of coercion itself. It was Goffman alone who openly attacked and rejected outright the 'schoolboy model' which undergirds the image of society as mostly a teaching-learning institution with a modest sprinkling of correctional measures—the model which Goffman ridicules by its very description:

> If a person wishes to sustain a particular image of himself and trust his feelings to it, he must work hard for the credits that will buy this self-enhancement for him; should he try to obtain ends by improper means, by cheating or theft, he will be punished, disqualified from the race, or at least made to start all over again from the beginning.

One can easily distinguish behind this description the noble view of society as a mainly humanizing, moral force, which both Durkheim's poetry and Parsons's prose have keenly promoted. In Durksonianism, mutual trust based on integrity and truthfulness is the 'limen' towards which society strives and which all its institutions try to work hard to bring about. If something is being suppressed on the way, it is the animal instincts and a-social egoism of individuals who are treacherous and untrustworthy until they have undergone redeeming social treatment. Without society, men are crude, cruel and dishonest; thanks to the coercive power of 'conscience collective' (or central values cluster) they are turned into moral beings.

Not so, says Erving Goffman. Fresh from the bedlam of McCarthyism, Goffman hastened to articulate the staggering discovery of the generation: just how wild society may run when overwhelmed by the zeal of its moralizing mission. This discovery furnished Goffman with his main, and perhaps only, motif, on which he has harped obsessively in all his work. The new experience was there, ready to be wrapped in words. But Goffman, in tune with the long established habit of sociologizing without history, did more than just that: he promoted the intuitive findings of a generation into another general model of society. What had been done by human beings tinkering with their history, was polished up as another face of the 'second nature'.

And so we learn from Goffman, that such freedom as the human individual may possess is obtained not thanks to society, but in spite of its obtrusive invigilation. The central issue in the individualsociety relation is not, as Durksonianism would have us believe, the joyful and rewarding, though society-controlled, immersion of the person in the refreshing, purifying, humanizing waters of socially-upheld ideals and recipes. Instead, it is the precarious and hazardous art of surrendering, or pretending to surrender, to as tiny a modicum of social 'musts' as is humanly possible, in order to be allowed to enjoy one's virtual, and always lonely, existence. Socialization, once again in sharp opposition to Durksonianism, is the price paid in exchange for a makeshift emancipation from unbearable social surveillance, rather than the royal highway leading to the full, truly human existence. Society and the individual, far from imitating the benevolent teacher and his diligent pupil, bear a striking resemblance to mutually suspicious, shrewd and malevolent hagglers. They would not, though, go as far as annihilating the other partner or foreclosing his property; they need him as much as they seek to cheat him and to get the better of him. Intertwined forever in their equivocal hate-love, they will be only too happy to settle for keeping the other side at a safe distance, and will be eager to accept the other side's promise to behave as 'it befits it to behave' as the conditions of armistice.

> If the person is willing to be subject to informal social control—if he is willing to find out from hints and glances and tactful cues what his place is, and keep it then there will be no objection to his furnishing this place at his discretion, with all the comfort, elegance, and nobility that his wit can muster for him… Social life is an uncluttered, orderly thing because the person voluntarily stays away from the places and topics and times where he is not wanted and where he might be disparaged for going. (23)

And so society is still the 'tough reality' which confronts the individual with the stubbornness and impermeability of things, but it is a reality of a pile of conventions and excuses, false

pretences and 'white lies', rather than majestic ethical principles. Society emerges under Goffman's pen as a gigantic hoax, patched up by a multitude of puny deceptions and confidence games. It is a pseudo-moral system into which scores of individuals are tacked together with the strings of sham devotion and make-believe acts. Everybody there pretends to do something he neither does nor wishes to do. Society is, therefore, put back again in the dock from which Durkson-ianism strove hard to extricate it. It is again reduced to pure constraint, to negativity eo ipso, to a set of border-stones rather than guide-posts, aimed at imposing willingness to desist action rather than willingness to act. The rule of society is sustained by the massive conformity of individuals—no departure here from the axiom of Durksonianism. But what makes society tick is, in Goffman's view, the multitude of human beings, simply keeping obediently to where they have been declared to belong, donning eagerly the mask offered by society, and once in a while emitting the right noises which indicate that they love the mask and would not swap it for anything else. 'Perhaps the main principle of the ritual order is not justice but face.' Indeed, little has been left of the lyrical romance of the beast ennobled or the epic of the affectionate monster made rational. What is left of social reality, what the individual must still scrupulously learn and observe, what the individual is still forbidden to defy, what is presented to the individual as an uninfringible, hard and 'objective' reality—is a particular set of rules which regulate the bargain for face and for the frontiers of the private domain. These rules refer to interhuman communication, to the way in which it is made meaningful and effective, but not to the content of the message. Not beliefs, but rules of the game glue together the Goffmanesque social order.

What is being exchanged in human encounters, which combine into a process called 'society', are impressions rather than goods. The partners give each other clues which help the 'alter' to locate his protagonist on the cognitive map. The locating, so it seems, is the important thing, rather than other, more tangible benefits, which can be derived from the interaction. One can assume (though Goffman never gives it away in so many words) that what men are after is above all cognitive certainty and the emotional security which comes with it. Hell is the Other, one would say with Sartre; the very presence of the Other makes my own 'whatness' problematic, questions the comforting obviousness, 'givenness' of my existence, and compromises me, gives away things which I would rather keep for myself. The feeling of constant vigilance by the Other, of my being watched, spied upon, assessed, is a source of constant fear. Society helps us out: it opens a huge store room of protective masks, disguises, make-believe attires behind which we can hide, thus making our own 'whatness' opaque, impervious to an undesirable eye. From the open expanse of truth and authenticity we flee under the secure circus tent, where everybody pretends to be somebody else, everybody is aware that the others are not what they seem to be, but nobody cares any longer about what they 'really' are. Having once donned the clownish mask, people are determined to squeeze as much pleasure as they possibly can from the mimicry. If we have to play the game, let us make it grand.

And so what the individual offers in interaction are expressions. Of the two kinds of expression—'the expression that he 'gives' and the expression that he 'gives off''—the second, which 'involves a wide range of action that others can treat as symptomatic of the actor, the expectation being that the action was performed for reasons other than the information conveyed in this way' (24) came to play in Goffman's writings an increasingly central role—as it does, in his view, in social life as such. It is not enough

to be X and to behave the way in which people expect X to behave; one has, in addition, to convince others that he indeed behaves like an X, that he 'is' X. The second need comes to overshadow the first; it seems that in fact it eliminates the first or, at least, gains independence of it. The view that the second has been built on the sound foundation of the first (conveying and disseminating such a view is the very intention behind the second category of expressions) reflects, again, sham pretences rather than a necessary connection. In fact, excelling in the first expression is not a sufficient condition of overall success; what is more, it is not even the necessary condition of such success. Display is a separate art in social encounters and perhaps the only art which keeps the delicate social fabric in balance. As a result, what is called 'social reality' appears to the individual to be not just unmanageable, but impenetrable as well. Certainly he tries to pierce through the masks which cover the faces of his partners in the life drama—but pretences have been piled upon pretences and, like the gripping discovery of Ibsen's Peer Gynt, there is no 'hard core' in the onion, just layer behind layer, however conscientiously you try to penetrate the 'ultimate depth'. Goffman's imagery is meant to explain not just why we experience 'society' as a reality, but why this reality is opaque and, in the end, impervious to our eye. We are left with the impression that society must remain so to survive. The play of pretences is the essence of all and any social relations. The effort to dispel the mist will result, at best, in an endless chain of approximations, hardly ever conclusive.

For Durkheim, in order to be human, the individual has to embrace the morality which society propounds and supports. For Goffman, in order to be himself, the individual has to defend himself against society by using socially produced tools of disguise. The 'second nature' image has thus come full circle. It had started, at the beginning of modern times, as a man-legislated tissue of power relations which may have, in principle, violated 'laws of nature'. Through a truly dialectical 'negation of negation' it emerged, with Goffman, as a 'must' everybody takes part in generating and keeping alive, but hardly deliberately, and without ever surveying the whole structure. It is now the human individual who sets the standards of human nature. 'In interiore homine habitat veritas'. Society is again experienced as too tight a collar. If anything, it tends to obfuscate and confound human truth. It stands between the individual and his truth. It breeds immorality and it feeds on immorality. Society is now perceived as pure negativity. It is something the individual has to fight all his life. He may, as in fact he does, adjust himself to these conditions of perpetual struggle, but the outcome of adjustment is hardly Durksonian 'humanization'. Society is degraded; once the natural and logically indispensable locus of human life, it has been reduced to an inhospitable and demanding environment.

The about-face in the perception of the 'second nature', exemplified by Goffman, may be alternatively portrayed as a further 'peeling of the onion' of social reality. The experience of constraint had been ascribed at the beginning to faulty political institutions. The discovery of which sociology as 'science of society' was begotten consisted in unravelling another, deeper and tougher, reality beneath the realm of politics; this was mostly conceived as made of ideational stuff, but somehow sedimented and toughened to the point of confronting any individual or group of individuals with the force of genuine 'things'. The intensive analysis of the texture of these sediments, as well as of the process of sedimentation, has led in the end beyond the layer of social institutions, towards the individuals themselves, who are the ultimate source of all and any social institutions and 'social reality'. It is the attempt to peel

further the onion of social reality which has been proclaimed somewhat pretentiously as the current crisis of sociology.

'SECOND NATURE' AND THE COMMONSENSE

Sociology, as we know it, was born of the investigation of the regular, the invariable, the unmanageable in the human condition. In its most zealous and pietistical moments it tends to conceive its own activity in terms of the crusade of science against 'the mystical notion of free-will'. (25) In more sober and secular moods it readily grants the individual his idiosyncrasies, but declares them scientifically uninteresting: the field of sociological investigation begins where the unique, the unrepeatable and irreplaceable ends. It does not deny human freedom; it simply evicts it beyond the boundaries of scientific inquiry. The latter makes sense only when concerned with the unfreedom of uniformity.

Sociology, as we know it, inquires into the 'conditions' of the normal, but the 'causes' of the abnormal. 'The normal' is, in its pre-predicative, intentional meaning, whatever is recurrent, repeatable, routine, expected to happen again and again within the territory delineated by the interested human eye. The abnormal is, eo ipso, whatever should not happen under given conditions, but did.

Nothing is bizarre in itself. The oddity of a phenomenon is never an attribute of its own—though this is what the common figure of speech would have us believe. We perceive an event or an object as odd when it 'stands out' from the colourless, jejune background of monotony. But the background in turn is the product of selective perception; it is the act of sowing standard seed which turns other flowers into weeds. It makes little sense, therefore, to blame sociologists for ignoring or belittling the role of individual (by definition irregular) factors. This 'negligence' is as 'organic' to the activity of sociology as its constitutive interest in the nature of social reality; one, in a sense, follows from the other.

The notorious difficulty experienced by bona fide sociologists whenever they attempt to account for the subjective, the spontaneous, the unique (in their own terms rather than in terms of their marginality or obsolescence, from the perspective of a supra-subjective whole)—is an immanent feature of sociology, unlikely ever to be overcome from within this intellectual project. All systematized knowledge of human life process, sociology included, is an attempt to lend intelligibility and cohesion to unorganised, disparate commonsensical experience; it is a sophisticated elaboration upon crude commonsense, theoretical refinement of the raw material of the 'directly given'. This knowledge may be sceptical and critical of the naive beliefs of commonsense—an attitude in which established sociology takes well-deserved pride. But commonsensical experience will always remain the locus in which sociological queries and concepts are gestated—and the 'umbilical cord binding the knowledge of human affairs to commonsense will never be cut. The commonsense is the ultimate object of sociological exploration in the same inescapable way as nature is the ultimate object of natural science. Even its care-free trust in the 'objective reality' of the social, sociology owes to the commonsensically confirmed pre-predicative experience of unfreedom. It is this experience which provides the ultimate, and the only, foundation for social reality, and therefore, for sociology as a legitimate intellectual activity with a legitimate and. 'objective' subject-matter.

The trouble with commonsensical evidence is, however, that it is equivocal. It does not contain information about the external determination of human fate and conduct. On the contrary, such evidence it acknowledges of nature-like, stubborn resistance to human will, can only appear as the corollary of a manifestation of this will. The experience of freedom is possible only as a sense of subduing an outer force, perceived, because of its resistance, as 'real'. Similarly, the sense of unfreedom, styled as perception of reality, manifests itself only in the form of defeat of a project impelled by human will. The aspects of experience which can be articulated, respectively, as freedom and unfreedom, appear either in conjunction or not at all. Knowledge of unfreedom (constraints, nature, reality—all these family of concepts, meaningless unless traceable to the same pre-predicative source) without intuition of freedom is as absurd and, indeed, inconceivable, as experience of freedom unaccompanied by knowledge of its potential or actual limitations.

Hence any system of knowledge (including sociology), which describes the structure of unfreedom alone, is a one-sided account of human experience, and needs additional constructs to foreclose ite unaccounted-for components.

It remains to be shown, this time in disagreement with comnonsense, that what appears to the pristine, pre-predicative experience as a free act, stemming from reasoning and choice, is an inevitability concealed and invisible to the naked eye. Much of the disdain shown towards commonsense, written into the progect of science, has as its source the alleged inability of unrefined experience to discover the necessary and the law-like behind the façade of free will. This ineptness of unaided commonsense to uncover the sternly deterministic order of the world and to account for its own hidden causes also provides the stuff of which the distinction between 'essence' and 'existence' have been ultimately forged. The impression usually given, and often deliberately enhanced, of scientific knowledge being an implacable enemy of commonsense (while, in fact, remaining its symbiotic adjunct) is due mostly to this circumstance. Science is expected only to 'explain' how the necessity of the outer world—already experienced as nature-like—comes into being; but it has to 'prove', in defiance of pre-scientific experience, that the kingdom of necessity embraces the totality of human life processes. The second task, naturally, takes much more effort and consequently generates much more zeal. It is, therefore, the second line of the battle where the heaviest artillery of science is concentrated and the most ferocious barrages are launched. The war is waged between the 'real order of things' and misleading appearances—the 'mystical notion of free-will'.

Both tasks, to be sure, stem from the poignant need constantly generated by the lived-through human experience. Men experience resistance coming from a misty realm which is not like those impenetrable, tough, tangible things they freely conceive as objects. As one might expect, they keep asking how it can be that that 'something', divested of all the familiar attributes of material objects, nevertheless behaves like them in setting limits to human movement. The intuitive metaphor requires intelligible substantiation, and the riddle sets loose all the imaginative power of theorising and model-building. This is the cognitive curiosity aroused by the unknown and the incomprehensible. The concepts produced in response are meant to bring sense, order, to unintelligible experience. The message conveyed by this exerience is clear; its structure is not, however.

But the other task is supported no less eagerly by the life process. The experience of free will is by no means an enjoyable feeling. More often than not it is psychologically

unbearable in a world posited as a set of chances which may be taken up but can be missed. In such a world, free will is experienced as an 'agonizing burden', (26) as 'dizziness', which 'occurs when freedom looks down into its own possibility'. (27) A man cannot easily tolerate the knowledge that his predicament is of his own choosing, his failure of his own making. Freedom means choice, and the choice is—if it is real and concerned with genuine crossroads and the options which count—one agony men dread more than any else. There is an air of irrevocability to each act of choice: for each road chosen, there are many abandoned once and for all. Choice is, therefore, the gateway through which finality enters the open-ended and hopeful human existence; choice is the point at which the unnegotiable past gets hold of the amenable future. The experience of freedom is, therefore, an inexhaustible source of fear. If the experience of nature arouses curiosity and creative energy ('only in the name of something not of my own creation can I usurp the want of creation') (28) this other experience generates an overwhelming urge to escape. It is not knowledge, paving the way for free action, which is sought, but, on the contrary, a powerful authority contradicting the evidence of experience, exposing its frailty and undependability. What is wanted above everything else is the removal of the burden of responsibility. Free will in itself is an unfathomable well of anxiety. Free will, conceived as the only cause of constraint, irrevocability and finality in human fate, is a nightmare.

God is thereby generated at both poles of the human experience. On the 'reality pole', as He who set the world clock. On the 'freewill pole', as He who pre-determined human fate and conduct, while refusing human creatures the ability to discern the inevitable behind the phantom of their free decisions. On the first pole, He stands as just a name for the obviously known; He adds little to the content of human experience. On the second pole, however, He is an alien, powerful force, suppressing and re-moulding the data of experience. It is here that He is particularly desired and most intensely awed. Here His presence does not contain its own proof and requires all the emotion and power of belief for it to take root. Naively and intuitively, men know their responsibility, but dread the knowledge and wish to suppress it. If they experience their relation to the world as antagonism, they feel much more comfortable if the play in which they act is staged and directed by an imperious, high-handed director. Perhaps it is not the frustration itself, but the awareness of one's own fault which induces most of the suffering, and is most difficult to withstand.

Religion has always built its spiritual power on this essential need which stems from men's confrontation with their world. The priests in all their many garbs, whether those of Radin's 'religious formulators', or Eliade's 'shamans', have always acted as the mediators between the Director and the actor whom He moves over the stage without divulging His intentions or the denouement of the plot. Each actor knew only his own few lines, and could surmise only that his part dovetailed somehow, somewhere, into the parts of the other members of the cast and combined with them into a meaningful whole. No conclusive proof that it did indeed do so could he derive from the lines he knew. Deep in his heart a terrifying suspicion gnawed at his very ability to take part in the show: life was but a walking shadow; it was a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing… But to admit this to himself, to articulate this intolerable dread, was to refuse to act, to reject life and to choose death. It was the job of the priests to see to it that the suspicion never surfaced; in this they co-operated with the man-made structure of the life-process, designed in such a way as never to give the opportunity for ultimate questions and final

choices. The priests had to mount a convincing case for the existence of the Director. And then they had to interpret His design, never unveiled by the Author himself in the presence of the uninitiated. They had to demonstrate the meaning behind the absurd, the plan behind the random string of unconnected events, the supreme logic peeping through the endless chain of personal defeats. The belief that one is nothing but a pawn in the superior player's hands removes unhappiness from bad luck. It is a benign, charitable belief.

Its antagonist is the doctrine of free will. It is the idea of free will, continuously suggested by daily experience, which has to be suppressed in the first place for God to relieve men of the tormenting realization of their immense task. God's therapeutic job of reconciling men to their fate cannot be completed so long as the slightest remnants of the free will doctrine linger in human consciousness. Pelagianism was, therefore, the most treacherous and subversive of all heresies with which religion had to wrestle. It was Pelagius' view that God's grace is a reward for human merit rather than its condition. The view could easily ruin the subtle therapeutic design of the church: were it accepted, men would have to struggle for God's grace and to blame themselves were it not forthcoming—to wit, to go through all the agonies which they sought to escape when embracing their belief in God. It was, therefore, against Pelagius that St Augustine loosed his most poisonous arrows. In doing so, he formulated the original theory of deviation, later to be taken over and re-phrased by Durksonianism: God's grace precedes all merit and is the preliminary, necessary condition of human virtue. The latter is inconceivable without the active intervention of God. If man breaks loose, if he defies God's command, if he attempts to stand on his own feet—sin is the only possible result. No merit awaits man on his road to independence. The distance he adopts in relation to God is the measure of his deviance. Amidst the crumbling and decomposing souvenirs of the most grandiose civilization mankind had known to date, with the terrors of the great Barbarian Unknown just across the gate, Augustine evoked God as the last retreat of steady ground amidst the earthquake: 'With a hidden goad thou didst urge me, that I might be restless until such time as the sight of my mind might discern thee for certain'.(29) The good is in the embracing of God. Since his fall, man's free will, if unaided by God, can lead only to morbid sin. It is only God's grace which fills the empty container of will with the desire to do good. One can say, in anticipation of the future vagaries of Augustinian anti-Pelagianism: it is the powerful force 'over there' which makes man a moral being. To escape the perversions lying in wait in the wilderness of the will considering itself to be free, man has to 'put himself in Him who made him', adjust himself to his predicament, embrace it willingly and gratefully.

The Durksonian deified society will later inherit such redeeming potentials of God. The Durksonian vision will take over Augustinian contempt for the sinful, beastly flesh and the location of the morally ennobling reunion with God in the higher regions of the Spirit—the 'situs' of belief, trust, and self-constraint. Durksonian sociology will take over the traditional function of the priest: the interpretation of the supra-individual order, modelling the inscrutable into intelligibility, imposing an iron-clad logic upon seemingly irrational, chance events, lending meaning to apparently nonsensical human fate. Contrary to Nietzsche, God is not quite dead. Demystification of the human community has taken on the form of deification of the communal sources of individual unfreedom. The perpetual effort to satisfy cognitive and emotional needs fomented by daily experience has not stopped. It is not likely that it ever will.

Whatever the veracity of sociological models and the reliability of their verification, they owe much of their credibility to the degree of intelligibility they lend to the protean human experience, and to the extent to which they match the criteria of acceptability as fixed by experience-determined urges. In other words, the more chance a sociological model stands of being absorbed by commonsensical wisdom and, with time, of being perceived as obvious, the stronger the case it makes for the inevitability which resides in the human life-setting and the more relief it offers to the 'dizziness of freedom'. The mainstream sociological conceptualizations of pre-predicative experience were always distinguished by their demonstrating the determinism of human action and revealing the hidden sense of phenomena whose wisdom and utility was not immediately apparent.

This was, indeed, the ubiquitous tendency in the prevailing brand of sociology, as exemplified by Durksonianism. Such Wrong-style complaints as were levied against the allegedly 'oversocialized' concept of man proclaimed by this sociology were misdirected, since the concept of socialization was not an empirical description of human behaviour, but an analytical postulate commensurate with God's grace and aimed at the same task of rendering human fate intelligible and bearable; far from being an error to be easily corrected to the benefit of the ruling paradigm, it has been its 'sine qua non' attribute and paramount source of strength. No other secular form seems to be available for promoting the idea of the essentially determined character of human conduct. If society replaced God in the role of the source of necessity, socialization is a natural substitute for the God-operated springs of human deeds.

Socialization is, indeed, a well-nigh wholesome substitute. It meets at one fell swoop cognitive and emotional pleas pressed by both poles of human experience: it binds one pole to the other, creating a situation in which the explanatory formulae attached to either confirm and reinforce each other. To the cognitive query: 'what is nature-like in the human setting?', the answer is: 'the socially-supported moral ideas which confront you with the stubborn reality of things'. To the emotional anxiety arising from the experience of freedom and choice an answer is given which is derivative of and complementary to the first: free will is an illusion, in so far as whatever you do, has been impelled by the ideas you have absorbed from your social environment; the selfsame moral (cultural, normative) ideas which society has been inculcating in you from your birth on. It is society, therefore, which simultaneously makes you what you are and bears the responsibility for it. Sociology fought the 'illusion of free will' with the doggedness and zeal which the religious doctrine of providence previously manifested. The fact that religion fought free will as heresy, whereas sociology has fought it as a 'mystical', i.e. unscientific, notion—cannot conceal the striking affinity of attitudes and intellectual projects.

In fundamentalist sociology, as in fundamentalist religion, the major, 'noble' determinism in human conduct has had, however, all along, a competitor: a different kind of determinism, usually assessed as somewhat inferior, less worthy, better to be got rid of, though never entirely eliminable. This feature of a dual determinism or the dual sources of inevitability in human behaviour perhaps owes its persistence again to comnonsensical experience, whose evidence it articulates. It is, however, a different aspect of the experience it reflects. This time it is not the essential split of experience into nature-like constraints and the intuition of free choice, but the perception of acts as differentially valued, as divided into commendable and condemnable, allowed and prohibited by a superior power—sometimes felt as situated 'within', sometimes as coming from outside the acting individual. All system

is a limitation, an exclusion of some occurrences on behalf of some others and social systems, which delineate the outer framework of human life are no exception to this rule; hence the manichaic streak in intuitive experience is fairly universal, positing at all times a troublesome problem for fundamentalist world views. To be complete and cohesive, such a world view had to account for the fact that despite the presence of superior and, in essence, benevolent (good, humanizing) power (God, society), acts which cannot be tolerated and ought to be assessed as negative (sin, deviance) do occur on a more or less permanent basis. Answers to this challenge occupied the whole continuum from the outrightly manichaic solution to that which tried hard to steer clear of manichaic temptations, and which, in the end, put in question the omnipotence of the central power. As we know, the official doctrine of the Christian Church took a sharply antimanichaic stand. It was accepted, again from the time of St Augustine, that evil is a purely negative phenomenon rather than another 'substance': evil is the non-possession of grace and derives from the inability of the wan, imperfect human creature to reach the 'ought' prescribed for him in God's mind; the possibility that God may be somewhat less than omnipotent, or—worse still—that He might be a source of evil as well as the source of good, was considered unacceptable. Not so in sociology. Its solutions were, on the whole, akin to the Christian tradition, in that it never permitted anyone to doubt that deviant acts occur in spite of the dominant tendency of society rather than as a result of it. In all other respects, however, the sociological tradition was much more tolerant to manichaic ideas. On one hand, the occurrence of deviant, and by definition disruptive, acts was traced back to the technical imperfection of the many means applied by society to keep its members in check—to the society which was not quite up to the task. On the other, particularly in the Adam Smith—Max Weber tradition, departures from the 'normal' pattern sponsored by society were ascribed to the intrinsic, or residual irrationality of human action—and, in particular, to the emotional, non-intellectual layers of human personality. The essential incompatibility of the affectual and the rational, of emotion and reason has been an unquestionable truth to virtually all sociologists; superiority of the second over the first has in fact been taken for granted, though the terms in which it has been articulated varied. By Comte as well as by Weber, this superiority was organized along historical lines—the rational system superseding that founded upon affection—and was thereby projected as the axis of societal progress. Sociologists, on the whole, side with the social practice which tends to denigrate, condemn and suppress drives defined as 'biological', deriving from the human animal infrastructure and in opposition to those socially inspired and legitimized. They, therefore, posit their own formula of objectivity and truth-pursuit as the historical tendency of the human world as such. This theme is found beyond the enthusiastic welcome given by Comte to the coming industrial age, this positive age which should be 'matched' only by a similarly positive science of human affairs. One can find the same theme, though presented in a considerably refined manner, in Weber's diagnosis of the trend towards the legal-rational society. It is this society, in which men are increasingly prompted to act according to the rules of instrumental rationality, which lends ultimate sanction to the plausibility of an objective social science: ideal types, positing the behaviour of a rational actor in given circumstances, will approximate more closely to actual conduct in conditions where other bases of social action, and, above all, traditional and affectual, recede to the margins of social life. The final triumph of objective knowledge over the emotional, the subjective, the pre-social,

parallels the historical tendency towards the institutionalization of rational objectifications of socially selected behavioural patterns. The sociologists' neglect of the non-rational aspects of human experience is increasingly justified by the consistent elimination of such aspects, or their diminishing social importance, as a result of social development itself.

The above reasoning squares well with another tendency of sociology—that is, to seek the meaning which occurrences derive from their relation to the societal whole, rather than from intentions of actors. Kingsley Davis was in a sense right in declaring a separate 'functional method' to be a myth, and proclaiming the concept of function to be constitutive of sociology as a whole. It is true that thinking in terms of 'function' has been consistently much more widespread than any particular school which identified itself with such usage, Having assumed once and for all that it is society which defines the conditions of human life, which shapes human 'nature', sociologists could, without further argument, depict as the meaning of a recurrent or single social event, its role in sustaining and perpetuating this very activity of society. It is the calculus of function, therefore, rather than ordinary logical calculus, which decides the meaningfulness of customs and rites, institutions and usages. It is no longer the individual reason of 'les philosophes', but the impersonal, invisible reason of society, which decides whether a social phenomenon does, or does not, make sense. What seems to be absurd and despicable to individual reason, may still be utterly 'logical' from the wider and more objective vantage point of society, from which its function becomes evident. If the reason of 'les philosophes' was Protestant in spirit—each individual reads the Bible, each has the right to interpret its meaning—sociologists took the line pursued by the Catholic strategy of communication with God mediated by professional priests, who are alone in their ability and their right to uncover the hidden meaning and sense in the allegedly inscrutable verdicts of God.

The great achievement of a sociology which developed as the science of unfreedom has been the unity of its ontology, methodology, and cognitive function. The grip in which sociology has successfully kept human imagination is strengthened by the fact that it is 'based on these objectifications of reality which we undertake daily', that it 'merely extends the everyday procedure of objectifying reality', as Habermas pertinently observed. (30) It is fed by the pre-predicative experience of the life-process as essentially unfree, and of freedom as a fear-generating state, and it aptly supplies apposite cognitive and emotional outlets to both intuitions. It merely reinforces the intuition of unfreedom, and the supremacy of the outer condition over individual cravings. It makes this unfreedom less intolerable by positing its inherent wisdom and coherence. It assists the individual in his spontaneous effort of disposing of the excessive, and, therefore, anxiety-ridden, freedom of choice, by either positing this freedom as illusion or advising him that such freedom is supported by reason which has been delimited and defined beforehand by society, whose power of judgement he cannot challenge; not only because of its superior strength, but simply because the distinction between reason and unreason is synonymous with the division between society and non-social, i.e., animal life.

Sociology, therefore, as the science of unfreedom, answers the call coming from the perplexed individual searching his own experience for such meaning as can make it acceptable. It placates that experience which is vexed and confused by the incompatibility of individual freedom with the actuality of the life-process not of the individual's choice. It saves the individual from the torments of indecision and the responsibility he is too weak

to bear, by sharply cutting down the range of acceptable options to the size of his 'real' potential. The price it pays, however, for playing such a benign and charitable role is its essentially conservative impact upon the society it helps people to explain and understand.

It has become increasingly popular, mostly in politically motivated quarters, to accuse established sociology of a vulgar 'distortion of truth', of uniting with the powerful in praise of their order and in their effort to convince the oppressed and the duped of its intrinsic virtue, The critics who wish to expose the genuine role of sociology in the struggle of groups and their ideas, tend to look, it seems, in the wrong direction. They seem to identify the partisan, ideological function with propaganda in favour of the superior qualities of a specific type of social system; hence they assume that their case will be proved if they can show that sociologists, while pretending to be impartial and objective, in fact smuggle into their allegedly non-partisan descriptions attitudes heavily laden with partisan values. Hence analysis of the cultural role of sociology often takes the form of a peculiar 'value-hunting'. The game the hunters are after is proof that sociology is 'bourgeois ideology', and this proof will take the form of a demonstration that, explicitly, or implicitly, sociology extols the virtues of a bourgeois society and inspires, or tries to inspire, popular sympathy for its attributes.

The hunters are on a false track. A strong case has been repeatedly made on behalf of 'value-freedom' which sociology has achieved, or strives towards with a measure of success. Sociologists do agree with Comte, when he protested against 'metaphysical thinking', which exaggerated 'ridiculously the influence of the individual mind upon the course of human affairs', and called for man's nature to be given 'a solemn character of authority which must always be respected by rational legislation'—in short, to 'assume the ground of observed realities'. (31) In so far as this observable reality towers high above the level of meagre individual capacities, the truth of sociologists towers high above the truncated, partial truths of individuals or groups of individuals. Sociology contains no more partisan values than the reality it describes has incorporated and petrified. But sociologists do take one fateful decision: to remain entirely on the ground of this reality, not to transcend it, to recognize as valid and worthy knowledge only such information as can be checked against this reality here and now. The alternatives which this reality renders unrealistic, unlikely, fantastic, sociology promptly declares utopian and of no interest to science. In this, and perhaps in this alone, resides the intrinsically conservative role of sociology as the science of unfreedom. Sociology acts on the assumption that social reality is regular and subject to recurrent, monotonous uniformities; by making such an assumption, it posits social reality as conforming as much as possible to that description. By positing it in such a form, sociologists perpetuate belief in the 'natural' rather than the historical character of social arrangements. In other words, it is not true that sociologists take conservative attitudes in order to lend support to, and extol, bourgeois virtues; they may inadvertently lend such support if reality they 'naturalize' happens to institutionalize such virtues; but then it would offer similar service were other principles the object of institutionalization.

The stance of 'techne' (in opposition to gambling, random acts, etc.) may be applied only to objects which are essentially constant in their behaviour, and therefore predictable. Hence positing the social world as nature, subject to a repeatable cyclicality described as laws, is a necessity for any knowledge which intends to serve the technical interests of men. And sociology, as we know it, does desire to serve such interests. If human institutions are

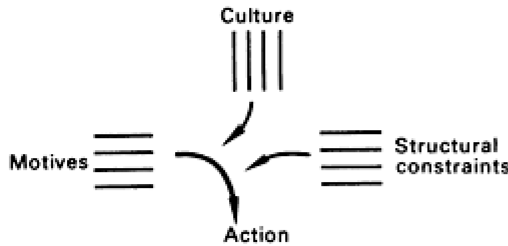
to be treated as objects of technologically informed manipulation, they must be seen as law-abiding units of nature-like reality. At any rate, they are of interest to sociology only inasmuch as they fit that model. As Bernard Berelson once candidly put it, 'The ultimate end is to understand, explain, and predict human behaviour in the same sense in which scientists understand, explain, and predict the behaviour of physical forces or biological entities or, closer home, the behaviour of goods and prices in the economic market'. (32) It is only natural that such an end be seen and portrayed as impartial and free of earthly commitments apart from the universal human desire to know in order to act. Within the limits of a given society any knowledge which such an end may beget is, in a sense, impartial. There is nothing, indeed, in the knowledge itself (though a lot in the surrounding social conditions) which pre-determines its exclusive utilization by one rather than another part of society. The intrinsic bias of such knowledge lies elsewhere—in its stubborn (though prudent, considering its aims) refusal to transcend the horizon fixed by the prerequisites of the technical interest alone. But this can hardly be held against knowledge which frankly concedes its commitment to the technical-instrumental service. To be at peace with itself, to remain faithful to its pledge and deliver the goods it has promised, sociology has to resist resolutely the temptation to reach beyond the boundaries of reality here and now—the only object of a technically sound and effective action. George Lundberg, that most outspoken interpreter of the programme of positive sociology, could indeed be righteously indignant when faced with demands (or accusations) that sociology ought to be (or is) a politically committed endeavour:

> I am opposed to making science the tail of any political kite whatsoever… I have emphasized that political scientists are indispensable to any political regime. Social scientists had better work toward a corresponding status… The social sciences of the future will not pretend to dictate to men the ends of existence or the goals of striving. They will merely chart the possible alternatives, the consequences of each and the most efficient technique of arriving at whatever ends man shall from time to time consider it worth while to pursue… No regime can get along without it. (33)

To be fair, a 'Wertfrei' sociology would shirk from the vexing issue of the social responsibility of scientists no more than natural scientists have done, 'wertfrei' as they are to everybody's satisfaction. But the contention is that the fact that human beings are objects which sociology helps to manipulate, does not posit the issue of responsibility and commitment in a qualitatively different light.

Indeed, Lundberg's point is almost trivially true. No ideological gulfs between regimes seem to bear much relevance (freak historical variations notwithstanding) to their uniformly keen interest—sometimes unrecognized, but always 'objectively' present—in the kind of technical service so cogently exposed in Lundberg's programme. There is little doubt that this programme is really 'neutral' in terms of ideological divisions, that is to say, in terms of those specific models of social organization the virtual or would-be managers of social processes would wish people to love or, at any rate, to enact and to perpetuate through their orderly behaviour. Such partisan commitment as may be sensibly imputed to this programme is of an entirely different nature and cuts across existing (as well as possible, conceivable) political camps.

Logically, social science may influence human behaviour—perform the 'engineering' function—in two different ways. If 'engineering' consists, by definition, in the shaping or re-shaping of an object by factors external to it and designed without its participation, then the distinction between the two is determined by the very structure of human action, as it has been schematically portrayed:



Granted that the individual's motives remain (unless processed culturally) beyond the reach of the factors dealt with by social science proper (these motives may be acted directly upon by drugs, brain surgery, etc.), there still remain two openings through which an outside influence may penetrate the course of the action and modify it, The first is, broadly speaking, the 'cultural' opening. It conveys those cognitive assertions and normative precepts which the individual employs to assess the situation he confronts and to select the 'right' (that is, commendable in one of its many senses, e.g., effective or morally elevated) course of action. The individual's motives processed by such cultural factors and applied in order to assess the relative value of different courses of action is in fact the meaning of the widely used concept of the 'definition of situation'. The factors which enter the action through the cultural opening are aimed precisely at the definition of the situation. By supplying the actor with new information about the environment, about himself, and about their reciprocal relations, with knowledge of new ways of acting, or with the image of possible ends of action, these factors may prompt the actor to change his view of the situation and its eventual consequences, or, on the contrary, to strengthen his attachment to the previous definition. For example, by exposing intimate links between the limits of individual gratification and freedom of action on the one hand, and societal networks of power and wealth (normally invisible to the unaided individual eye), the private experience of individual suffering and frustration may be transplanted from a 'consumer deprivation' intellectual scheme into a 'class exploitation' scheme. Accordingly, subsequent action may be re-directed from the industrial, trade-oriented context into the total, society-inscribed one. Or, by connecting the diverse components of individual strivings and accomplishments into a communal unit styled as the nation, the tendency to consider the nation as the prime object of loyalty, together with the ensuing propensity to ethnocentric behaviour, may be reinforced.

The 'cultural' factors appeal, therefore, to individual consciousness. They tend to broaden individual vision, to indicate new, unsuspected horizons from which to review and to assess the individual 'raw' experience. To be accepted, and therefore effectively to reshape the conduct of the individual, they must match, in a sense, the individual demand: they must be perceived as being adequate to the personal experience so far accumulated and sedimented in the individual's private and group memory. This acceptance (or, for that matter, rejection)

is subject to the rules of logic (though not necessarily to the truth of the message, rules of logic formal as they are). They are likely to be appropriated if they ‘make sense’, i.e. if they render meaningful and intelligible the available knowledge of the individual situation, and lend apparent coherence to the disparate odds and ends of the individual’s previous experience. The probability of their acceptance will be further augmented if, in addition, they succeed in pointing out a hopefully reliable way of resolving a task experienced as unpleasant, or stabilizing a situation felt as satisfactory. Their rejection, on the other hand, will by no means be inevitable, unless they appear grossly to contradict previously amassed, experience-supported knowledge. Cultural factors, to conclude, can direct and re-direct human action by offering new vistas (supplying new factual knowledge), or ‘arousing the conscience’ (supplying new values). In both cases, they widen the range of choices cognitively and morally accessible to the individual. Consequently, they extend the freedom of the individual’s action.

Now, any given volume of individual and/or group experience allows for more than one meaningful interpretation. ‘Adequacy’ is, first, a matter of degree; second, it can hardly ever be ascertained conclusively unless put to the practical test. There can, therefore, be more than one intellectual scheme, which renders the experience intelligible and thus makes a strong bid for acceptance. And acceptance or rejection is, on the whole, a matter of competition and practical trial. In the process, these aspects of the interaction between experience, cultural formulae and action are revealed which have been, in various ways, subsumed under the name of ideology, However the term ‘ideology’ is defined, it refers to a phenomenon whose essence is neither a distorted relation between a message and the ‘reality’ it purports to portray, nor a partisan, unscientific attitude supposedly impelling some action on the part of the author. The attribution of the term ‘idological’ refers in fact to the specific way in which the ideas in question—those affecting individual definitions of the situation—are adopted or rejected as interpretations of reality and guides to action. Their apparent partisanship and endemic inability to live up to the exacting stipulations of ‘consensus omnii’ result not so much from their intrinsic flaws and formal defects, but from the persistent diversity of the individual and group predicament and experience, which ultimately wields the key to social praxis.

The simultaneous presence of several competing cultural formulae, coupled with the impossibility of assessing in advance their adequacy in terms of multifarious individual and group experiences—to determine their possible application—results in ‘cultural engineering’ acquiring the form of a continuous discourse, in which verbal exchanges alternate with practical tests. The assimilation of cultural formula requires the active stance of the person or group whose definition of the situation is to be reformed. In the process of enlightenment the initiative is perhaps distributed unequally, but as the process develops the distinction between subjects and objects of action tends to be blurred. The cultural influence prompts the activity of the actor, both theoretically and practically; it puts the actor in a situation of active choice and forces him to re-analyse his own conduct and its relation to the social setting in which it takes place. New and alternative cultural formulae enable the actor to take a detached posture toward his own activity, to approach it as an object which can be objectively scrutinized and reliably evaluated. Putting the actor on the outside of his own life routine, it may liberate him from the shackles of habit, irremovable as long as they are unreflected upon. In short, influencing human action through the process of enlightenment, through cultural discourse, is an agent of freedom.

Unlike the cultural constituent of human action, the 'objective' structure of the actor's situation, usually presented as 'structural constraints', has little to say concerning the ends and meanings of individual or group praxis; its only role in the general scheme of action consists in setting the ultimate limits to the actor's 'sensibility'—in classifying possible actions into the realistic and the abortive. It will decide which courses of action, of those the individual or the group may take, stand a chance of success, and which are, From the start, out of the question. In other words, structural constraints delineate the boundaries of individual or group freedom. The field of freedom may be vast or narrow, depending on the degree to which the situation is structured. Theoretically, it is possible to narrow it enough to make the pursuit of a specific end as improbable as is required in a specific case; either because a rational individual would balk at an admittedly unrealistic effort, or because such an effort, even if, for the lack of relevant information or understanding, he were to make it, would lead him nowhere. This remarkable quality of structural constraints can be, in principle, exploited by anybody who would like an individual or a group to take or to abandon a specific course of action. This time, however, influence will be exerted directly on the structure of the situation rather than on its definition (i.e., on the external setting in which action takes place, rather than on the consciousness of the actors). The effectiveness of such influence will not depend on willingness to accept the end as true or morally justified; it certainly does not include a discourse, and eliminates the possibility of role-exchange between participants of the process. On the contrary, it assumes the permanent inequality of status and the split between the subject and the object of influence. Hence the knowledge the influencing agent employs is effective or ineffective regardless of the experience of the human objects whose conduct it is about to shape. This experience is, therefore, irrelevant and can be disregarded in the process of verification (or falsification) of the knowledge in question; and—in so far as such conditions hold—those human objects may indeed be looked upon as 'things', no different from the objects manipulated with the help of the natural sciences. In this sense, Lundberg's insistence on the non-ideological character of the knowledge he proposes to pursue is well justified. The technical-instrumental handling of human objects is indeed a foundation on which a bona fide empirical-analytical science of human affairs can be safely erected.

The practical application of science advocated by Lundberg may be described as an engineering-throngh-situation, as distinct from the previously discussed engineering-through-definition-of-situation. To exemplify the Lundbergian type of engineering, let us consider a typical situation reduced to the simplest diadic form. In this case, the scheme of influence will assume the following shape:

- i A is confronted with alternative action X or Y;
- ii B wishes A to take the action X;
- iii B may then use available assets either to increase rewards attached to X or to maximize the punishments attached to Y.
- iv Following iii, A is now more likely than before to take the action X.

If all these events happen, we can say that B has indeed 'engineered' the action of A, with the important qualification, however, that in the situation of the type described above, what is being 'engineered' is the probability of a specific action, rather than the action itself. However immense B's assets, he will never achieve complete mastery over A's conduct in the sense of excluding all possible alternatives. A's definition of the situation is an

irremovable link in the chain of events leading to the final decision. Still, one can approach very closely indeed a predicament practically indistinguishable from 'inevitability', if B succeeds in lifting the price of alternatives high enough. B does it by manipulating directly the structural constraints which delimit the freedom of A's choice and action.

A, therefore, has been an indirect object of B's action, A's situation being this action's direct object. The knowledge B has required to set A in the kind of motion he wished is information of the statistical probability of a specific action being increased or decreased depending on the re-arranging of the elements of the actor's situation. If the images and definitions supplied by sociology of a Durksonian type—one aimed above all at satisfying the need of intelligibility—can exercise its technical-instrumental role only through the consciousness of actors, the kind of knowledge serving the second type of engineering has been developed in the so-called 'behavioural sciences'. To obtain such knowledge, one has to arrange, in B.F.Skinner's words, a 'repeatable bit of behaviour' in a 'causal chain consisting of three links: 1 an operation performed upon the organism from without—for example, water deprivation; 2 an inner condition—for example, physiological or psychic thirst and 3 a kind of behaviour—for example, drinking'. The second link is, however, 'useless in the control of behaviour unless we can manipulate it'. (34) We can therefore disregard this link, as we do the 'mysterious notion of free will', as the element which will contribute nothing to our results. Analytically, it is argued, human behaviour posits no problems essentially different from those encountered, say, in the exploration of flies' conduct; and as for the latter, 'if no one calculated the orbit of a fly, it is only because no one has been sufficiently interested in doing so'. Well, there is still one difference: all knowledge, if available to all, can in the case of humans (though not in the case of flies) turn into a self-destroying prophecy. To this objection Skinner resolutely retorts: 'There may have been practical reasons why the results of the poll in question could not be withheld until after the election, but this would not be the case in a purely scientific endeavour'. (35) The type of technical-instrumental interests behavioural sciences aspire to serve have no use for the consciousness of controlled actors. If it appears in related arguments, it is only in the role of an irritant which would be better disposed of entirely.

The knowledge sought in the above case, therefore, when effectively applied, can be kept away from the individuals or groups whose behaviour it is about to influence. Far from being a mere technical expedient, this is an integral trait of the knowledge in question. It cannot but polarize men into those who think and act, and those who are acted upon, into subjects and objects of action. It is not true that such knowledge disregards all consciousness, values, ends—that is, everything 'subjective'. It is only the motivations, preferences, norms and beliefs of the objects of control-through-reinforcement which such knowledge evicts into the field of the irrelevant. Naturally, there is no intention to communicate with them or, indeed, reform; no question of knowledge as a dialogue may even be posited within the universe of discourse defined by the programme of the behavioural sciences. In this sense, the output of behavioural sciences is indeed ideologically neutral in the same way as bureaucracy, whose vantage point it employs to perceive the world as manipulable without committing itself to any specific end of manipulation—and thereby positing the manipulation as a technical problem.

But is the technical tool of behavioural knowledge available to all who may wish to employ it for the advancement of the ends they cherish? Skinner, to be sure, is aware of

the problem: 'It is true that we can gain control over behaviour only in so far as we can control the factors responsible for it. What a scientific study does is to enable us to make optimal use of the control we possess'. 'Us' obviously means here, people who are already in control of the resources necessary for the application of behavioural findings. The type of knowledge which behavioural sciences are intent on supplying does not interfere with the extant distribution of assets; if anything, it will have a 'funnelling' effect, emphasizing and further polarizing present inequalities. 'Us', therefore, rather than universalizing human status in relation to the benefits science can offer, divides men sharper still into two highly unequal groups. The marvels of 'neutral technology' will probably be of greater use to a prison governor than to a prisoner, to a military commander than to a private, to a general manager than to a clerk, to a party leader than to a rank-and-file member. The kind of engineering which is catered for by behavioural sciences is therefore committed and partisan from the start (though not in the usual ideological way), in the sense that it reinforces the already existing split between subjects and objects of action, the controllers and the controlled, the superiors and the subordinated—and renders its elimination even more difficult than otherwise would have been the case.

One should not lightly dismiss, however, the enlightenment impact still exercised, though inadvertently, by behavioural sciences. The image of men and the mechanism of their action propagated by these sciences may induce the tendency to perceive the world as a set of manipulable objects, and the life process as a set of technical problems rather than questions which, to be solved, require communication and discourse. The yearning for wisdom and meaning will then degenerate into a demand for technical instruction of the 'do it yourself' sort, and the problem of meaningful life will be reforged into the question how to 'win friends and influence people' and to otherwise outwit one's brethren.

Of the two brands of sociology, which acts programmatically as the science of unfreedom, one brand, therefore, tends to reinforce the harsh realities to which the second tends to induce men to reconcile themselves. Each, in its own way, plays in culture an essentially conservative role. Each tends to suppress, in its own way, alternative forms of social existence and to identify the historically created situation, either conceptually or in practice, with nature-like reality.

However well such sociology may serve the perpetuation of everyday life, informing the mundane daily routine (in its engineering-through-definition role) and enhancing the efficiency of the network of power (in its engineering-through-situation role), its inability to account for the persistent experience of human freedom and to assist its promotion engenders time and again dissent and rebellion.

Chapter 2
CRITIQUE OF SOCIOLOGY

THE HUSSERLIAN REVOLUTION

As we have seen, it is commonsensical, mundane experience which lends plausibility to the sociological explanation of human existence. It is thanks to this powerful and ubiquitous support that sociology may neglect the task of testing and proving the legitimacy of its own activity. Its legitimacy is taken for granted, assumed as being borne out by the flow of everyday experience: it is only the way of keeping it so—that is, the technical problem of accuracy and precision in fulfilling the task whose validity is beyond question—which remains problematic.

And so sociologists rarely look into the foundations of the sumptuous edifice they erect and adorn only from the ground floor up. Indeed, the attitude taken by sociology to its own uiltimate source is strikingly reminiscent of that peculiar blend of embarrassed reticence and neurotically ostentatious disdain with which a 'nouveau riche' of humble origin often treats his ancestry. Officially, sociology is the critique of commonsense. In reality, this critique never goes as far as fundamentals and never brings to light the shared assumptions which render both commonsense and sociology meaningful. It is perhaps precisely because of this close and intimate kinship that sociology can never set itself outside commonsense at a great enough distance for these tacit premisses to become visible. Pragmatically, such a long stride outside the secure field would be patently unwise. To question the reliability of the ontological evidence supplied by commonsense would certainly mean an earthquake, which could easily shatter the whole edifice of the science of unfreedom. Even a naive, philosophically unrefined reflection on the validity of commonsensical experience reveals how much emotional security and self-righteousness rests on how brittle a foundation. As Robert Heilbroner put it:(1)

> to the ordinary person, reared in the tradition of Western empiricism, physical objects usually seem to exist 'by themselves' out there in time and space, appearing as disparate clusters of sense data. So, too, social objects appear to most of us as things… All these categories of reality often present themselves to our consciousness as existing by themselves, with defined boundaries that set them off from other aspects of the social universe. However abstract, they tend to be conceived as distinctly as if they were objects to be picked up and turned over in one's hand.

As in the quoted paragraph, even the very beginning of the scrutiny reveals two things which sociology normally is reluctant to discuss. First, our ontological knowledge of the 'objectivity' of categories of reality is ultimately based on the fact that they appear to the ordinary person as such; and this appearance is never naive and pure, but a result of a

complex process of training. Second, the allegedly unshakeable obviousness of objectivity is, in fact, constantly produced and re-produced by an intrinsically tautological process. The ontological premisses of empiricism derive their proof from commonsensical perceptions which deliver such proof only because they themselves have been trained for the purpose by the assumptions they are supposed to validate.

It is from this circular process of sham validation that Husserl, and phenomenology, purported to liberate our knowledge. They saw the way to this emancipation in the critique of tolerated, rather than consciously accepted, commonsensical assumptions. Having conceived of the process of knowledge as a self-enclosed, hermetically sealed field which is set in motion (and, consequently, capable of being reformed) all by itself, Husserl identified the task of restoring human knowledge to a sound and unshakable foundation with that of purifying the nuclear experience from foreign, inadmissible admixtures. The first element to be separated and purged was precisely the tacit assumption of existence, on which belief in the validity of the sociological exercise (as well as of many other similar exercises) was buttressed.

Husserl's project was a resurrection of an old preoccupation of philosophers rather than the positing of a question previously unasked. Its staggering impact was due to the fact that Husserl restated, publicly and forcefully, ideas not daily present in an age in which empiricisn was too well established to bother with vindicating the truthfulness of its claims. Potentially, however, they had remained an integral part of the Western philosophical tradition long before Husserl recovered them from the remote corner of the intellectual storage room, to bring them back into the focus of philosophical analysis. Indeed, such ideas were current as far back as the beginnings of the Western philosophical tradition in the works of Plato and Aristotle. It was Plato who questioned, more than two thousand years before Husserl, the solidity of that knowledge which may be derived from the 'mere' existence of a phenomenon; real truth resides in extemporal ideas and can be sought by insight, by unmediated intimation with the necessary. By the same token he ascribed to the existence of objects a somewhat inferior, and above all unstable, protean, accidental status: it followed that genuine knowledge could not possibly rest on such a shaky, moving foundation. As for Aristotle, he carefully separated essence from existence, as a category in its own right, and—most important of all—autonomous in relation to existence. The information 'that' something is, throws little light on the question 'what' is it. Existence is accidental to essence and, therefore, does not illuminate it; on the other hand, existence is not included, and therefore cannot be derived from, the essence of things. This latter motif, in particular, was later broadly discussed by Avicenna, and it was through his works that it was brought to the attention of, and keenly absorbed by, modern European philosophy. With the advent of a science wed to technical-instrumental interests, it was instrumental in the gradual abandonment of 'essences' as the barren ground on which no useful information with technical import could flourish.

The essence-existence dilemma has always sprung to the attention of philosophers in the epistemological context. Its importance was derived from the centrality of the question 'how do we know what we think we know?', or, more specifically, 'how can we be sure of the truth of our knowledge?' The great achievement of modern science consists precisely in the fact that it has managed to make its everyday activities, and the utility of their results, independent of any answer which one could give to these questions, thereby evicting the questions themselves beyond the boundaries of its own self-sustained system. Not unless

a science faces an ontological crisis do such questions become again an integral link in its validating logic. Since, however, these questions have no points of communication with the ordinary daily practices of science, it is highly unlikely that they will ever be imposed upon scientists by the logic of their own inquiry. If at all, they will come from the regions normally considered as external to science—again an occurrence which is highly unlikely in view of the institutionalized autonomy of the scientific community. The so-called social sciences, to be sure, form an exception to this rule: because of their wide lay audience and their decision to select comnonsensically accessible experience as their subject, they can never succeed in subjecting their object to their exclusive rule, or in fortifying their autonomy by the ordinary means of professional elitism guarded by self-selection. Whatever the reason, the social sciences are the only ones which are organically incapable of purging themselves of the epistemological question once and for all. Unlike the natural sciences, their positive findings and their sheer meaningfulness hinge directly on the stance taken towards this central problem. However hard they try, social sciences cannot separate epistemological issues from the object they choose to investigate. That is to say, it is on these issues that the reliability of the 'obviously given' existence of social objects ultimately depends.

To this question St Augustine gave a virtually Platonic answer, later to be turned by Husserl into the cornerstone of his philosophy: 'You, who wish to know, know you that you are? I know. Whence know you? I know not…. Know you that you think? I know. Therefore it is true that you think. It is true'.(2) No certainty of existence is given to the human thought with such an obviousness as to render further questioning redundant—apart from the certainty of the thought itself. The fact of thinking is the only indubitable reality which is given so clearly that it does not require any proof. More than twelve centuries later Descartes will make the bold step St Augustine was prudent to eschew: in the famous 'cogito ergo sum', he will suggest that the actual existence of the thinking subject, aside from the fact of thinking, is directly given in the unmediated experience: therefore, the question of whether at least one object—the 'substratum' of my thinking—exists, is answered conclusively by the very act of thinking. In such a way the thinking subject validates simultaneously the essence and the existence. One can draw reliable information concerning both from the same source and by virtue of the same act. This was, in fact, a daring and fateful departure from the previous philosophical tradition originated by the ancient sage. What Descartes in fact suggested, was that existence is as necessary and self-imposing as the truth of the essence. This might have played an important 'go-ahead' role in times when the infant sciences had to look carefully over their shoulder at their clerical watchdogs—but the patchiness of the alleged reconciliation was something which could not be concealed for long from the philosopher's eye. After Descartes, just as before him, philosophers continued to divide themselves into those who denigrated intellectual insights in favour of sensual impressions and those who—faithful to Plato—could not but deplore the unreliability of 'creeping empiricism'.

Moses Hess was perhaps the first bluntly to declare as fake the majestic logic of the 'cogito'. He stressed that Descartes had no right whatsoever, on the strength of obviousness alone, to jump from the awareness of thinking to the assumption of 'substantia cogitans', and from there to the reality of causal relations, allegedly warranted by the same immediacy. Hess's metaphor was a child looking into a mirror and believing that there must be another object behind his impression; the child eagerly peeps behind the mirror, only to find to his

bewilderment, a dark surface impervious to his eye. The conclusion is terrifying: either we succeed in substantiating our knowledge by the very act of thinking, or it will forever rest on moving sands. Husserl, in a way, picked up this task where Hess, having had it barely sketched, abandoned it.

Husserl would settle for nothing less than establishing, beyond doubt, the conditions on which we can obtain and possess knowledge which is necessary, that is to say, independent of contingent existence, essential, in the sense of showing what things really are instead of in what form they happen to appear, and objective in the sense of being independent of any arbitrary meaning which a psychological, objectifiable, subject may wish to give it. To achieve such a purpose, Husserl proposed to end the millennia of separating ontology and epistemology: the two questions, which constituted two philosophical disciplines, can be answered either together or not at all. 'How do I know?' and 'what things are?' are, in fact, one question unjustly and misleadingly split into two. The only knowledge I may possess is precisaly the knowledge of what things are. Knowing is the knowledge of essence, of inseparable attributes of things. And knowing is the only way in which essences 'exist'. 'Being' is 'Bewusstsein'—being known; 'cogito' and 'cogitatum', 'noesis' and 'noema', are in fact concepts which try to catch the same act of consciousness, though from different sides. 'Noema' refer to the act of 'noesis' looked upon from the point of view of its results; but 'noesis' refers to the 'noema' seen as their mode of being, of 'Bewusstsein'. The only existence of things of which we know for sure, clearly and without doubt, is precisely their 'givenness' as essence—the kind of knowledge-existence implacably denied or neglected by empiricism which focussed on contingent appearances. Meaning, essence, 'Bewusstsein' are created and maintained together in the only act which is given directly, obviously, and without mediation: the act of intentional consciousness. The concepts of subject and object, which the dominant philosophy taught us to employ to describe our world and our way of being in it, are just abstractions which ossify arbitrarily isolated aspects of the virtual 'Bewusstsein'.

But necessary, essential, and objective truth is hidden from our insight by the 'natural attitude'—the careless, naive way of contemplating the world, in which objects appear to us as simply being present 'over there', independently of 'noesis'. The natural attitude is, to be sure, hardly 'natural'; it is a complex product of a multitude of uncontrolled assumptions and information which are taken for granted and never checked. One cannot embark on the thorny road to truth without first 'losing' this world which is ablaze with phoney appearances and misleading beliefs. The first thing to be left behind is all the information we possess or deem to possess of the 'existence' of things. Not that things do not exist 'over there'; but that their existence or non-existence is simply irrelevant to the pursuit of truth, and their objectified existence 'over there', in a mode different from 'Bewusstsein', can add nothing to their essence.

Hence the whole series of 'transcendental reductions', which must be performed in order to render pure 'noesis', untainted by external admixtures, accessible to our insight. The series starts by 'bracketing away', or 'suspending', the question of existence. We simply bar all considerations of existence of things from entering our reasoning. But there are other reductions as well, and one of them is the 'monadic reduction'—one aimed at purifying consciousness of all influences of culture, which shares with existence its contingent, inessential appearance. At the end of the long process of reduction a pure subjectivity emerges, thoroughly cleansed of all the misleading assumptions which refer

to the allegedly 'matter of course' existence. One of the many assumptions which has been reduced away and left behind in the process, is the psychologists' notion of individual consciousness, considered as an 'object' over there, which can be objectively explored 'from outside' and duly described in an objectified language. Thus the sediment left at the bottom of the solution, from which all alien bodies have been scrupulously distilled, is not the individual psyche, but 'transcendental subjectivity' which has little in common with the Cartesian 'substantia cogitans'. It is set in motion by intentionality, instead of causality. It has been made, by the act of multiple reduction, impervious to causal bonds with the world, describable in terms of relations between objects.

There are several ways in which the critique of sociology can draw inspiration from the Husserlian philosophical revolution. All of them, to be sure, are related to the Husserlian re-evaluation of realities rather than to his specific findings and proposed solutions. First is the Husserlian restoration of subjectivity to the status of a valid—indeed, the only valid—subject-matter of knowledge. One can now invoke the authority of Husserl in objecting to behaviourist extremisms. Second and more important, is the peculiarly active meaning which Husserl, following Brentano, attached to his notion of subjectivity: it is an entity characterized above all by its intentionality, the only active element capable of generating meanings and, indeed, creating things themselves in their only reliable modality of 'Bewnsstsein'. These critics weary of the sociologists' irritating habit of objectifying meanings, of tracing them to supra-individual entities like society or culture, and of focussing attention on the means by which these meanings are brought from 'outside' to 'inside' the individual mind, may greet with relish a respectable philosophy which offers its authority in support of the reversal of exploration. Now one can start from the individual as the pristine origin of his world, while enjoying the intellectually comforting feeling that this decision brings emancipation from unwelcome a priori assumptions, that is, genuine liberation from commonsense—that perpetual criterion of the success of the avowed scientific enterprise. Third, the Husserlian treatment of meaning supplies the sought-for means of lending radicality and cohesion to the methodological principles of hermeneutics. Not only is meaning ('Meinung') a derivative of intending ('meinen') rather than an attribute of objects, but it provides all the reliable information about things one can reasonably hope for. Meaning is not something which on principle can and ought to be compared with things 'as they are', and which is, therefore, immanently crippled by that morbid kind of subjectivity whose presence in scientific cogitations requires continual apology. On the contrary, meaning is simultaneously the only source and the only sense of 'Bewusstsein'—the only existence which can be legitimately and sensibly discussed by anybody wishing to grasp the true knowledge of things. Fourth, one can sense, in the emancipation of the validity ('Geltung') of meaning from the actual process of thinking, the way out of the many methodological traps with which the traditional exploration of meanings seemed to be inextricably associated. According to Husserl it is existence alone which depends on actual thinking, dealt with by psychologists; not the meaning itself, situated in the transcendental subjectivity. One can, therefore, validly explore meanings without incurring the wrath of methodological purists who have justly condemned introspective exercises for their heavy reliance of the personal idiosyncrasies of the individual researcher. Meaning is not an entity uniquely located in the mind of an empirical individual, but something transcendental to each individual consciousness and therefore accessible to all. The exploration of meaning

may now be pursued without mediation: the empirical realm, subject to the inter-subjective techniques of scientific observations, need not be entered at any of its stages. The vexing problems of intersubjective verification, which arises immediately whenever (but only when) such transgression takes place, can therefore be mercifully avoided. By the simple expedient of declaring the 'objective referent' irrelevant to the question of validity of meaning one brushes aside the very possibility of questioning the legitimacy of his explorations. The essential definitions of phenomenology surround its territory with a dense line of turrets and moats which render its methodological fortress invulnerable. One can indeed agree with Fink or Scheler, that one cannot understand phenomenology without being a phenomenologist, and that once having become a phenomenologist, one can view with equanimity inroads coming from outside: they are doomed to peter out the moment they break into the fortress. Even the obvious objection, that various phenomenologists, employing faithfully the same method of reduction, may arrive (as they actually do) to widely different intuitions of meaning, makes sense only within the activity organized by notions of 'objective truth' or 'being as it really is in itself': an activity to which Husserl explicitly denies anything approaching an ultimate authority, conceding it at best only a partial, derivative status. The diversity of intuitions signifies perhaps that the practice of reductions has been somewhat short of perfection—but it hardly undermines the validity of the method as such. As it were, Husserl never ascribed the meaning-giving activity to 'a' knowing subject; knowing subjects only attempt—sometimes unsuccessfully—to penetrate, to reflect upon, the meanings which are already 'given' by the transcendental subjectivity much in the same way as they used to be given by the scholastic God.

Practically, all these aspects of the Husserlian project may inspire a kind of research in which the techniques traditionally identified with empirical activity are relegated to a somewhat subordinated status. Instead of supplying outright the sought-for information about 'reality', they will be treated now as only a rawore from which the actual metal is to be smelted. In the empirical activity, the chain of reasoning has been reversed. Husserl called for the application of multiple reduction to uncover the 'transcendental subjectivity' buried under numerous layers of objectifying abstractions. In the empirical research, which Husserl's appeal may generate, the hidden presence of transcendental subjectivity is taken for granted and the question is asked how, in actual fact, this presence makes human discourse possible. That this transcendental subjectivity (or whatever other name is used to denote it) is already there and operative, is not something to be demonstrated. It is taken as proven by Husserl, and therefore employed as a data-organizing, analytical device, even if it is not articulated and is, indeed, ineffable.

I have spoken thus far about the inspiration which one can derive from the Husserlian programme, rather than from Husserl's philosophy as a foundation upon which one could mount a system of sociological knowledge. The decision has been deliberate. Though there are few immanent limits to inspired, though free, interpretations, mounting a sociology upon Husserlian foundations does present difficult problems to which no one, to date, has offered an impeccable solution. Sociology, it is true, has been a family name for an odd gathering of images and activities which, sometimes, barely communicate with each other. Yet, even at loggerheads with each other, these images and activities have been recognizable as 'sociological', because of their common reference to the space extending 'between' human individuals. To be classified as sociological, an image or an activity has

to relate itself to the phenomenon of human interaction. This self-defining act transcends the most vehement disagreements between schools, normally evolving around the method by which this phenomenon should be approached, and the way in which it ought to be conceptualized. The more one wishes to remain faithful to the principles of Husserlian phenomenology, however, the more awkward one finds the task of moving into this field, central as it is to specifically sociological interests.

Indeed, how is one to account for the space 'between' individuals without having first 'unbracketed' the previously suspended existential question? And will not such 'unbracketing' cancel the advantages transcendental reduction might offer? These questions are arguably the stumbling block over which phenomenological enquiry has thus far tried to pass without success, and possibly, without hope of ever succeeding. Transcendental subjectivity, the central object of phenomenological exploration, is indeed an extra-individual entity, but it has as much in common with the interaction space between individuals as consciousness of the Husserlian kind has with the consciousness of psychologists or of British empirical philosophy—that is to say, nothing at all. Transcendental subjectivity is not an entity which may be acted upon, generated by human action, oriented towards, or modified by design; in short, it is not a reality-object. If anything, it precedes, majestically unperturbed and immutable, all objectifiable action. To reach it (and reaching it is precisely what phenomenology is all about) one has to commit oneself to many things, of which 'bracketing away' the field on which sociological knowledge has been mounted, is one of the most crucial.

It is true that Husserl was, at least at the later stage of his work, acutely aware of this major weakness of his system—that which rendered it 'incommunicado' with the most vital queries arising from sociology and cultural studies. It is also true that he did try his best to redress it. It may be argued, however, that he misunderstood the nature of the inevitable sociological complaint. He did next to nothing to demonstrate the relevance of transcendental reduction to the kind of problems sociology, the science whose object is human interaction, must come to grips with. Instead, he attempted to show (sacrificing a good deal of his initial, stern and uncompromising, purity) that with transcendental reduction successfully accomplished, one can still legitimise the idea of another human being and, to go a step further, of a human group.

And so Husserl conceived of the problem as the need to demonstrate a legitimate passage from transcendental subjectivity to a transcendental 'inter' subjectivity. In Husserlian terms, such a demonstration would have been valid only if it were possible to show that this inter subjectivity is given directly, naively, pre-predicatively within the 'Lebenswelt'—the only source of knowledge, our life as we live it daily and as we experience it prior to any theoretical experience. Whatever is part of the 'Lebenswelt', is given as a mode of 'Empfindnis'—'being at the tips of my fingers'; lying open, here and now; accessible without the mediation of theoretical constructs which are produced by science struggling to let itself loose from 'Lebenswelt', and therefore shyly concealing its origin, and drawing the curtains of abstract concepts between man and the world in which he already lives. Can other subjectivities be derived directly from this 'Lebenswelt', without invoking the 'existential' data offered by science? Can it be shown that other subjectivities are indeed given in this unique pre-predicative mode of 'Empfindnis'?

What follows is as ingenious as it is unconvincing. (3) A number of relevant experiences are naively given: the experience of my body ('Körper'); the experience of my soul; the

experience of their unity (i.e., the experience that my 'Körper' is a 'Leib', i.e. a live body, animated, active entity); the experience of the presence of other 'Körper', who fit the description of my body known to me as 'Leib'—I see they are alive, they move, make gestures, etc. What is more, they are, at the moment, exactly where I was a moment before. It is a situation, Husserl points out, similar to that of memory: I remember myself from a moment ago, and I experience my memory of myself simultaneously with my experience of myself now—but this simultaneity, being the foundation of my naive experience of community with myself which transcends time, still does not blur the distinction between past and present. The same applies to community with the other: 'Ichliche Gemeinschaft mit mir selbst als Parallele zur Gemeinschaft mit Anderen'.

Experience of community with others is possible only because I conceive of the Other as an interntional modification of myself. This is a unique feature of the Other; no other things are constituted in the same way. It is only the Other, in contrast to ordinary things, who—while being represented as an empirical person—is by the same token represented as a transcendental subjectivity. Hence I extend toward the other an intentional community-like bond; and the bond—here comes the greatest surprise—is reciprocated.

This is, indeed, the most brittle of all pillars supporting the laboriously built bridge which is intended to connect phenomenology with sociology. The elegant reasoning carried out thus far has been phenomenologically, rather than sociologically, inspired. It has been constructed to show that one can remain a bona fide phenomenologist and still exempt 'the others' from 'epoche'. So far, so good: the mnemonic allegory is an acceptable device in philosophical argument of this sort. Then, however, all of a sudden, reciprocity springs up from somewhere, but certainly not from the same line of argument. Up till then it had been only 'my' intellectual activity which led to the 'Bewusstsein' of the other; but now the other himself begins to act. He can (but then possibly he can not) reciprocate my offer of community. Transcendental subjectivity has been unavoidably present from the start, stubbornly there even if concealed. 'Inter' subjectivity, however, is constituted in an entirely different way, subject to negotiation and perhaps controversy between more than one autonomous subject. As Ervin Laszlo convincingly pointed out, the very concept of 'intersubjectivity' is 'either insoluble, or spurious' and hence 'illegitimate': Laszlo argues that there are two sharply different types of discourse—the realistic, to which the concept of 'inter' belongs, and sceptical, of which 'subjectivity' is a part.

> The type of meaning attaching to 'inter' presupposes several entities, and hence realism to some extent and in some form. On the other hand 'subjectivity', if taken at its face value, means that as far as any given subject is concerned, there are only objective contents of experience, and not necessarily 'others' such as himself. Thus 'inter' presupposes the many, and 'subjectivity' connotes the one. (4)

Radical scepticism, on which phenomenology prides itself and which it justly considers its main claim to distinction and glory, can hardly generate 'others' as something more than contents of experience. As autonomous agents 'like myself', others can be substantiated only if an argument 'from being'—which phenomenology has emphatically disavowed—is restored to its own rights.

But it is not the philosophical finesse of argument which concerns us here. We have followed Husserl in the hope of finding a foundation on which to buttress a cogent critique of sociology. We have not found one. Husserl has little to offer in the way of exposing the original errors of the 'science of unfreedom', preoccupied, as he is, with showing that one can clear one's sociological conscience without renouncing one's phenomenological faith. This desire for sociological respectability is so overpowering, that it goads him into fields few sociologists would dare to enter without intense embarrassment. As we saw, Husserl legitimized intersubjectivity by postulating a reciprocated intentional bond between subjectivity and its contents. Doubtful as it is, it happens to be only the first step towards sociologizing—admittedly not the strongest of Husserl's skills. And so we learn that the 'Kulturwelt' created by intersubjectivity (a homologue of the 'Umwelt', generated by subjectivity), has, again by analogy, all the constituting faculties of subjectivity, and thus it generates the 'spatio-temporal nature of humanity'. Its ultimate product is 'Gemeingeist', an exact carbon copy of 'mentalité collective' and central value clusters, neatly typed this time on an allegedly phenomenological typewriter. 'Gemeingeist' sediments in the form of culture, which manifests itself in the 'unity of ends and action'—the most prominent and distinctive feature of the ethical community, the counterpart, by analogy again, of the ethical personality. And finally—this is the ultimate failure of phenomenology as an abortive attempt at the critique of sociology—society may be conceived of, without violating phenomenological principles, as a synthetic personality. To prove it, Husserl invokes the ghosts of Spencers, Novikovs, Lilienfields: just as a single body is built of cells, society is built of personalities (sic!).

> Die Gemeinschaftsperson, die gemeinschaftliche Geistigkeit…ist wirklich und wahrhaft personel, es ist ein wesenoberer Begriff da, der die individuelle Einzelperson und die Gemeinschaftsperson verbindet, es ist Analogie da, genau so wie Analogie da ist zwischen einer Zelle und einem aus Zellen gebauten Organismus, kein blosses Bild sondern Gattungsgemeinschaft.

And so we are faced with a dilemma with no viable solution. If we accept the logic of Husserl's legitimation of sociology, we end up by vindicating the least savoury of those beliefs the 'science of unfreedom' wished us to adopt—presented, moreover, in the most primitive of possible forms. If, following Laszlo, we point out-the immanent inconsistencies of Husserl's logic, we are left without any proposal at all which we can consider relevant to the task at hand: we are reinforced in our original view, that the phenomenological programme, if scrupulously observed, can generate no sociology. If anything, it is a declaration of the illegitimacy of the sociological venture. If we do take subjectivity seriously, the conception of partners as autonomous subjects becomes impossible. The concept of inter-individual space, and the communication between autonomous subjects become unproblematic (and offer a legitimate object of study) only if the existence of 'other minds' is axiomatically asserted. But then all the notorious difficulties with subjectivity, only too well known in the history of sociology, are back again, and we are once more at square one. As we shall see later, the problem is by no means a minor irritant. The critique of sociology, currently undertaken ostensibly under the auspices of phenomenology, emanates, in actual fact, from a different source—that of existentialist philosophy.

THE EXISTENTIALIST RESTORATION

In opposition to Husserl, existentialists were never bewildered by the existence of others; this never struck them as a problem with which one has to grapple by spinning a fine fabric of subtle philosophical categories. The presence of others appeared to them, on the contrary, as the primary fact of existence. The presence of others, communication with others, being impregnated with interaction, were all integral constituents of the self, rather than attributes which could be added at some later stage to the self already established and complete. Perhaps the difference should be traced back to the fact that Husserl on the one hand, and exist-entialists on the other, pursued different ends. Husserl's preoccupation was above all noetical: ontological questions, the problem of 'whatness', came under his scrutiny in so far as Husserl realized that the major ontological and epistemological queries can be given a satisfactory solution only if treated conjointly, as aspects of one central question 'how do I know?' In existentialism the question of knowledge, though considered seriously, plays a subordinate role. The guiding motif of existentialist philosophy is provided by the search for the authentic, undistorted nature of man, rather than the undistorted knowledge man can acquire. And the starting point for such a quest consists, so to speak, in 'bracketing away' precisely those essences which Husserl wished to place at the very centre of the philosophical enterprise. It is existence which constitutes the most blatant, obtrusively present, ineradicable and 'pre-predicative' reality of human-being-in-the-world. And this being-in-the-world entails objects—things and other human beings—from the very start, as a precondition to all philosophizing, to existence itself. As in the notorious Sartrian phrase 'existence precedes essence', it is essence which can be viewed as factitious addenda to the primary experience submerged in the living flow of existence. What we, in our everyday life, as a result of long and tormenting training, consider essence, are the by-products of an inauthentic, counterfeit existence; a testimony to men who failed, or were not allowed, to be themselves. Within the field structured by the quest for true knowledge, the presence of others could not be taken for granted. Without the presence of others having been taken for granted, one could not embark on the search for true existence.

And so all being is, from the outset, being-in-the-world, which includes being-with-others. Now both 'being-in' and 'being-with' are defined as consciousness that such 'not-me' is present, irremovable, and that it presents a problem, makes a relation, an attitude, a 'modus vivendi', inevitable. What follows is that the only being which can be discussed—the only true being—is the human condition of being, that founded on reflection, and containing the realization of the separateness of the knowing self. 'Man' is a multi-faceted concept, which, having entailed the human body and such relations as it conditions, might encompass more than the kind of being which existentialists would consider specifically human. Hence the tendency to introduce other words to stand for the specifically human way of existing ('Dasein' in Heidegger, 'pour-soi' in Sartre), words which bring into focus the reflective mode of being and simultaneously jettison such meanings of existence as men can share with animate or inanimate things. It is only for humans, that being-in-the-world means the necessity of defining themselves in relation to this world, drawing dividing lines between themselves and this world, defending their self against encroachments coming from outside, distinguishing between their true selves and the shapes the outside world presses to imprint on them.

The tensions between the self and the world in which the self is immersed are therefore contained in the most elementary and universal, pre-predicative experience. They are not caused by a specific kind of social relations; nor are they created by a special type of demand raised against the world by a historically determined personality. They are, instead, a defining feature of the human existence as such—an anthropological-by-definition factor of human life. If they cease to be experienced and felt as 'the' problem of man's being in the world, it may mean only a spurious emancipation from the inherent sufferings of the human predicament. It may mean only losing whatever is genuinely human in man's existence, a return of the 'pour-soi' to the pre-human 'en-soi'; a retreat from being-in-the-world to a state in which the previously separate and autonomous self is sucked in and dissolved by the world outside him to the point at which he loses his distinction; that is to say, abandons his power to see himself as an object and his relation to the world as a problem. The demarcation between the self and his world is, therefore, inescapable within the limits of human existence. The split cannot be transcended or, indeed, overcome, without destroying the 'pour-soi' itself. Given the fact that the world outside the self 'exists'; that it is present as an object of reflection, as an object for a reflecting subject only in so far as the self posits it in opposition to himself (in this sense 'creating' his own world), then one can indeed view the existentialist idiom as a variation of the Hegelian motif of 'Entausserung': the refleeted upon, the meaning-endowed, the posited world is an exteriorization of the self. But here the affinity ends. The Hegelian vision of the ultimate reabsorption of the exteriorized world by the Spirit recognizing itself in the products of its self-alienation (the vision which 'historicized' the phenomenon of alienation and endowed it with a directed dynamics) is emphatically rejected by the existentialist philosophy. The split is not a transient stage on the way to the restoration of unity: it is, instead, a synonym of being human; an episode in the history of Nature, an eternal state for human beings: a state coterminous with the specifically human being-in-the-world.

As the split is unavoidable, so is the relation with others. As the split is, at root, an inevitable event (by definition of the specifically human existence), though, at the same time, an act of will, so is the relation with others. Man is condemned to exist physically with others, to share with them the natural world. But in order to coexist with them in a specifically human way, he has to apply his own will: one has to choose actively the right relation with others and actively reject the corrupt, dehumanized one. Right relations can be founded only on the partners' decision to remain 'pour-soi'. As the prominent existentialist psychologist L.Biswanger put it, men can understand each other only in an I-Thou relation, in the intimacy of selves rather than through a clash of objects, or an attempt of a self to master and manipulate another, objectified human being. The virtual being-with-others requires a difficult and strenuous effort to establish contact on the level of 'pour-soi', a contact in which at no stage the other being has been reified and posited as an object.

The other, therefore, has been awarded a double and intrinsically controversial role as a lever necessary for elevating the 'en-soi' up to the level of authentically human 'pour-soi', while, simultaneously, being the gravest danger and obstacle to such an elevation. The first role is a matter of conscious effort, of active decision. The second is a matter of the obtrusive and addictive routine of daily life, of the escape from the 'dizziness of freedom', of cravenly shying from the decision to be authentically human. The second role is the one we all know too well from everyday life. Others appear to us, at first sight, as an

anonymous 'they', a faceless crowd which at one stroke deprives us of our distinctiveness and liberates us from the painful need to choose and decide. The crowd—this hated monster of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger ('das Man')—usurps the right, once allotted to God, to pass sentence on the human essence, on the role to which one has to conform, and the moral principles by which one has to abide. In exchange it offers the comforting feeling of irresponsibility, freedom from bearing the consequences of one's own choice, from blaming oneself for the hardships of life. As we can see, this crowd of the existentialist is keen to satisfy both needs stemming from commonsensical experience; the need to comprehend the nature of the outer necessity, and the desire to shift the burden of responsibility to agents of which man can say, with a clear conscience, that they are not in his power. It caters, therefore, for those same yearnings to which the Durksonian society attends. What, for Durksonianists, is the benevolent though overwhelmingly powerful society, is the crowd for Kierkegaard, the atrocious, stultifying herd of Nietzsche, the stupefying 'das Man' of Heidegger, the human Hell of Sartre. With one essential difference, however. For existentialists, in opposition to Durksonianism, the herd-society does not gain mastery over the self unless invited to do so, more often by default than by a deliberate surrender. To exercise its dictatorial power, to dilute the potentially unique self in a homogenized crowd of exchangeable digits, this society must first undergo the process of reification (Hegel's 'Verdinglichung'), be cognitively re-cast into an all-powerful inevitability, and ultimately articulated as the omnipotent 'they'. In fact, society becomes a second nature, an objective reality, only if articulated in such a way. Only if it is cognitively appropriated as 'they' who push us around, bully, drag, and force us into being what we have no desire to be; only if it is permitted, in exchange for the freedom from responsibility, to depredate our authentic existence. Thus to be enslaved by society is a matter of decision, or, rather, a matter of refraining from decision. It is by no means an unavoidable fate of human beings. Much less still is it the condition of becoming one.

Existentialist philosophy seems to offer, therefore, an outright and most radical critique of sociology, while meeting sociology on its own ground, appropriating its language and its problematics, and thus suggesting a meaningful—and eventually conclusive—argument. It accepts 'society' as a reality. But, first, it insists on asking the pertinent question of how society has become (or, rather, how is it becoming over and over again) a reality in the first place. Second, it points out that the self is a highly instrumental and active (if only by desisting action) factor in this becoming. Third, it opens the possibility of questioning and challenging social reality, by defining it as an inauthentic existence: by so doing it offers a wider cognitive horizon, within which the current 'here and now' social reality can no longer claim the privileged status of the sole fulcrum of valid knowledge—the sole purveyor of 'facts'. As we shall see later, these three proposals have sufficed to attract many a thinker disaffected with the notorious flaws of the science of unfreedom.

This being so, however, the road blazed by existentialism has proved to be as rough as the alternative it came to replace. Having successfully resisted the reduction of human existence to the opposite, objectified pole, it has reduced it instead to the first, subjective one. Human yearnings and motives are no longer the end-products of intractable 'social reality'; rather, social reality becomes the reified consequence of the decision (or indecision) of the self. The direction of reduction has been turned 180 degrees, to be sure; but it is still a reduction. With the same vehemence that Durksonians fight the 'mysterious notion of

free will', existentialist sociologists are bound to fight the 'mysterious notion of social necessity'. The change of direction does not detract from the intensity of the barrage.

More important, if Durksonian sociology could not adequately account for the actualizations of human waywardness and could not help but conceive of freedom as a deviation resulting from the technical failure of society, existentialist sociology confronts the same difficulty when trying to account for the persistent experience of society as an obtrusive and irremovable reality, and cannot help but perceive such a feeling as a deviation resulting from the technical failure within the thrust for authenticity. Both visions, because of their self-programmed one-sidedness, leave behind an uncomfortably large residue of human experience, for which they refuse to account in any other way than as odd and unfortunate abnormalities, which one can, with right knowledge and germane effort, mitigate, if not wipe out. Being organically unable to coherently account for human freedom, the Durksonian sociology can only declare it an illusion. Being similarly unable to offer a meaningful explanation of the nature-like appearance of social reality, existentialist sociology is bound to employ the same artifice and declare it a phantasm.

Another consequence of reductionism is, of course, a neglect of history and the ensuing necessity to project the chosen analytical idiom on to the ontological plane, as the anthropological dimension of its postulated referents. Durksonianism can achieve such an effect by positing the formula of its reductionism as the 'logical prerequisites' of any and all organized human community. Thanks to this expedient, the crucial category has been securely placed on an extra-temporal plane and the cumbersome problem of the 'origin' of nature-like society has been dismissed once and for all. It is kept at a safe distance by the hypothetical bracket in which all substantial statements of Durksonian sociology are kept: given a human society, there must be a, b, c…n. The same effect is achieved by existentialist sociology by portraying the formula of their brand of reductionism as the defining feature of authentically human existence. Once again, the problem of history has been safely removed from the agenda. Once again, a hypothetical bracket prevents it from interfering: given an authentically human way of being-in-the-world, there must be a, b, c, …n.

So, it seems, we have one form of reductionism confronting another, and the problem ultimately is one of arbitrary choice, guided solely by one's preferences or research task at hand. In one important respect, however, the society-centred version of sociology has an advantage over the self-centred one: it pretends to offer genuine guidance to the individual, where the existentially orientated sociology leaves much to his own discernment. Having chosen society as the humanizing agent, Durksonian sociology is capable of discussing the problem of morality as something which, in principle, can be studied and learnt with certainty. Having chosen the stance of an objective science, it observes, of course, strict neutrality as to the personal decision of being or not being moral. But if the decision to be moral is taken, Durksonian sociology has no difficulty in pointing out 'how' one can be a moral being, and what it is to be moral under specific conditions. It is precisely the opposite in the case of existentialist sociology. In the absence of supraindividual humanizing agents, being moral is an imperative which the individual faces directly as the task he must carry on his own shoulders. When it comes to the question, however, of how one can be sure that his way of being-in-the-world is indeed moral, existentialism, as well as the sociology it may inspire, offers no reliable guidance. 'Leading an authentic life' is the only recipe. But this is purely formal advice. Authenticity is by definition a thoroughly individualized

concept, and also by definition, is filled with substance only by the individual himself, after the guidance, which might have been obtained from extra-individual sources, has been pinned down as inauthentic and as such rejected. No decision taken by the individual can, therefore, ever attain that conclusiveness which may be furnished only by an agent which one sees as un-impregnable and beyond one's control. Having declared such an agent illusion, and debunked it as a product of morbid reification, existentialism does more than just withdraw its own judgment of right and wrong; it denies the very possibility of discussing moral problems in terms valid to more than one self. It seems that existentialism has effectively dispelled the shroud of appearances which passed for the moral content of human existence—but only to reveal the ultimate moral void which a genuinely human, authentic life cannot escape.

We saw earlier that the Durksonian type of sociology, while addressing the imagination of an ordinary lay member of society, endeavours to satisfy these very needs which used to be catered for by the religion of the priests. One can similarly compare existentialist sociology to the religion of the prophets. It contains no easy promises of releasing the tormented individual from the burden of his responsibility. It demystifies rather than interprets the mystery of human existence. The demystified existence is not, however, one which is easy to face. The mystified world, with all the sufferings it may cause, does emanate a comforting feeling of false security; when suff erings spill over the brim of the safe container of daily routine, the mystified world can still be criticised, rejected and challenged without putting in question the integrity and moral blamelessness of the challenging subject. 'They' are not only slave-masters and prison guards. They bring, in a peculiar package deal, redemption together with slavery, freedom from responsibility together with the unfreedom of action. The prophets, therefore, unlike priests, offer little comfort. Having chased away the phantom of 'they', the prophets point their accusing fingers at the self, now left alone on the suddenly empty stage. It is now the self who remains the only and the ultimate object of self-searching scrutiny and criticism.

It is this existentialist philosophy, with its immense demystifying potential and self-imposed limitations to the practical criticisn of the world, which has served as a real inspiration for those diverse currents of the critique of sociology which trace their common roots back to the works of Alfred Schutz. The rubric 'phenomenological', under which those currents have chosen to describe their distinctive features, is a misnomer. We saw that the principles of phenomenology, if scrupulously observed, are incapable of generating any descriptive knowledge sharing its subject-matter with what has come to be known as sociology. It is existentialism, taking that being-in-the-world which entails being-with-others as its starting point, which aspires to cover a field of study comensurable with that of sociology. Indeed, Schutz starts from a living world much more densely populated than the austere transcendental subjectivity of Husserl would allow. The presence of others, which Husserl considered the most intricate and mysterious problem of all, is to Schutz axiomatically unproblematic. It is the existence of such a complex world (the very existence of which Husserl wanted to bracket away and, later, cautiously to re-build using non-existential elements only) which, according to Schutz (and Kierkegaard, Heidegger and Sartre) is simply given, directly and immediately. On the whole, Schutz is prepared to include in the 'pre-predicative sphere' much more of the 'interpretive relevances' than Husserl originally did—though he constantly invokes Husserl's authority to legitimate the

non-inferential character of such relevances. (5) The member, rather than transcendental subjectivity, is Schutz's central category; which means that membership in a community which shares interpretive relevances is assigned a pre-predicative modality, is located among the preliminary conditions of the subject's Life-process. This membership, as well as the inventory of knowledge 'at hand' it may signify, is, by the same token, declared non-inferential. It is thus this 'brute fact', or 'the-immediately-given', which should be carefully surveyed and faithfully described, but which has no meaningful 'beyond', from which one may furnish its causal explanation. It is true that knowledge at hand is socially derived; but this is an assumption without much consequence, since our life begins to be experienced, and therefore becomes an object accessible to exploration and reflection, only when the 'social giving' of that know-ledge at hand has already taken place. The vernacular—this ready made set of pre-constituted types—has already been acquired. 'From the outset' is Schutz's favourite term. It is 'from the outset' that our world is an intersubjective world of culture, and not, as Husserl argued, something to be laboriously constructed in order to be known. Methodologically, the above statement means that such sociologizing as Schutz would permit must start from the world of culture already appropriated and incorporated by the 'member'—just as it must start from a society which has already acquired ascendancy over the individual, in the case of the Durksonian brand of sociology.

This 'intersubjective world of culture', which 'from the outset' is ours, is a world of signification which, however, is ultimately man-made. Not in its entirety, to be sure. There are numerous assumptions and generative rules which Schutz discusses as anthropologically universal structural features of the life-experience as such; the suggestion being that they constitute unencroachable limits, or universal conditions, of any intersubjective world of culture. This tendency to climb the anthropological, extra-temporal heights, Schutz shares with Durksonian sociology. Both lack good tools to deal with the historically specific because of their effort, perhaps, to posit the historically specific as universal. Schutz is at his best when remaining on the level of the 'generative grammar' of experience as such. Even when admittedly taking a specific, geographically and historically locatable, action as his starting point, he tends to treat this geographical-historical specificity as a veil concealing the universal structures of genuine interest. Home-coming, or the Stranger, rise to the level of a-historical types. Significantly, the 'intersubjective world of culture', in the form in which Schutz posits it as the object of research, lacks 'from the outset' any historical dimension.

The main role of the intersubjective world of culture seems to consist in furnishing generative principles which differentiate and individualize the subjectively conceived worlds of members. Most cultural patterns discussed by Schutz take the form of rules of cognitive structuration, which inevitably lead to results different in each individual case. Classification of others into members of 'Umwelt', 'Mitwelt', 'Vorwelt', and 'Folgewelt', is a universal rule, necessitated by the natural graduation of familiarity and accessibility. Depending on these two factors, the member takes four different attitudes to such individuals, casting them accordingly into one of the above categories. The formal principles of such a cognitive structuration, therefore, remain the same in every case; but the emerging cognitive structures will be, as one might expect, sharply different, depending on the biographical situation of the structuring member. As Schutz himself put it, with the substitution of another 'null-point' (i.e., another biographical situation), meaning-reference

is changed. The same applies to one of the central categories of Schutzian sociology—'world within reach'. For each member, the world within reach, the only area in which 'we' (I-Thou) relations are conceivable, and the only area to which 'in-order-to' motives can be reasonably applied, constitutes the kernel of each member's reality. But again, its boundaries will surely be drawn differently for, and by, each member, and the territories of such worlds as circumscribed by different biographical situations most certainly will not overlap. The useful concept of 'finite provinces of meaning' supplies another example. Every member lives within multiple realities. Each reality is cognitively constituted in its own specific way, which is characterized by a peculiar cognitive style, by a consistency attained by pushing some specific elements into a 'for-granted' background, by the application of 'epoche' to a distinct sector of life-world, and by a peculiar time-perspective, Again, all these distinctive features combine into a number of types which are universal, in the sense of being recognizably similar in every member's set of 'finite provinces of meaning'. One can describe validly for all actual and possible members what kind of cognitive style, 'epoche' etc., constitutes the province of argument, or art, or leisure. But, as in former cases, the way in which a member divides the shared world into provinces, when he shifts his attention from one province to another, are by no means necessarily co-ordinated. On the contrary, these activities of members, though operated by the same structural principles, will lead inevitably to highly distinct results. The concept of 'appresentational reference', considered by Schutz a major tool of meaning-bestowing, will provide our final example. Any member, confronted with a series of experiences, will assign meaning to them by combining them into appresenting-appresented pairs. The context in which such pairing will take place, and consequently the selection of pairs and the division of roles within pairs, will all vary according to the biographical situation of a given member; the same tools will inevitably produce a wide variety of meanings, even if applied to 'externally' similar objects of experience.

To sum up, Schutz's intersubjective world of culture tends to produce, perpetuate and reinforce the autonomy and uniqueness of each member as a cognitive entity. Schutz has shown admirably how the uniqueness of members is created and continually re-created with the same inevitability which Durksonianism ascribed to the uniforming impact of culture. The two incompatible testimonies of experience have been therefore reconciled on the cognitive plane: cast into a shared cultural world, unable to choose it as an act of will, confronting his cultural world as inescapable reality, the member is still (due to this fact rather than in spite of it) doomed to become and to remain a unique individual. It is precisely the sharing of the same structural rules of world perception which assures the uniqueness of each experience and each individual world of meaning.

If, however, as it has been demonstrated, the worlds of meaning of individual members are unique, communication between individuals constitutes a problem. Indeed, one has to ask how such communication is possible at all. Thus far, all we have learnt about the intersubjective world of culture has pointed unambiguously toward the monadic separateness of individual cognitive worlds. It is now necessary to show how, given this monadic status, members may still form and maintain a community of meanings.

Some conditions of such community Schutz assumes as anthropologically universal. These are common assumptions, somehow made by all members of all communities at all times—perhaps spontaneously, but at any rate without any visible teaching-learning

processes. They are, it seems, simple elaborations on constant and primary features of individual, but universal, experience—though nowhere is this surmise confirmed by Schutz himself in so many words. In the absence of any explicit answer to the question of origin of the 'stock of knowledge at hand', one is indeed free to postulate a variety of interpretations, reaching as far as the supposition of an inborn, species-wide propensity to perceive the world and to organize the perception according to a set of invariable rules. Not that the question of origin matters in the case of Schutz. The rules and assumptions combining into the 'stock of knowledge at hand' have been introduced into the system of Schutzian sociology as an admittedly Kantian element. They are, in fact, nothing more than a priori conditions of all meaningful experience, and of all meaningful communication between unique cognitive subjects.

The following are typical examples. First—the assumption that the world consists of definite objects. This assumption is drawn from, and continually warranted by, the experience of resistance. Its most elementary form is the resistance of our own body, which may fall ill, become incapacitated, or be reluctant to obey our decisions. All perception of the world as exterior and 'real' may be seen as a modification of this fundamental experience. Second comes the expectation that experiences are typical; that they lend themselves, in principle, to generalizations, instead of being unique and unrepeatable; that a single experience is always a member of a larger class of similar experiences, and that, therefore, one can learn from one's previous experience, reasonably expecting future occurrences to conform to the pattern already known. Next, the same expectation of regularity extends into the sphere directly relevant to the problem of interhuman communication: one expects cognitive perspectives to be reciprocated by other members, the standpoints assumed by the partners of conversation to be, in principle at least, interchangeable. In other words, reciprocated understanding of each other's meanings is an a priori given condition of being-with-others. Instead of being an end-product of the application of an intricate technology one must diligently learn to master, understanding is implied in each act of communication 'from the outset'. The idealized possibility of such understanding manifests itself continually in members' assuming, in the process of communication, their opposite numbers' attitudes, and expecting their partners to behave similarly. Finally, there is an a priori expectation of the congruence of standpoints. Not only are they interchaingeable in the sense that each member can 'put himself' into each standpoint in turn, but they can be harmonized, made to complement each other, with the effect that they may be held to simultaneously by different partners in the conversation, without rendering the discourse incomprehensible or condemning it to failure. Let us repeat: all those and similar assumptions are not accepted on the strength of empirical generalizations, but deduced from the analysis of conditions which must be met if 'being-with-other', in the sense of meaningful intercommunication, is to be conceivable. These are, therefore, 'theoretical prerequisites' of the individual's existence, much as, say, 'patternmaintenance' is, for Durksonian sociology, a theoretical prerequisite of the system's survival.

Those being the general conditions of being-with-others, further factors are necessary to attain genuine subject-to-subject relations. Schutz disagrees with Sartre's rather gloomy view of the possibility of transcending or eschewing reification in interhuman relations. To Sartre, the very presence of others unavoidably compromises the authentic uniqueness of the self. The very awareness of being looked upon creates uneasiness and discomfort,

and limits the self's freedom; the self experiences himself as objectified by the other, and is incapable of avoiding doing the same in exchange. Hence only subject-object relations are possible. Schutz is more sanguine. From many types of relations between members he selects, as particularly privileged in respect to de-reification, 'Wir-Einstellung' (equivalent of Buber's I-Thou) relations between consociates, in which members can indeed conceive of each other as unique subjects. This possibility they owe to mutual biographical involvement. It seems that 'Wir-Einstellung' develops in the process of prolonged and continuous discourse between members, in which all aspects of each partner's subjectivity stand the chance of being brought to light, so as to enable each partner to grasp in time their unique configuration. Each partner learns gradually the other's unique subjectivity by exploring, in the process of active interchange, both its flexibility and its ultimate limits. When genuine I-Thou relations develop, the many veils of anonymity, which normally cover the subjectivity of the other, can be removed completely.

This possibility, even if not actualized, makes all the difference between consociates and mere contemporaries. The latter, though in principle accessible to potential conversation, are not sufficiently involved in the biography of the given member to expose themselves in the uniqueness of their subjectivities. They will always retain a smaller or larger degree of anonymity; the greater the anonymity, the poorer the set of symptoms by which they are apprehended. Rather than being perceived as subjects, contemporaries are conceived as specimens of a type. Such a type refers to them, locates them within a member's subjective cognitive map, and triggers off the relevant unit of a member's behavioural repertoire, but it is never identical with a concrete other.

There is, therefore, a difference in kind between the subject-to-subject and merely typified relations. The first are an integral element of a member's being-in-the-world; they are in fact coterminous with his existence itself. The second, however, are only of a hypothetical character. When we speak of social relations between mere contemporaries, what we mean is just a subjective chance that the reciprocally ascribed typifying schemes and expectations will be reciprocated, i.e., used congruently, by the partners. This remains a subjective chance all along, and, in so far as they continue to be founded on 'Ihr-Einstellung' only, cannot rise above the level of mere hypothesis. Only that sector of the world which has been highlighted by the biographical situation, is constantly put in question by the members and is subject to intensive exploration. Contemporaries, unlike consociates, are placed outside that sector. Untouched by the cognitive interests of the member, assigned little or no topical relevance, they—even if, in principle, questionable—are left unquestioned. The very phenomenon of 'type' consists in drawing a demarcation line between the explored horizons of the topic at hand and the rest of it, which the member leaves unexplored.

'Personal ideal types', which refer to aggregates of contempor-aries (or, for that matter, predecessors or successors—who, however, differ from contemporaries in that they cannot be made partners of discourse), are typifications of the first, lowest level. There are, to be sure, typifications which are more complex, but they are always derived from those of the first-level through analogy or conflation. State, people, economy, class—are all characteristic examples of such complex types, which we tend to treat as if they were personal types 'sui generis'. In fact, they are abbreviated descriptions of highly complex systems of interwoven personal types of the lower order. Because of their derivative nature,

they magnify all the weaknesses of the original typification and widen the areas left in the shade and smugly taken for granted in the process of typifying. In particular, the hypothetical nature of such types of the second order is considerably intensified. So much has been taken for granted in the process of their typification, that the question of their verification can hardly be put on the agenda. To depart, for a moment, from the universe of discourse designed by Schutzian vocabulary, we can say that, for all practical purposes, concepts like society or class enter the life-world of the human individual as myths, sedimented from a long and tortuous process of abstraction of which the member himself lost control at a relatively early stage (in fact, with his first step beyond the cosy realm of I-Thou relations with the close circle of consociates).

These are, it seems, the ultimate limits of the critique of sociology which can emanate from the existentialist inspiration. Such a critique can account for supra-individual phenomena only as mental concepts. Any critique of such concepts will consist in demonstrating that they have been arrived at by a series of mental operations subject to purely cognitive rules; in showing that, given those rules ineradicably present in the stock of knowledge at hand, the generation of types is inescapable. These types return later to the life-world of the individual, admitted there on the strength of analogy with personal relations—the only ones which are directly and fully experienced. The same mental mechanisms, so to speak, dereify consociates and reify all the rest of the individual's world—reification being itself a mental process, which consists in assuming the 'objective existence' of what is, in fact, a complex conceptual product of sifting the limited personal experience. Schutz—and his followers with even more zeal—ascribe to such conduct the status of hypostasis: a common logical error of imputing real referents to abstract words.

'SECOND NATURE' VINDICATED

If, therefore, Durksonian sociology tries hard to 'demystify' individual freedom, its Schutzian critique, apparently, attempts to 'demystify' society. It does little, however, to assist the individual, allegedly emancipated as a result of such demystification, in acquiring practical freedom from the product of his own reifying capacity. On the contrary, Schutzian analysis convincingly demonstrates that reification, and hypothetical types replacing the intimate, I-Thou experience of others, are built into the very fabric of the member's existence. They can perhaps be re-negotiated and re-made, but in one form or another they are there to stay forever. In a sense, reification of the limited experience into the all-powerful, though hypothetical concepts which, in turn, structure the individual's experience, is as anthropologically universal and inevitable as Durkheim's 'conscience collective' or Parsons's, system's prerequisites. No room has been left for the supposition that in some conditions reification might be avoided, that in some situations people might be able to 'see through' the totality of their social entanglements, and that, consequently, the Schutzian subtle analysis of the life-world as such is just an unduly generalized description of a specific, historically generated world. With all its powerful critical potential aimed at sociology, conceived as the science of unfreedom, the Schutzian alternative refrains from offering a conceptual standpoint from which a critique of social reality (as opposite to the critique of its image), could be launched. In this respect it belongs to the same class as Durksonian sociology, which it so ably criticizes.

The Schutzian existentialistically inspired system is, therefore, specifically a critique of sociology, and not of its object. As such a critique, it does offer a harmoniously coherent programme complete with a multitude of eye-opening insights. The Schutzian system may be conceived of as an anthropology (rather than a sociology) of knowledge, focussing its lenses on precisely those sectors of knowledge which form the chosen domain of sociology. Schutz has convincingly shown that sociology, far from grasping so-called 'objective social reality', in actual fact is a once-removed modification of commonsense; that it takes as its object not 'objective phenomena', but products of typification, and, in consequence, perpetuates and re-affirms the reifying tendencies of commonsense, instead of exposing them for what they are. Being mere products of objectivation. 'objective phenomena' are embodiments of subjective knowledge of 'lifewordly events'.(6) Ascribing to them any other existential modality means perpetuating that illusion whose exposure is the prime task of the scientific investigation of the life-world. State, class, etc.—if they confront the individual as irremovable constituents of his life-world—reach such a status only because 'the positing of objectivations done by one person and their interpretation done by the Other occurred "at the same time"'. The task of sociology consists, therefore, in unravelling the hidden mechanism of the process of collective objectivation, which opens itself to the eyes of an ordinary member only in the form of its end-products.

But at this point the Schutzian critique of sociology stops. If all we do is follow faithfully his pattern of exploring the logic of objectivation, sociology will be stood on its feet again. Instead of vainly attempting to grasp social reality, we shall show more sense in turning our attention to the structure of the process which generates our belief in such 'reality'—starting from the only certain knowledge given to us unproblematically, i.e., knowledge derivable directly from the world of everyday living. That will be equal to returning 'to the roots', and the Husserlian postulate 'zu den Sachen selbst' will be fulfilled. Schutz does not ask sociology to be critical of its object. He invites it only to be critical of its own knowledge of that object and of the way it has arrived at such knowledge. Indeed, exactly like his Durksonian opponents, Schutz precludes a priori, by sheer methodological decision, the very possibility of the object-directed critique. If, to paraphrase Anselm L.Strauss, (7) Durksonian sociology assumed that the observer (sociologist) 'has knowledge of the end against which persons are matched', Schutz pretends to know 'the basic rules on which variations (of a personality) are composed': to know, that is, in the sense of excluding the possibility of such rules, and not just their applications, from ever changing.

With tough, nature-like social reality reduced analytically to typifications and typifications alone, the question remains whether men can ever eschew such typifying activity. No such possibility is left within the Schutzian system. By explaining away the totality of 'social reality' by the most elementary and universal process of reification of meanings, Schutz depicts, first, the experience of unfreedom as the eternal, anthropological feature of human-being-in-the -world; and second, portrays all unfreedom as essentially alike stemming from the same essential human endowment. The supposition that some elements of experienced 'reality' are redundant and can be disposed of, that those elements derive from more restricted (and less inevitable) causes than universal propensities of all mankind—cannot be seriously posited within the Schutzian perspective. But it is only with such a supposition that the critique of sociology may turn into a critique of social reality itself. From Schutz's devastating vivisection of sociology, social reality emerges intact

and invincible—reduced to a benign, intellectual substance, but no less unavoidable and overwhelming than Parsons's methodologically postulated system.

Both attempts to account for the human experience monistically, therefore, seem equally disappointing. Curiously, while trying to prove that the other pole of the apparently dual experience is only imaginary, both are incapable of questioning the necessity contained in the first one. Both attempts are, therefore, organically uncritical of society, or the human predicament they describe. The one advantage of existentialist sociology over its Durksonian counterpart consists in its capacity to criticise knowledge in general, and commonsensical knowledge in particular—one ability which Durksonian sociology is conspicuously lacking. But its is a barren critique of knowledge, in the sense that it does not, and cannot, take one decisive step further, into the critique of society, or the human condition, itself. We may well suspect that no fundamentalist reduction, whatever its direction, can generate such a critique.

For this reason the few theories which did attempt to avoid the traps of unilateral reductionism deserve particular attention. One of them is the theory of George Herbert Mead, which drew heavily on the world view of John Dewey. The starting point of that theory, in Horace M.Kallen's formulation, was 'the recognition that the first and last 'reality' is flux, process, duration, eventuation, function, and that ideas of unmoving substance and eternal forms are themselves changing ideals based on passing arrests, and movements of aversion and negation'.(8) Mead's is perhaps that sociological view in which existentialist dialectics have reached their furthermost limits. Mead refused to assign unilateral priority to either of the two poles of the most haunting of sociological dilemmas. Instead, he brought into focus the dialectical process of the continuous struggle and reconciliation between them, as the true starting point of sociological analysis. What warrants, in our view, the classification of this solution as existentialist, is the location of that dialectic within the subjective horizon of the self, and taking the existential predicament of the individual as the only source of data and object of analysis.

For Mead, neither of the poles—self and society—can be reduced to the other. Instead, they are both present, as partly autonomous, partly co-operating factors in every unit of experience. Even if we conform to the methodological rule that subjectively given information is the sole legitimate ground for sociological analysis, we can still, without postulating entities alien to primary experience, account for the tough, objective elements of existence, and posit them as its projections. Social reality is present in the most individual experience from the very start—not as a self-imposed, factitious constraint, or an inaccessible 'other side', as in some existentialist writings. It is visible from the subjective perspective, as the organic ingredient of the acting self as such, Both aspects of the self—the notorious Meadian 'me' and 'I'—already contain objective social reality, however unique and subjective they may appear; though, to be sure, social reality enters each in a different way and in a specific form. 'Me' and 'I' are two aspects of the self; but they are also the two aspects of social reality into which each individual is born and which he confronts in any of his acts. His 'I' is nothing but a lasting sediment of all previous acts to date in which the individual has faced reality as an immediately present, situational limit to his freedom; thus it contains society, though in a processed, individualized form, unlike the 'me', which is reality with its face uncovered, reality in this very moment, still 'sticking out' as an unassimilated, external factor of the action. The confrontation between 'me' and

'I', which the individual experiences in each of his acts, is but the subjective reflection of the dialectic of 'situation' and its individual 'definition'. However we look at it, it is always the same: the-already-assimilated against the-not-yet-assimilated reality, or the-already-accomplished, against still-open-ended, self. What we conceptualize as 'society' or the 'subjective self' are, therefore, two gigantic screens on which we progect, with equal right but equally misleading, the only existential reality which is directly given to the individual's experience: the dialectical tension of the social act. Both self and society are subsumed under this act, and only from its perspective can they be studied properly.

It is only when looked upon from the standpoint of a single act, that the 'I' and the 'me' face each other as independent entities; as, respectively, seats of freedom and unfreedom, impulse and its limitations, the self's drive and its external constraints, individual uniqueness and the uniformizing pressures of a socially founded and guarded 'role'. When seen processually, as interwined aspects of a biography, they lose their identity, merge into each other, reveal their relativity and ultimately dissolve into the endless series of the individual's on-going action-in-the-world. It is true that we experience intrinsic impulse as the unfinished, open-ended, programmatic component of the situation, in which the other component, which we call, 'social reality', 'structural constraints', or 'me', look very much like an inflexible, closed cage which arbit-rarily cuts the trajectory of our flight. But this truth holds only as long as the horizon of a single act is not transcended. From a wider perspective, such as that of the biography as an on-going process, both look remarkably alike. Indeed, they are, in equal measure, both open-ended and closed, both unfinished and accomplished, temporary and conclusive. Whatever difference we sense in their modality-for-us has been granted by the structuring capacity of the act at hand. It is past situations which project present definitions. As to the truth, however, of the reversal of the above statement, Mead was much less explicit. We do not know—in fact, we are incapable of knowing—whether, and in what way, the definitions of today sediment into situations of tomorrow. This part of dialectics has been left barely touched. It has been by-passed rather than tackled in the facile W.I.Thomas adage of the truth which emanates from the supposition of truth. If, however, Mead is specific and convincing in elucidating the actual mechanism of situations-becoming -definitions, there has been no comparably strong case presented for the other side of the dialectics of self and society.

This uneven distribution of emphases should not surprise us. In a truly existentialist mood, Mead attempts to disentangle the mysteries of the individual's existence which is always given, ready-made, and established the moment the individual begins to reflect upon it and thereby 'finds himself' in it. The process which led to the establishing of the 'outer fringe' of existence is not, therefore, a part of the individual experience of this existence; it cannot be surveyed 'from within', it is not opened to scrutiny as clearly and immediately as the existence itself. It can be reconstructed, or rather postulated, by theorizing and abstracting, but never experienced with the same obviousness with which the other side—the subjectivation of the objective—is. The aim of such theory is to satisfy human curiosity about the 'origin' of his world, rather than lending intelligibility to the message already contained in the experience. One cannot preserve the purity of the method and, at the same time, ascribe to the problem of the origin of objective reality the same epistemological status one gives to the question of the subjective appropriation of objectivity. Starting from existentialist assumptions, Mead went as far as it is humanly possible toward

transcending the opposition between self and society and attaining a unified account of an apparently polarized experience. But the same assumptions set an unsurpassable limit to his achievement. The dialectics disentangled within Meadian sociology inhered in the relationship between the ever-becoming self and a ready-made society. To expose the dynamics of the self, Mead had to leave in semi-shade the dynamics of society.

Though admittedly taking inspiration from Mead's work, Berger and Luckmann (9) have gone a long way towards transcending that limitation. By so doing, however, they have sacrificed a good deal of the methodological purity and cohesion of the original. Like Mead, Berger and Luckmann attempt to disentangle the dialectics of freedom and unfreedom, the acting self and the limits to his action. But their attention is drawn in the first place to the problem cast by Mead to the background of his central project. Berger and Luckmann (the telling title of their book makes it clear) wish to discover the mechanism of the construction of reality rather than the self.

They accept, as other existentialist critics of sociology have done, that whatever happens to man or in man—indeed, the very process of becoming man—takes place in the presence of the world, in the course of man's interaction with his environment perceived as the situation of action. Several additional assumptions are, however, introduced in the process, which purport to facilitate the explication of such presence—which other existentialist sociologies rarely bother to elevate from the status of the 'taken-for-granted'. Thus, we have the tacit assumption of some regularity, the constancy of environment, which in a Homans-like fashion leads to the 'habituation' of behavioural patterns. Frequently repeated action stops to be problematic, is no longer an object of active pondering and reflection, and quietly moves into the field of 'taken-for-granteds', where it becomes undistinguishable from other objective realities. If the habituation of A's actions is now reciprocated by a parallel habituation of B's behaviour, a new quality emerges: habitualized actions become typified, that is, nomically attached to typical situations. And another assumption: such actions tend to be selected for typification—i.e., become institutionalized—which are 'relevant to all' actors who share a given situation. Once institutionalized, the typified actions are reflected back into individuals' consciousness as objective, inevitable, unavoidable, etc. Knowledge of 'society', which emerges in such a way, is therefore a 'realization' in a double sense: it is an apprehension of social reality as 'reality', and, at the same time, the production of this reality, in so far as individuals, taking its objective nature for granted, on-goingly act toward perpetuating and continually re-creating its objectivity. It is this knowledge which lends institutions the appearance of cohesion and harmony they enjoy; the order of the universe is in the eye of the beholder, and in the habituated action of the actor.

This is, clearly, a revealing insight. The idea that there is only as much of the social order as there is of repetitious, routinized human action, and that there is no more 'necessity' in such an order than that on-goingly generated by routinized action and the knowledge which accompanies it, has a genuinely emancipating effect. It means a decisive step on the road leading from the critique of sociology to the critique of society. It reveals the partisan, committed nature of social knowledge, which endows the current routine (which can invoke for its legitimation nothing but a historical coincidence) with cognitive validity and normative dignity. It exposes the selective nature of such knowledge: it must be selective in the sense of suppressing information and values which explode the security of a closed universe. A necessary complement of knowledge is therefore 'nihilation'—a

machinery aimed at liquidating conceptually that which lies 'outside' the universe: if socially distributed knowledge validates current reality, the mechanism of nihilation tends to deny the validity of alternative realities and such interpretations which may relativize and put in question the existing one, Once established, the knowledge-reality mix tends to perpetuate itself. It acquires the power of producing reality. And so there is no 'social reality' unless produced by routinized human conduct; but there will be no routinization of conduct unless supported by the knowledge-reality mix:

> 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 plausibility. This is where the religious community comes in. It provides the indispensable plausibility structure for the new reality. (10)

But in the form in which it has been introduced and argued for, the above idea leaves the door to the critique of society only half-open. To start with, all members in society carry an equal share of 'responsibility' for the perpetuation of the social order. Order's stability rests ultimately upon their tacit agreement to behave in the habituated way. The order, in principle, can be reduced—without residue—to the institutionalized routine of a multitude of individuals. It has no other foundations but this routine: no structure stands out from the flat plain of evenly dispersed knowledge as a solid fulcrum of societal stability. The drama of the social construction of reality is, from beginning to end, played on the intellectual stage. Members of society appear on this stage only as epistemological entities, the rest of their attributes being irrelevant and therefore not invoked as explanatory factors. Having been built entirely of thought, institutions seem to possess no more toughness and solidity than thought usually does; or, rather, thought, being the building material, lends its pliability to the entire edifice. It will be difficult to prove, within this idiom, that in the process of construction there may be points of no return, structures which acquire a new quality, sediments which cannot be dissolved simply by the re-form of meanings.

A second point is closely associated with the first: while the observation, that the existence of society consists in continuous structuring rather than in a once-and-for-all established structure, is a powerful insight from which to start a devastating critique of sociology, it suggests, in a truly Enlightenment manner, the identity of the critique of sociology and the critique of society.

It reduces the task of criticizing social reality to the critique of social knowledge. Whatever there is of 'social reality' in the human condition depends at each particular moment, 'on-goingly', upon the persistence of the meanings which members of the society attach to it. One is inclined to conclude that, were the reflective consciousness of individuals, who lend visibility of logic and congruence to social institutions, abruptly stopped or turned the other way, social reality itself would dissipate or change its content. The situation which an individual confronts as the limitation of his action is nothing more than somebody else's definition, with a shared symbolic universe as a linchpin connecting the two. No other means are necessary to perpetuate a given set of institutions, than mythology, theology, philosophy, science—and no other elements of the social world need to be re-made to replace social reality by a new one.

Third and most important—Berger and Luckmann's view of the social construction of reality begs the question of the relevance of institutions to individuals' interests by a

simple assumption that precisely this relevance is the factor operative in the typification of habitual actions. To be sure, it is not clear what is the meaning which the authors attach to the last statement. The 'typification of the relevant' hypothesis may be seen as an 'origin myth', in which case it deserves precisely that measure of respect and attention those myths normally do. It may be seen, on the other hand, as a concealed definition of relevance. In that case one should not be misled by its pseudo-empirical form, but take it for what it is a methodologically convenient tautology; but then the question of why some habitual actions and not others become eventually institutionalized remains unanswered. If, however, Berger and Luckmann mean literally what they apparently say, the doubt immediately arises whether the individuals, for whom specific actions have been institutionalized, and those individuals for whom such actions are 'relevant', are the same people. It seems that precisely in the space stretched between those two distinct categories of individuals the problem of social reality is accommodated: as it were, the very experience of social reality stems from the feeling of discrepancy, or incongruence, between institutions and relevance. But this space is absent from Berger and Luckmann's vision; it has been eliminated, from the start, by an assumption which disposes of the possibility of a critique of social reality as a problem separate and different from the critique of knowledge.

Having said all this, Berger and Luckmann's remains a bold and fateful stride towards social knowledge which, unlike the Durksonian science of unfreedom, is capable of turning into a critique of society. Such a critique will have to embrace, as its condition and starting point, a thorough analysis of the social origin of knowledge Berger and Luckmann-fashion. But, to be sure, it will incorporate such a critique only as its starting point.

Chapter 3
CRITIQUE OF UNFREEDOM

TECHNICAL AND EMANCIPATORY REASON

Both sociology and its critique, as described in the last chapter, admit one commitment alone: a commitment to truth, understood, roughly, as the task of describing things 'as they really are', and thereby of supplying a firm foundation for action. Whatever other commitments sociology or its critique may enter into (and we have traced a number of them), they are not part of the design and are certainly not consciously allowed to interfere with the strategy of cognition. Such commitments are reached unwittingly, by selectively illuminating one or another aspect of the multi-faceted human condition. They are not consciously sought; when discovered (and they are discovered only when a critical stance has been taken) they are exposed as evidence of immaturity or failure of knowledge or as a sign of its misuse. Even then they are portrayed as simply departures from the truth; in most cases, extra-scientific commitments are carefully avoided even when those commitments already disclosed are criticized. There is a tacit agreement between the critique of sociology and the object of its criticism—an agreement which both sides are eager not to transgress—to assign to the 'true description of facts' the role of not just the supreme, but the only arbiter of their debate. Instead of exposing the many virtual commitments of social knowledge, the debate, however veheinent, reinforces social scientists in their dedication to the pursuit of such a noncommittal truth; and in their belief, that such truth would be accessible if only the method of attaining it were sufficiently purified of earthly pollutants.

To such a programme of uncommitted knowledge the name of positivism, in one of its many meanings (the 'ecstatic purification of passions'—Habermas), has been attached. If the programme of positive science simply calls to investigate facts in an impartial manner—as they really are, rather than as they ought to be or as they could be if not prevented—the programme of positivism maintains that, first, the kind of knowledge which can be obtained by positive science so organized is the only valid one, and, more importantly, that such knowledge will be, inevitably and unproblematically, as impartial and non-partisan as the attitude of the scient-ists who produce it. As Habermas pointed out, (1) the possibility of such a programme was contained, though in nuce only, in the Enlightenment accolade of Reason as the supreme value and guide of human practice in the world. Reason was advanced by 'les philosophes' as the conqueror of dogmatic prejudice, at which door the blame was laid for the oppressive physical and spiritual slavery men had suffered for the greater part of their history. In the mind of 'les philosophes', it was clearly a committed, embattled reason, totally immersed in the most topical, urgent, and poignant human yearnings. The cause of human emancipation was the basis of the case for the advancement of Reason. The triumph of Reason over prejudice was indeed seen as that emancipation itself: the acquisition of knowledge, so 'les philosophes' hoped, will give men control

over their lives and destinies: there will be no mediation between privately appropriated knowledge and private control, no by-products, no 'cognitive pouvoirs intermediaries', no institutionalized ossifications which will rise, as unsurmountable and opaque barriers, between man and his fate. 'Les philosophes' did not know, and could not know, that the advancement of technically expert, instrumentally efficient knowledge would, sooner or later, bind men to a huge artificial world on which they will depend materially but which will not depend on their capacity to penetrate and embrace it spiritually. 'Les philosophes' did not suspect that the Reason they advanced would coagulate into a new bondage which technically orientated science would be able only to reinforce, and which would put on the agenda a fundamental re-thinking of the type of knowledge man will need to control their fate. One can hardly blame 'les philosophes' for this failure of prevision. They articulated the programme of emancipation in the only terms the experience of their age had suppl1ed. Positive science, engaged in a mortal battle against dogmatic prejudice, was the only name available in their age for Reason committed to the task of human emancipation.

Positivism fed precisely on what had been the historically limited, temporary, transient form of the Enlightenment call to arms. It duly sifted the form from the content it was designed to serve. Means were zestfully promoted to the rank of autotelic ends. The commitment to emancipation, the practical involvement which supplied the fuel with which to launch Reason on its spectacular orbit, was allowed to recede slowly into the background, where it could be scanned only on ceremonious occasions, but rarely looked back to in daily routine. Imperceptibly but unavoidably, the commitment as such came to be identified with a morbid departure from the chosen path believed to lead to the only truth worth its name; as a renascence of the same dogmatic prejudice, which the pursuit of positive truth was aimed to vanquish. Among the extra-scientific commitments lumped together in the condemned field, room was soon found for any commitment to human emancipation which looked beyond instrumentally orientated positive science for a more powerful leverage of human freedom.

The essential difference between the Enlightenment and positivist Reason was that between open-endedness and closure, between the hopeful postulate and conservative description. For 'les philosophes', Reason was—to paraphrase Santayana—a knife with its edge pressed against the future: a programme of the struggle to come, aimed against the prejudice, the ignorance, the dogmatism incarnate in slavish obedience to the present and through the present to the past, from which it descended. They saw Reason as an errant knight of virtue who had boldly, perhaps even recklessly, challenged the overwhelming powers of unreason congealed in human bondage and terror. It was unreason which had been fortified in the trenches of human reality 'here and now'. To chase it away from there, Reason had to be critical of human reality, to consider it from an autonomous perspective, to assume the standpoint of a better reality yet-to-come; to be, in other words, willingly and consciously ideal-committed, utopian, iconoclastic. All these proud self-designations positivist Reason turned into invectives. From its vantage point they became attributes of unreason which Reason has the task of destroying. If the modality of the future is one characterized by freedom coupled with uncertainty, while the modality of the past is marked by the blend of certainty with unfreedom—one can say that Reason, cast by Enlightenment in the 'future' mould, has been re-cast by Enlightenment's positivist heirs, into the mould of the past.

The stunning transmogrification of Reason on its way from the Enlightenment to its positivist heirs holds, in fact, little mystery. It was just one more case of the only too well known rule, whose manifestations can be easily observed whenever a utopia 'grows into' reality: what it irretrievably loses in the process, is its critical edge. Holbach could, without many qualms, subtitle his major work 'Laws of the physical and the moral world'—not because he was unaware of the distinction between facts and norms, but because (a circumstance some wish to forget) the common denominator, which he invoked to legitimize the conjunction, was not 'objective reality', but reason. It was Reason which made sense of spelling out physical and moral laws in one breath. In part—in the physical world—reason had already identified itself with reality thanks to the fact that Nature did not require any human informed mediation to 'be at one with itself', to conflate its potentiality and its actuality. Having dissolved itself in the works of Nature, Reason could be just 'read out' from there. The enhancement of Reason and learning the facts of Nature was, admittedly, one and the same activity. In the moral world, however, Reason resided only as a potentiality, a postulate, as a commandment, as a utopian programme for the future, still waiting to be embraced by enlightened men and turned into reality. The committed, value-informed practice in the ethical realm was, therefore, the natural companion and equivalent of the unbiased, impartial study of Reason incarnate in non-human Nature. Were a positivist to have furnished his book with Holbach's subtitle, he would certainly have inserted another meaning into the same conjunction. The physical and the moral world would, for him, belong to the same class, not because they both are or should be subjugated to Reason, but because both are reality, waiting to be studied in the same impartial, detached and disinterested fashion. But then in its positivist incarnation Reason declares its lack of interest in human unfulfilled potentialities and its inability to discuss them: it is only there that facts and values part their ways once and for all. With Reason forced to abdicate rights to criticize and relativize human reality, men are bound, willy-nilly, to seek levers of their emancipation elsewhere. But this 'elsewhere' has been condemned from the outset as the domain of error and prejudice, variously called partisanship, ideology, utopia. Once the weapon of emancipation, Reason has been turned into its opponent. The more it succeeds, however, in disowning and disavowing the efforts of emancipation, the less challenged is the rule of charlatans and witch doctors over the intractable human quest for a better world. The question is, therefore, whether Enlightenment Reason still contains a message which can be retrieved to inform the task of human emancipation in the age shaped—materially and spiritually—by scientific civilization; whether, in other words, Reason and Emancipation, by now long divorced, can be brought together again; whether Reason, enriched but changed by two centuries of scientific explosion, can now revindicate its critical power and the potency to inform human emancipation.

The very success of the positive sciences, the tremendous increase in the technical-instrumental capacity of mankind, has manifested itself in the emergence of a technological civilization, which, constructed of highly specialized and autonomous units, has detached itself from its source: from the informed, goal-directed human activity; and which does not require, for its survival and growth, to be penetrated in its entirety by human consciousness and reflected in universally distributed knowledge. It has become, therefore, 'like' nature, in the sense of being independent of human knowledge and conscience—at least such knowledge and conscience which reflect directly upon it as a totality, in order to guide its

activity. Positive science, contributing to expert technical-instrumental skill, can only add further bricks to the cognitive wall which separates the autonomous system of civilization from men who are increasingly dependent on it for their existence. Positivism, struggling to assure for such a science the position of monopolistic knowledge, perpetrates human dependence further still, by branding with infamy all attempts to render the wall penetrable to the human eye. It seems, therefore, that the interest of human emancipation, the desire to consciously control the course of human history, may not be properly served if the positivistically informed cognitive attitude retains its monopoly. In Haberman's words:

> this can only be altered by a change in the state of consciousness itself, by the practical effect of a theory which does not improve the manipulation of things and of reifications, but which instead advances the interest of reason in human adulthood, in the autonomy of action and in the liberation from dogmatism. This it achieves by means of the penetrating ideas of a persistent critique.

The question is, however, how such a critique can render itself legitimate within the civilization informed by the ascendant positivist idiom.

Once again, as in the times of the Enlightenment, the reason which purports to be critical and thereby to assist and advance the process of emancipation, has to confront commonsense as its most powerful adversary. With commonsense reflecting the lack of autonomy which defines daily existence, it is reason, aspiring towards adult responsibility and the liberation of human action, which is liable to ridicule and refutation on the grounds of evidence. There is little in commonsensical experience which may warrant hope. On the contr-ary, the totality of daily routine seems to expose its naivety and discredit its promises. Emancipatory reason, from the outset, is denied the benefit of unorganized, spontaneous evidence comparable with that enjoyed by commonsense. It appears therefore unfounded, rootless, crippled by all those frailties which commonsense, articulated in positivism, posits as the most odious of sins knowledge may commit—fantasy, utopianism, unrealism. Indeed, to legitimize its claims, this reason must reach beyond commonsense and challenge the very daily existence which renders commonsense so placidly, if not fatuously, assured of its righteousness. Emancipatory reason does not simply compete with other theories, which, like the science of unfreedom or its critique, attempt only to articulate what commonsensical experience informs men about anyway. It recklessly denies the validity of information itself, portraying it as inconclusive, partial, historically limited, as a reflection of a matilated, maimed, truncated existence. Its struggle is not with commonsense, but with the practice, called social reality, which underlies it. Reason proclaims reality itself to be untrue. Its plea against commonsense is, therefore, not that commonsense errs (commonsense has nothing against being corrected; it, too, strives to be cohesive and enjoys the feeling of being at one with logic), but that it truly reports an experience which, in itself, is untrue, being born, as it is, from the suppression of human potential. Commonsensical consciousness, so considered, is not false; but it faithfully reflects existence which belies the genuine human potential. Hence emancipatory reason goes beyond the merely epistemological critique of commonsense.

Emancipatory reason roams into regions which its positivistic opposite number has declared strictly off-limits. It is set upon disclosing the factors responsible for the one-

sidedness, the selectivity of human experience and the 'facts' it supplies. It assumes that the 'prejudice' 'les philosophes' fought, is not rooted in the deficiencies of human cognitive faculties. Its roots reach much deeper, into the very structure of the human conditions. If positivist reason meets commonsense critically on the cognitive battlefield alone, if it chastises commonsense for not being methodical enough, for drawing wrong conclusions from right evidence—emancipatory reason does not blame it for errors of judgment. Instead, and much more painfully, emancipatory reason puts in question the admissibility of the very evidence on which commonsensical judgments are made. It is social reality itself which renders commonsensical awareness—even when resulting from faithful, correct reflection—false.

Such an iconoclastic attitude cannot but arouse a most ferocious resistance. If accepted, it will surely put in doubt the virtue of commonsense, frequently identified with wisdom, and detract from the strength and attractiveness of commonsensical beliefs. It will 'denaturalize' what commonsensically passes for nature, make the inevitable a matter of choice, transform the super-human necessity into an object of moral responsibility, and force men into questioning what has been unreflectively, and often conveniently, accepted as brute, immutable facts. It will tear to shreds the comfortingly tight protective shield which leaves so little within the reach of human decision and responsibility. It may well render unbearable the same human condition which commonsense tries hard—and successfully—to make tolerable.

> It is thanks to commonsense that man: knows who he is. He feels accordingly. He can conduct himself 'spontaneously', because the firmly internalized cognitive and emotive structure makes it unnecessary or even impossible for him to reflect upon alternative possibilities of conduct…. The socially available definitions of such a world are thus taken to be 'knowledge' about it and are continuously verified for the individual by social situations in which this 'knowledge' is taken for granted. The socially constructed world becomes the world 'tout ccrurt'—the only real world, typically the only world that one can seriously conceive of. The individual is thus freed of the necessity of reflecting anew about the meaning of each step in his unfolding experience. He can simply refer to 'common sense' for such interpretation…. (2)

What man loses in the breadth of his cognitive horizons and in the extent to which his inner potentialities may be realised, he certainly gains in emotional security. He attains a deluding, but rewarding impression of the meaingfulness of his world by severely limiting the part of it which he expects to possess meaning. He acquires the ability to cope with the harsh realities of the public world because he believes, as he is told, that he bears responsibility only for his narrow private world. In so believing he does not err; his consciousness is false only 'by proxy' in so far as his actual condition falsifies his true potentialities. There is, in fact, a two-way correspondence between the human situation and its comnonsensical reflection. It is thanks to this correspondence that comnonsense is cognitively satisfying and pragmatically effective. In this double utility it is confirmed and reinforced by that type of social science which codifies and articulates the convenient surrender. As Henry S.Kariel put it:

> just as a dream of an iceberg floating by keeps us asleep when our blanket has slipped off the bed, the report of political science that apathy is a function of healthy political system reconciles us to the exploitation of part of the body politic. Political scientists consolingly reveal that whatever happens is 'really' no accident. They disclose the existence of underlying patterns—pattern assumed to lie in nature, imposed by Fate, History, Rationality, or the Logic of Events. Relying on Einstein's metaphysical sentiments, they assume that God does not play dice. Like the great works of theology and art, their rationalizations fill a human need: they make our existence tolerable. And like the great achievements of theology, they help implement what the powerful allege to be the consensus.(3)

In the struggle against the reality protected by commonsense, emancipatory reason starts off from a handicapped position, being bound to revive the anxieties and the terrifying uncertainty of human fate which commonsense so consolingly puts to rest or hermetically seals off.

Unlike instrumentally motivated knowledge, emancipatory reason does not promise to facilitate the tasks commonsense strives to ful-fil: the tasks of making the best of the world 'given', in all its dazzling obviousness, in the most elementary experience. It does not offer to assist commonsense in its effort adequately to process and systematize the seemingly unmistakable information experience supplies. Instead, it comes up with a piece of advice which is apt, if taken seriously, to pulverize the solid walls of the cosy everyday world: it proposes, in all earnest, to take an ironic attitude toward experience itself, complete with the allegedly unshakable 'facts' it furnishes. If commonsense asks men to believe in 'laws of nature' which emancipatory reason finds difficult to accept, the reaction does not confine itself to re-checking the method of commonsensical fact-gathering and the logic of commonsensical reasoning. Inevitably, it strikes at the 'experience' which supplies such facts and stimulates such reasoning. It questions the 'natural' character of the putative 'nature'. The ironic detachment from commonsense which emancipatory reason propounds and cultivates, has its sharp edge turned against social reality, and not against human cognitive or moral faculties.

It is for this reason that the critique aimed at emancipation is bound to consider commonsense as an obstacle. Commonsense can only fulfil its cognitive and emotional functions to the extent to which it succeeds in closing its eyes to 'alternative realities'. All the power of conviction which commonsense may carry ultimately rests on the assumption that the reality conveyed by commonsense is the sole reality, while commonsense is the only channel through which information about it may be obtained: reality is one, and commonsense is its spokesman. Commonsense, assisted by the technically orientated science which reforges its findings into utilitarian knowledge, spare, therefore, no efforts to expose and unmask 'false prophets' of alternative realities. As we have seen, the technicalscientific idiom offers quite a few categories which have been coined with this purpose in mind. A 'possible reality', which is unable to produce a certificate of viability issued by experience, is branded unrealistic, irrational, or utopian—depending on context. On the contrary, emancipatory reason can claim its legitimacy only on the condition that the one reality of which commonsensical experience informs us has no more foundation than a historical coincidence can give, and by no means can be considered as the only one which is possible and conceivable. In particular, it perceives the limitation of the range of

possibilities, as signalled by commonsense, as a mere reflection of the limitations imposed on human action by changing historical practice. Neither the one, nor the other is final and irreparable. To discover alternative kinds of practice which have been suppressed and temporarily eliminated by the unique course of man-made history, one has first to accept them as a possibility; and that requires a hypothetical refutation of the finality of commonsensical evidence.

Emancipatory reason is at odds with commonsense (and that technical-instrumental knowledge which shares its philosophical standpoint) in one other vital respect. Having accepted historically accomplished reality as the only source of legitimate knowledge, commonsense, together with derivative science, limits its recognition of choice to that which is posited as 'decisional nods' in an otherwise deterministic process. Positivism denies science the right of discussing 'ends'; indeed, this voluntary abstention from stepping beyond the realm of means, from seeing the discussion of values as its objective, from asking questions about the 'ends of history' or the 'meaning of human existence'—all these aspects of self-imposed modesty define that science which positivism recognises as the sole form of valid knowledge. But the distinction between ends and means, which delineates the limits of scientific pursuit, is nothing but a reflection of the dividing line between things controlled and things beyond control, again, as drawn by that social reality which has been historically accomplished. In social life, 'means' refers to activities or their aspects which have been left flexible and which can and should be directed by human choices. 'Ends', on the other hand, are large-scale states or changes which are not, at least not directly, an object of deliberate decision made by specific people. They are located on the level of this societal totality which gained independence from conscious, purposeful human activity. If men happen to become objects of such decision, science, as in the case of the Weberian charismatic overlords of meansoriented bureaucracy, can neither interfere nor help. As for the historical process as a whole, its ends can be theoretically depicted as remote consequences of minute, sectional decisions. But they do not figure in these decisions as 'in-order-to' motives. They follow such decisions in an a fortiori inscrutable way, whose logic may be penetrated only in retrospect.

Knowledge orientated towards technical-instrumental interests has, as it were, no tools with which to analyse and select 'better ends'. Instead, it locates the ends inside the reality which it takes for granted, as given, as the starting point of all inquiry. By the same token, such knowledge follows commonsense in implicitly assigning to ends a status akin to inevitability. They are not considered to be a matter of choice; they are, if anything, the supreme criterion of all other, smaller, more limited choices. Social reality is historically constructed in such a way as to prevent some major questions from ever becoming an object of the deliberate consideration and decision of men. Commonsense reflects this structure of social reality by preventing men from facing such questions as objects of their responsibility and decision. Instead, the life-process and its intellectual reflections are split into a multitude of tiny and relatively inconsequential decisions, none of which is practically or intellectually related directly to the major dilemmas of the human condition. Thus commonsense presents as a supra-human necessity what social reality has already placed beyond the realm of human control. In this respect, as in so many others, social reality and commonsense support and reinforce each other. Man abstains from rebellion, and social reality in exchange prevents him from facing situations which may occasion

that utterly unpleasant, tormenting feeling of incertitude. As Voltaire's Martin would say- 'Travaillons sans raisonner…. C'est le seul moyen de rendre lavie supportable'.

And thus, technical-instrumental knowledge has none of the tools which would be required were one wishing to evaluate ends with the same degree of certainty and precision with which this knowledge evaluates actions defined as means. Technical-instrumental knowledge willingly admits its incompetence. But, at the same time, it denies the possibility of any other type of knowledge passing authoritative verdicts on issues it shirks discussing. Denied a more sophisticated methodology, and warned against ideas which might stretch its imagination beyond the limits of reality at hand, commonsense will obviously opt for the only ends which can produce evidence of their 'reality'—i.e., those ends which are woven into social reality itself and therefore appear to the individual as an outer necessity. Science will then agree with commonsense that the 'satisfaction of human needs' furnishes the ultimate, and utterly non-partisan limit to the field of such human affairs as may be instrumentalized and thus judged, served and perfected by science. But not human needs themselves—which are just given, and which one would expect monotonously to remind us of their obstinate presence whatever happens in the instrumental sphere. What has been left unsaid is that those needs themselves are, in the long run, a cultural, i.e. non-natural, product (except for the few 'physiological', organic needs, whose discussion makes, however, little practical sense, since in every known culture they are theoretically conceived rather than appearing in their pure, unadorned form).

It is true that until very recently human needs entered human relations as unarguable starting points, rather than as objects of intentional manipulation. They were the results of human action none the less, albeit action uncontrolled by understanding and uninformed by anticipatory knowledge. Once established, they enter, in the form of expectations and demands, in a feedback relation with social reality, which in its turn lends them some of its appearance of inevitability. The resulting commonsensical attitude of taking them for granted further contributes to their entrenchment and obscures even more the fact of their human, historically contingent origin. This means, in practice, that the chance of submitting them to a conscious, informed human control becomes more remote still, and the commonsense-fed positivist idiom, which denies the right of critical reason to assess human needs, is partly to blame for the perpetuation of this situation. By endorsing the expedient of splitting existential issues into a plethora of short-range, narrowly circumscribed daily decisions, science, oriented toward technical interest and allegedly set upon the rationalization of human action, unwittingly propagates the irrationality of historical process—though only by default. To quote Habermas again:

> the root of the irrationality of history is that we 'make' it, without, however, having been able until now to make it consciously. A rationalization of history cannot therefore be furthered by an extended power of control on the part of manipulative human beings, but only by a higher stage of reflection, a consciousness of acting human beings moving forward in the direction of emancipation. (4)

To sum up—emancipatory reason comes into conflict with commonsense on three crucial fronts: it is set upon 'de-naturalizing' that which commonsense declares to be human—or social—nature; it exposes and condemns the commonsensical dismissal of alternative

realities; and it attempts to restore the legitimacy of those existential issues which commonsense, following human historical predicament, pulverizes into a multitude of such mini-problems as can be articulated in purely instrumental terms. In view of those dis-agreements, emancipatory reason cannot settle for—truly or falsely—correcting commonsense and enhancing its theoretical sophistication, as does Durksonian sociology; nor can it settle for turning its searching lights on commonsense itself, in order to explore the generative grammar of beliefs which commonsense presents as platitudionally obvious, as did the critics of sociology inspired by existentialism. It cannot stop short of questioning the very reality which comnonsense strives faithfully to reflect—and, therefore, of undermining the very basis of commonsense's authority as a trustworthy source of true knowledge.

One can point out a common denominator in all three major points of controversy between emancipatory reason and commonsense: that is, the conflict between the historical and the natural perspective. Emancipatory reason can prove its case only if it succeeds in rearranging experiential knowledge in terms of its truly historical structure. And it is precisely an in-built tendency to positing the historical as the natural (i.e., timeless), which supplies commonsense with its most crucial cognitive principle. Indeed, it is not only the first point of disagreement which makes sense only if viewed against the background of this paramount conflict; the same applies to the two remaining issues of contention. The case for a specific social reality being unchallengeable and unchangeable in one or another of its aspects could not be seriously upheld were this reality assessed as historically contingent. And the multitude of mini-issues tend to congeal into great existential problems immediately (and only when) the questions of their historical origin are seriously asked and, consequently, the suspicion of their historical transcience is solidly founded.

It is this historical perspective which allows us to transcend the opposition between the two poles of the pre-predicative human experience (definition and situation, motives and constraints, control and system), on which the supposedly fundamental controversy between Durksonian sociology and its existentialist critics is founded. Indeed, the actor's and the situation's poles of action are counterposed as mutually independent agents and dissonant forces only if surveyed within the framework of a single act, or a set of identical acts. The autonomy of poles disappears, however, if the narrow cognitive horizons are broken, and the act begins to be seen as a link in a historical chain. What transpires then is the fact that the poles are inextricably linked to each other and, indeed, constitute each other.

What we mean here is constitution as historical process—not the 'cognitive' constitution, easily acknowledged by sociology which has no use for historicity: the latter is the trivial truth that the situation and its definition are inconceivable in isolation from each other. Recognition of this trivial truth is in no way related to the willingness or unwillingness to look beyond the boundary of a single event, towards men as historical agents. It requires only the much simpler acceptance of the actor as an epistemological agent, who either appropriates or posits the segment of reality brought into relief by his intentions, motives or intellectual labours. As we have seen, the only form in which time and process are admitted into this picture is the biographical past of the actor. But such an individualized history is too weak a lever to lift the barrier separ-ating the two poles of action-structure; the other, situation-centred pole, is as autonomous toward the biography of the actor as it is in relation to the actor's momentary intentions.

Not so in the case of a truly historical constitution. Here, the juxtaposition of actor and his situation is reduced to its proper status—a momentary snapshot of a process in which men play both of the roles so clearly distinguished in a single act—that of subject and object of history. This dialectical unity of both sides of human experience has been admirably expressed by John R.Seeley:

> What is lost from sight in this way of talking is again that the principle of inclusion is not 'given' (like the liver-cell's relation to that liver and that body in which the liver lies), but 'enacted'; that what is involved is a loyalty, not a locus; that while there are two-way consequences, so that neither the soldiers nor the army are conceptually or practically independent, the relations are not those of logical implication (as in the parts of triangles) nor necessity (as in the body-cell), nor even undying convenience. (5)

If they happen to be, by chance, historical relations, then the opposition of actor and his situation, instead of passing for the ultimate, pre-theoretical reality from which all investigation must start, becomes itself an occurrence to be explained, and, above all, questioned. Whatever insuperable constraints the here-and-now situation may entail, will then reveal their true nature: that of sediments of past actions and choices.

'SECOND NATURE' SEEN HISTORICALLY

No theory to date has gone further than Marxist sociology in elucidating the historical contingence of the allegedly natural conditions of human existence. Marxist sociology locates the science of unfreedom and its existentialist critics as parts of the same historically limited conditions, and thereby opens the possibility of their creative transcendence.

Marx's argument against Adam Smith (6) may be considered as a typical example of the method of critique. Smith, much like Durksonian sociology and its critics, 'naturalizes' historical conditions of human existence. Capital, prices, exchange, private interest, etc., he sees as pre-conditions of the life-process, as 'objective facts' from which any life-process, as well as its study, is bound to start. Marx questions this assumption:

> The dissolution of all products and activities into exchange values presupposes the dissolution of all fixed personal (historic) relations of dependence in production, as well as the all-sided dependence of the producers on one another. Each individual's production is dependent on the production of all others; and the transformation of his product into the necessaries of his own life is (similarly) dependent on the consumption of all others. Prices are old; exchange also; but the increasing determination of the former by costs of production, only develop fully, and continue to develop ever more completely, in bourgeois society, the society of free competition, What Adam Smith, in the true eighteenth-century manner, puts in the prehistoric period, the period preceding history, is rather a product of history.

It is the individual's dependence on the anonymous multitude of other members of the society which appears to him as 'social necessity', as the 'objective situation', against which he is bound to measure his own motives and intentions, and which furnishes him with the only 'objective' criteria of rationality of those motives. But this appearance is

itself a historical creation. It emerged at some point in history when human sociability, 'being-with-others', ceased to manifest itself as relations which—like personal relations—could be, in their totality, cognitively appropriated by the individuals involved. With the extension of relations of exchange the net of dependence transcended the narrow field which the individual could consciously control qua individual, in face-to-face, person-to-person, encounters. Such encounters now became small sectors of large totalities whose further reaches dissolved into the obscurity of unknown and invisible dependencies. To be properly understood, they now had to be cognitively dovetailed into a large network of relations: an intellectual feat which could not be performed without theoretically constructing a model, which would render intelligible what was not empirically accessible. To be controlled, they required human individuals to transcend their situation qua individuals—the situation in which they remain in their daily routine—and consciously to revindicate their group life, commensurate with the field of their dependencies. And thus a gap was created between the individual's creative and appropriating activities, between being-for-others and being-for-himself, between the individual's self-actualizing drive and the conditions of his own survival. The gap is perceived as a permanent clash between private interest and social reality. It is to be cognitively filled by an ideology—which, as the field of dependencies it attempts to make comprehensible—must transcend the data immediately given in the individual's daily experience.

Hence, in opposition to his primitive followers as well as to his equally primitive and superficial critics, Marx did not reduce social life to economics, thereby offering another version of a 'science of unfreedom'. On the contrary, he reduced economics to its social content; he re-wrote political economy as sociology, and sociology as history. It was only as the result of a specific, and perhaps unique, historic development that economic dependencies gained ascendancy over all other human relations; that they came to appear as inflexible, objective conditions of human existence and the ultimate limits of human freedom; that they congealed, in other words, into 'objective social reality', a 'second nature'. It is only because, in order to exist, he has to move in a network of dependencies he can neither scan nor control, that the individual has become 'privatized' 'private' is an antonym of public'), that he has to view his own interest in survival as threatened and conditioned by faceless others, whom he meets only as an oblique, inscrutable 'objective reality'.

> Private interest is itself already a socially determined interest, which can be achieved only within the conditions laid down by society and with the means provided by society; hence it is bound to the reproduction of these conditions and means.

And, most importantly:

> the social character of activity, as well as the social form of the product, and the share of individuals in production here appear as something alien and objective, confronting the individuals, not as their relation to one another, but as their subordination to relations which subsist independently of them and which arise out of collisions between mutually indifferent individuals.

The opacity of social institutions, the optical illusion of their autonomy, parallels their removal far beyond the reach of commonsensical experience. The individual's modalities

of producer and consumer are still visible from the commonsensical perspective, but not the link which connects them. All the vast social space which extends and mediates between the productive effort and consumer satisfaction enters the realm of commonsensical experience only in the form of 'exchange value' and 'money'—the first representing and concealing the intricate web of the individual's dependence on activities of others, the second epitomizing such power as the individual may possess over these activities. The only information comnonsense offers in such circumstances is that given more money, the individual may appropriate more exchange values. The only advice commonsense may supply, is that the individual should try, to the best of his ability, to obtain more power (=money), in order to gain more freedom (=exchange values standing at his disposal, and therefore subjugated and tamed). The relations of production, exchange and appropriation obtained the crucial, determining, nature-like role they possess in the market-based society not because of some mythical 'primacy' of economy over the rest of social relations, but because they, in the first place, have been withdrawn from immediate, conscious human control and therefore have become independent of those people whose activities constitute their only substance. They are still nothing but the sum-total of a multitude of human interactions. But to every single individual who partakes of these interactions they appear as 'something alien and objective'—in a way not very different from that in which the cat's tail appears to him as an alien object. Other non-econonic, social relations coagulate into power, i.e., into tough, constraining, pressure-exerting 'reality'—only as derivatives of structures already petrified by economic dependencies (the idea expressed in the metaphor of the 'superstructural' character of political, social and cultural powers). And vice versa—a type or a sector of human relations may be emancipated from the 'iron laws of social reality' and re-appropriated by human individuals as conscious controlling agents only to the extent to which they are independent of economy and located beyond the reach of the treadmill of money-exchange values. Hence the discovery, by the critics of Durksonian sociology, of face-to-face encounters, the narrow enclaves of inter-personal relations, as the fulcrum on which to base human meaning-negotiating freedom. Hence their tendency to enclose their cognitive universe within the walls of a psychiatrist's anteroom, a married couple's bedroom or university seminar. If the freedom to negotiate meanings and to actualize one's self-definition may indeed be found in these secluded places, it is only because, and in so far as, these places, and the activities which occur there, have been disgorged or disowned by, and then securely isolated from, the 'public' sphere ruled by anonymous necessities standing for the network of economic dependencies.

The 'public' sphere enters the commonsensical experience of the individual as a nature-like, superior reality in so far as it has been removed from an immediate relation with the individual. A new realm has been spread out between the individual creative effort (the production of utility objects by transforming natural ones) and the human life-supporting activities (which still can be seen as directly related to human will, as the realm, at least partly, of individual freedom). This realm in fact connects the two disparate halves of the- existential cycle, though, from the perspective of the individual experience, these halves appear to be short-circuited by money and exchange value. As far as individual commonsensical wisdom is concerned, money and exchange values stand for this mysterious, impenetrable realm into which the individual's products disappear and from which articles of the individual's consumption emerge. But money and exchange value

obscure rather than determine (much less illuminate) the virtuial social character of this realm: they present social relations as economic. The task of critical sociology is to revindicate the social substance of the social world.

In this, critical sociology differs from both Durksonian sociology and its existentialist critics. Durksonian sociology, so to speak, takes commonsensical appearances at their face value; since they appear inevitable and irremovable, it declares them to be such and proceeds to supply us with their precise and comprehensive description. Its existentialist critics refuse to acknowledge the reality of appearances, but first, go instead for investigating the mental process which posits them as 'reality', and—second—refrain from investigating other realities, which those appearances perhaps conceal. Instead, they retreat into exploration of the individual's freedom at the periphery of the social world—exactly where that freedom has been evicted by the realities which the rejected appearances distort and hide. They attempt to portray such periphery as a self-sustained world (both cognitively and morally) and, moreover, as the very centre of the life-world from which all other components of this world emanate. Thus, they attempt to short-circuit severed halves of human existence, in much the same way as it is done by money and commodities, only using language for the work done in the social world by money (to which Marx would retort: 'To compare money with language is…erroneous. Language does not transform ideas, so that the peculiarity of ideas is dissolved and their social character run alongside them as a separate entity…' (7)). Critical sociology sees both strategies as well founded in the historically developed commonsense of the market society: in a commonsense which has tacitly accepted its historical limitations and therefore perceives them as unencroachable. Both strategies seek to illuminate commonsense without questioning its self-determination. By so doing, they both replicate the limitations of the commonsense they serve.

The conflict between critical sociology and the two alternative strategies is not simply the question of an ultimately arbitrary preference, which, like taste, is not worth arguing about. Critical sociology shows that the alternative strategies fail, and are bound to fail, in their attempts to inform human existence in a way which can make emancipation possible, since they accept, as being irremovable, precisely those aspects of historically contingent reality which render such emancipation inaccessible. The idea that one can tack together 'pour les autres' and 'pour soi' aspects of one's existence by an intellectual and moral effort alone, can only tempt false hopes of illusory emancipation. The idea will make the fissure—and the resulting unfreedom—even more immune from emancipatory efforts.

Such an idea is an illusion, since in the market society the life-process of the individual cannot be contained within the narrow field of 'Umwelt': that sector of 'the others' with whom the individual has a chance of entering into linguistic communication—to meet face-to-face, to stimulate to action and respond to, to bargain about definitions of the situation and status-assignment, to negotiate meanings, etc. In a technologically primitive, pre-modern society, with the circulation of the totality of goods limited to a small circle of people belonging to cognitively accessible kinship or local group, the itinerary of all items listed in the inventory of the life-process remained, from beginning to end, within the sight of the individual. The network of dependencies overlapped, therefore, with the network of personal relations; dependencies were seen as obligations, and were defined by a kinship or estate category to which the individual belonged. It was there that economic dependencies were, in a direct and literary sense, culturally founded; they were coterminous

with status-definitions and the meanings attached to them. However unfree or dependent an individual was in such conditions, the sources of his unfreedom held nothing mysterious, they were easily ascribable to specific individuals who wielded the strings of dependence. A powerful church and the awesome will of God were, therefore, necessary to make up for the deficiencies of social bonds too transparent to secure their own perpetuation and to keep subordinate groups—those offered the raw end of the deal—in their grip. The dependence and non-autonomy of individual life was visible from within commonsensical experience in its true nature—that of personal bondage—and required, therefore, super-human cultural sanctions, in the shape of institutionalized eschatology, to be sustained. Reproduction of the economic system hinged in effect on the reproduction of the crude but easily assimilable web of cultural definitions.

Disintegration of kinship and local ties, the shaking off of immutable status definitions and their super-human sanctions, coincided with the emergence of this unique conjunction of personal independence with impersonal bondage, which is typical of market society. It is here that Steinbeck's hero, evicted from the land of his fathers, feels agonized by the realization that there is 'nobody to be shot' for his misfortune. The blight cannot be pinned to any particular individual; the intricate tissue of causes reaches far beyond the cognitive horizon of the individual, and clearly could not be woven out of personal responsibilities and guilts. As the web of dependencies lost its human nature, super-human sanctions are no longer necessary to keep it intact. The system of dependence can exist on its own, as a result of its opacity, impersonality, recon-dite and inscrutable nature. It appears now, and only now, as a mysterious 'social reality', as a nature-like objectivity, which must be obeyed. Obedience, to be sure, is now not a moral act, but a question of reason and rationality. The individual is welladvised not to overreach himself, not to embark on a futile struggle, not to challenge social nature—not because that would be a morally morbid act, a rebellion against supreme moral power, but because such an act of disobedience will be against his own personal interests. Hence, in retrospect, the market society appears as tantamount to personal liberation. The bondage once supported by fear and an ideological lie is now willingly and 'freely' chosen for the sake of well understood and rationally assessed personal interest. In the age of reason and informed choice, knowledge of the functional prerequisites of the 'second nature' is an apposite and sought-for substitute for the terror of God's vengeance. It assumes that the individual is a free agent; it appeals to his reason and intelligence instead of his prejudice and fear.

In a market society, 'the reciprocal and all-sided dependence of individuals who are indifferent to one another forms their social connection'. They are indifferent to each other, in the sense that they do not meet as persons, do not consciously interact, and may well be unaware of each other's existence: but they depend on one another, for the simple reason that the precise form of the product of one individual's activity, which returns to him transformed into some finished article for his consumption, will depend on the activities of innumerable other individuals of whom the individual in question has neither intellectual awareness nor practical control. The lack of personal bond holds, of course, in both directions. Hence the experience of personal freedom, which arises from the fact that no other person (an individual physically, cognitively and emotionally close enough to be perceived as a person) guides the individual in question in his choice, far less foists such choices upon him. Such constraints as individuals experience while making choices and

putting them to the test, are much too inflexible and so unmistakably beyond persuasion to be explained away as the works of specific persons. 'Individuals are subsumed under social production; social production exists outside them as their fate; but social production is not subsumed under individuals, manageable by them, as their common wealth'. Economic dependencies now in fact do precede and frame all other kinds of interhuman relations; they appear, at the outset, as the inexorable conditions of all human action and as unsurpassable limits to freedom of choice. But it is, Marx insists:

> an insipid notion to conceive of this merely 'objective bond' as a spontaneous, natural attribute inherent in individuals and inseparable from their nature (in antithesis to their conscious knowing and willing). It is a historic product. It belongs to a specific phase of their development.(8)

The split of the elementary human experience into the willing subject and his constraining environment (the split on which all sociology is built), is therefore a result of historic development and by no means can be taken as a perpetual, species-ascribed human condition. This, itself, requires explanation, and the explanation is bound to be historical.

To be fair, one has to admit that in their more inspired moments sociologists do play with the idea of the historical changeability of the human condition. But more often than not, history in their ratiocination boils down to typology, or rather to a dichotomic division of known types of social organization and, consequently, of human action. The idea appears under different names, though, given all their differences in emphasis, such variously described pairs betray a surprisingly wide range of similarities. 'Gemeinschaft' and 'Gesellschaft', military and industrial society, theological and positive eras, ascriptive and achievement societies, mechanical and organic solidarities, non-industrial and industrial societies—all these concepts, however rich their content may be, stand in fact for the same persistent realization of the antithesis between personal freedom caught in the net of impersonal dependencies (typical of market society) and the lack of personal choice combined with the evidently personal nature of dependencies (typical of a society with market undeveloped). The only alternative to the reality at hand, which the positive attitude can tolerate, is that state of affairs which has been eliminated, as a viable alternative, by the advent of present conditions. Hence history enters into consideration only in the form of a choice between two types. Disaffection with the type presently in ascendancy—if it does find its way into sociological analyses—automatically results in idealizations of the other type. Remedies for the resented partiality and inauthenticity of individual existence are sought in the allegedly 'fully developed' personality of a pre-modern society. To this Marx would retort, that 'it is as ridiculous to yearn for a return to that original fullness as it is to believe that with this complete emptiness history has come to a standstill'.

Alternatively, the same tendency manifests itself in persistent attempts to posit reciprocal dependencies as personal, and therefore manageable, in conditions where they are definitely not amenable to conscious human management. Paradoxically, this ideational 'humanization' of impersonal bondage belongs to the same category as opposite attempts to a scribe super-human status to what used to be simple and transparent personal serfdom. In their practical effects, both attempts bar or misguide actual or potential efforts of emancipation, soliciting inadequate action, or an action aimed at misplaced targets. One

way of perceiving reciprocal dependencies as personal is to depict them as arising from inadequate meanings, imposed by 'the others' and distorting the true, authentic existence of the individual. This is the existentialist view of the roots of human bondage—according to which the presence of others compromises, constrains, and confounds the individual's quest for 'pour-soi', for authentic existence. Sociological offshoots of existentialist philosophy, of which Garfinkel-style ethnomethodology is a foremost example, present dependencies and constraints as sediments of meaning-negotiation, as an ongoing accomplishment of 'work', which consists of 'talking'. The appearance of social reality, of external constraints upon human freedom, is posited therefore as a cultural phenomenon, in historical conditions distinguished precisely for the liberation of the social structure from its previous dependence of cultural factors. Strange as it may seem in view of their extra-scientific animosity, there is not much difference between these attempts and the tendency of 'folk-lore' Marxism to personalize the roots of human unfreedom, by pinning it to capitalists, parties, governments, etc. Here the misplacement consists in presenting the impersonal web of dependencies as a political problem, which can be controlled by means defined normally as political. With his usual insight Marx anticipated both delusions as epistemologically rooted in the opaque and recondite structure of human dependency. The relations of objective dependency:

> appear, in antithesis to those of personal dependency…in such a way that individuals are now ruled by abstractions, whereas earller they depended on one another…. Relations can be expressed, of course, only in ideas, and thus philosophers have determined the reign of ideas to be the peculiarity of the now age, and have identified the creation of free individuality with the overthrow of this reign.(9)

Neither type of social relations—either founded on personal or impersonal dependence—can operate without goading human imagination away from the genuine avenues of emancipation. The system based on personal dependence had to lean on the illusion of a supra-human, extra-personal anchorage of the personal definition of status. The obverse is true of the system of impersonal dependence: this is sustained and perpetuated by the illusion of personal freedom, the possibility of mastering, by an individual effort, the external relations which constrain it. It is precisely with the multitude's falling under the spell of this illusion and behaving accordingly that the web of impersonal dependencies is continually re-enacted and kept alive. The conditions of individual emancipation coincide with the conditions that perpetuate the unfreedom of individuals 'en masse'. A single individual, qua individual, may indeed 'get on top' of social relations and subject them to his will; so can a number of individuals acting as an aggregate in a 'mechanical type' of solidarity. But, by so doing, individuals all but strengthen the universal conditions of dependence and unfreedom. This objective situation sets individuals against one another; this is a situation in which competition, the pursuit of individual interest to the detriment of the interest of others, is the only rational and effective conduct. More than that, the individual's treatment of other human beings as an 'objective environment' which is to be mastered, is in itself an expression of the fact that control over the individual's own fate has been denied to him. As Habermas aptly put it, 'those interests which bind consciousness to the yoke imposed by the domination of things and reified relations are, as material interests,

anchored in historically specific configurations of alienated labour, denied satisfactions, and suppressed freedom'. (10)

And thus any system of social interaction which presents the ends and motives of such interaction as fixed and immutable (within the framework of God's commandments, or the requirements of Reason) must rely, for its perpetuation, on the authority of daily experience. It is because the practical side of human experience is taken for granted and unquestioned, and not seen in the relativizing, historical perspective, that the fundamental problems of individual freedom, authenticity of life, fulfilment, etc., may be posited as epistemological questions alone, solvable by man perceived as an epistemological entity; they may be seen, indeed, as part of a drama played from beginning to end on the stage of intellect and meaning. It is not that such a view is oblivious to the intimate link between man's intellectual and practical life, between theory and social practice. On the contrary, the accumulated and intellectually processed evidence of social practice is seen as the proper foundation of infallibility of the solutions such view offers to the human quest for 'full life'. The essential difference between such a view and critical sociology consists in the fact that the former considers the evidence of historically limited practice to be conclusive and, in actual fact, final, while the latter refuses to do so. As Horkheimer emphatically declared in 1933, 'anthropology can offer no valid objection to the overcoming of bad social relations'. (11) The only anthropology (aimed at being knowledge of universal human qualities) which is acceptable to critical sociology would be, in the words of Leo Kofler, a science 'of immutable premises of human mutability'. One can take, as the founding principle of critical sociology, an a priori rejection of the possibility of invariant endowment—whether transcendental or natural—which characterizes the human species once and for all. The only invariant attribute of the human species critical sociology will be prepared to accept is the mechanism by which the species becomes, ever anew and ever in a new form, the human species. In 'German Ideology' Marx defined the production of new needs as the first historical act. The production of new needs, which re-mould and re-classify the human environment, pushing to a new position the established borderline between the subjective and the objective, has always been, and will forever remain, the substance of human history. The dividing line between what man can, and what he cannot be, may be clearly drawn only in reference to past practice; but its extrapolation into the future will require an additional assumption, which critical sociology deems unsupportable—that the past contains evidence conclusively binding the future.

This assumption is built, however, into daily routine. It is thanks to this assumption that commonsensical experience may supply reliable guidance to human behaviour. Human organisms are endowed by nature with memory and the ability to learn, and such organisms can thrive only in an environment characterised by regularity and recurrent patterns of events. Uncertainty arising from a sudden interruption of monotony is a source of terror:

> This is what is so frightening about a phenomenon like 'runaway inflation'. In a money economy we experience the instability of currency in the social world much like we would an earthquake in the physical world. When the foundations shake, anything can happen. (12)

And thus human historical activity, as well as generating over new needs and, consequently ever new forms of human relations, displays a tendency towards fixity and order. It is true

that this activity discloses previously unsuspected potentialities of man; but the same activity leads to the elimination and suppression of other potentialities. The essence of any order is in the augmentation of the probability of some occurrences and—by the same token—rendering other occurrences utterly improbable. Critical sociology, having taken unlimited human potentiality as its organizing hypothesis, has to consider, as its major empirical concern, the way in which these potentialities come to be limited in actual social systems.

Commonsense and daily routine help and reinforce each other in sustaining and perpetuating both the fixed order of human interaction and the universal belief that such fixity is ineluctable. Daily routine is structured in such a way that men are rarely, if ever, confronted with the fundamental choice between actual and potential forms of interaction, their life-process being split into the multitude of partial and seemingly inconsequential decisions. In fact, each successive link in the chain of their actions is to some extent limited by former actions—and the limitation grows progressively in the course of individual biography, rendering the question of choice ever less realistic. Commonsense, on the other hand, being a reflection of historically and biographically truncated experience, confirms the universal validity of this individual lesson, and adds dignity to the necessity by drawing a sharp line between the 'rational' and 'reasonable' on the one hand, and 'irrational' and 'unrealistic' on the other. For daily routine, commonsense is the major driving force. For commonsense, daily routine is the ultimate source of cognitive certainty. It is daily routine against which the truth of commonsensical, as well as of sociological, beliefs is measured. Commonsense and daily routine being inextricably intertwined, it does not matter much whether a sociology takes, as its object, daily routine (as Durksonian sociology does), or commonsense (as the existentialist critique of Durksonianism does); in both cases sociology cuts the truth it seeks to the measure of historically restricted reality. By the same token, consciously or unwittingly, sociology falls in with that reality in its one-sided presentation of human potential.

CAN CRITICAL SOCIOLOGY BE A SCIENCE?

As we saw before, critical sociology tries to cut itself loose from both commonsense and daily routine as, respectively, its sources of information and the ultimate measure of truth. This intention, indispensable if unfulfilled human potential is to be offered the status of a legitimate object of study, places in question, however, the scientific nature of the project. In what sense may critical sociology claim a scientific status? If critical sociology agrees that the only valid knowledge is true knowledge, what are its criteria of truth, once past experience and current daily routine have been denied this role?

The concept of 'truth-process' is the response of critical sociology to this crucial objection. The essential idea of truth as a historical process is contained in the following statement by Marx:

> The question whether human thinking can reach objective truth is not a question of theory but a practical question. In practice man must prove the truth, that is, actuality and power, this-sidedness of his thinking. The dispute about the actuality or non-actuality of thinking—thinking isolated from practice—is a purely scholastic question. (13)

In itself, however, this statement does not necessitate a decisive rupture from the positivist idea of truth. Both Durksonian sociology and its existentialist critics would gladly agree that the supposition that men are indeed able to grasp objective truth will per-haps never be conclusively verified, but that it does constitute a convenient working hypothesis which one is invited constantly to attempt to refute by putting it to a never-ending practical test. What is, after all, scientific inquiry in a most orthodox positivist sense, if not a series of practical tests of this hypothesis? And yet, there is a wide and perhaps unbridgeable gap between the idea of truth contained in the quoted statement and the kind of truth positive sociology seeks for its statements. This gap is not created, however, by the sheer linking of truth with the process of practical testing. It is generated by a sharply different understanding of practice.

The practice to which positive sociology would refer its statements for testing and, possibly, for refutation is the practice of scientists—or the practice of an ordinary individual, but endowed, for the purpose at hand, with only such attributes as make him 'like' a scientist. Such practice is distinguished by a sharp and immutable division of statuses between the person performing the testing and the object against which the testing is being performed. It is a 'sine qua non' feature of this division that the testing agent only is aware of what is being tested. This situation is normal in the case of the natural sciences. In the social sciences, however, it must in most cases be artificially created—either by collecting data of objects' behaviour without their knowledge (as in most statistical studies), or by conveying to the objects deliberately incorrect information concerning the hypothesis about to be tested (as in most experiments in social psychology). Thus an effort is made to ensure that the content of the hypothesis will not influence the process and the result of testing—i.e., the conduct of the objects of study. Even though, in the case of social sciences, the objects of study are conscious human beings, endowed with the potential of knowing, understanding, and grasping meanings, they are deliberately placed, for the sake of the purity of procedure, in the position of objects which, like the objects of natural science, possess no such faculties. Only then may the criteria of testing, as formulated by natural sciences, be applied to statements concerning the behaviour of human beings: an expectation is spelled out, a proper set of independent variables is selected or construed, and the ensuing conduct is compared with the initial expectations. Significantly, the whole of the testing procedure consists of acts and events which remain entirely under the control of the scholar: throughout the procedure, he is the only 'knowing' agent; the only person aware of the specific meaning of events, assigned by the hypothesis under test. The concept of testing, the meaning of verification or falsification—are all forged in such a way as to preserve the procedure as the exclusive domain of professional scholars or people reportedly copying their conduct. One can almost define truth as statements supported by professional scientists. Pragmatically, the activities of professional scientists are defined as truth-seeking and truth-finding; institutionally, scientists as a group are believed to ensure that persons attaining their approval will engage in such activities. The concept of truth testing, which science supports, provides the foundation for the status of positive science as privileged, genuine knowledge.

If the rules of testing are applied to the study of human affairs, scholars are obliged to eschew a meaningful dialogue with the objects of their study. Good research is expected to be thoroughly cleansed of 'leading questions'—and certainly of any attempt at persuasion, or changing objects' minds (unless proclivity to surrender to persuasion is itself the subject-

matter of study), etc. The social scientist would like to keep himself in the shadows as far as humanly possible (the notorious one-way mirror of social psychologists being an admirable embodiment of this tendency), and to make sure that his physical presence—much more his presence as a meaning-establishing agent—in no way 'distorts' the 'natural' course of events under observation. What he can find, therefore, and prove with the degree of certainty allowed by the procedure, is how his objects would behave in routine conditions, assuming that their commonsensical definitions will retain their force. Artifically, and with great care and ingenuity, the human objects of sociological inquiry are kept or placed in conditions in which they cannot, or would not, exercise their faculties of understanding and decision-making, lest the 'validity' of inquiry be placed in danger. Keeping men within the bounds of their unfree daily existence is, therefore, built into the very definition of legitimate scientific research and truth-testing.

As we have seen, the routine-commonsense compact has an in-built tendency to self-perpetuation and assumes the appearance of its own timelessness. The routine-commonsense compact of the market society is structured by the fundamental separation, within the life-process of men, of the subjective ability to work, create, and authenticate one's existence, and the objective conditions of such work, creativity, and authenticity. Once split in such a way, the life-process itself, 'in and by itself' posits the 'real objective conditions of living labour' (material, instruments, etc.) 'as alien, independent existences'.

> The objective conditions of living labour appear as separated, independent values opposite living labour capacity as subjective being…. Once this separation is given, the production process can only produce it anew, reproduce it, and reproduce it on an expanded scale.

The material on which living, subjective, labour works,

> is 'alien' material; the instrument is likewise an 'alien' instrument; its labour appears as mere accessory to their substance and hence objectifies itself in things not 'belonging to it'.

In this terse description of the essential structure of life-process in a market society which separates objects of life labour from the subjective, living source of the labour itself, we find both the setting for routine activity and the epistemological roots of the mode in which it is commonsensically experienced. Routine and associated comnonsense form a vicious circle, which, unless cut at some point, tends to reproduce itself 'on an expanded scale'. A cut capable of breaking the endless process of self-reproduction must be an act of transcending merely commonsensical reflection, an act stepping, though at the start only ideally, beyond commonsense:

> The recognition of the products as its own, and the judgement that its separation from the conditions of its realization is improper—forcibly imposed—is an enormous advance in awareness, itself the product of the mode of production resting on capital, and as much the knell to its doom as, with the slave's awareness that he 'cannot be property of another', with his consciousness of himself as a person, the existence of slavery becomes a merely artificial, vegetative existence, and ceases to be able to prevail as the basis of production. (14)

The death knell to the allegedly invulnerable routine-commonsense compact sounds when the habitual split is suddenly seen in the light of another possibility. Then, and only then, does the natural begin to be perceived as artificial, the habitual as enforced, the normal as unbearable. Once the harmony between the routine condition and commonsensical knowledge has been distorted, the whole network of social relations is set in motion, and the iron laws of 'normal' behaviour are put in abeyance. The allegedly invariant attributes of men and their social life reveal their historicity.

The interests of emancipation and the interests of technical mastery served by positive science seem to be, therefore, at cross purposes. Science, as we have seen, lacks the means of breaking the routine commonsense compact and, moreover, refuses to acquire it, pointing to its impeccable truth-testing rules as on insuperable objection. Such rules require that science may investigate only those objects which remain wholly under the scientists' cognitive control; science continues to supply reliable knowledge, that is, conclusive information it can vouch for, only in so far as those men whose conduct it describes remain objects, i.e., thing-like, due to the unbroken hold of the habit-enforcing routine conditions of life, over which they have no control. Emancipation starts, however, when those conditions cease to be seen 'as they really are', when they are postulated in a form which, for being not-yet-real, eludes scientific methodology and the test of truth. The question arises, therefore, that perhaps the apparent gap between positive science and emancipatory knowledge is indeed unbridgeable as it seems at first sight, and as extremists and purists on both sides insist. The question is crucial to both social science and the prospects of human emancipation. If the gap is really unbridgeable, the social sciences may well be condemned to the role of one of the agents recording or even fortifying the already accomplished split of men into subjects and objects of action, while interests in emancipation may be doomed to rambling over uncharted, slushy ground of uncontrolled fantasy. The answer hinges, it seems, on the possibility of a re-adjustment of science's concept of truth-testing.

No wonder that in recent years a number of attempts have been made to blaze trails which may bring the vehicle of science beyond the spell-bound circle of routine and commonsense. The common motive of all these attempts has been the search for reliable, testable, conclusive knowledge of phenomena unlike those reliably explored by positive social science: namely, the non-routinized, still irregular, out-of-the-ordinary phenomena, observable or just conceivable, which, in a sense, can be considered as a glimpse into the future, or into an alternative reality. We will now briefly discuss several such attempts.

Appalled by the spectacular bankruptcy of French academic sociology, which failed to forecast the outburst of student rebellion and class conflict inside that allegedly pacified and consensusbound country, Edgar Morin came forward in 1968 with the idea of a 'sociology of the present', (15) as an alternative to sociology traditionally centred upon timeless regularity (i.e., regularity described without reference to variables which represent qualitatively changeable time). Not unexpectedly, the central unit of the alternative sociology was to represent, (in opposition to 'action' or 'role', the basic units of traditional sociological analysis) the intention to grasp the irregular and the unique. And this central unit, in Morin's view, was the event—'l'événement, qui signifie l'irruption a la fois du vécu, de l'accident, de l'irréversibilité, du singulier concret dans le tissu de la vie sociale', and which, for the same reason, 'est le monstre de la sociologie'. Derided and shunned by academic sociology, the event, however, displays a number of attributes which make

it ideally suitable for the role of a vantage point from which the realm of the possible can be scanned.

> The event, from the sociological point of view, is anything which cannot be squeezed into statistical regularities. Hence a crime or a suicide are not events, in so far as they may be inscribed into some statistical regularity, while a 'wave' of criminality, or epidemy of suicide can be considered as events, alongside the death of president Kennedy or suicide of Marilyn Monroe.

The event is 'news'; it contains information, inasmuch as information is the part of the message which conveys novelty. The event is, therefore, by definition, a de-structuring factor. By its very presence—or, rathar, by the fact of being perceived as an event—it perturbs the systems of rationalization, which enforce intelligibility upon the relation between the spirit and its everyday world. The event questions this intelligibility, and by so doing inspires critical scepticism towards rationalizing illusions. Instead, it puts on the agenda the need for a theory which selects as its foundation extreme situations, paroxysms of history, 'pathological' phenomena rather than statistical uniformities.

Crisis is precisely such an event. Thanks to the unusual concentration of out-of-the-ordinary features, the inherent instability which defies orderly, deterministic description, and its extreme evolutionary flexibility, the crisis acts as a sudden revelation of 'latent, subterranean realities' which remain invisible in times defined as 'normal'. Following Marxian-Freudian strategy, one can view the crisis as the unique occasion of seeing through the veil of the routine, directly into the 'genuine', or at least the genuinely important, reality—that which is submerged, unconscious or infrastructural. Such a view of the crisis will, of course, jarringly differ from the treatment offered by academic sociology with its apprehensive dismissal of crisis as an event which is both marginal and epiphenomenal: a case of momentary technical failure of the social fabric, which cannot be dressed in the vocabolary employed to express the main subject-matter of social science. 'Finalement la crise unit en elle, de façon trouble et troublante, répulsive et attractive, le caractère accidentel (contingent, événementiel), le caractère de nécessité (par la mise en oeuvre des réalités les plus profondes, les moins conscientes, les plus déterminantes) et le caractère conflictuel'. The clinching argument in favour of the crisis as the true object of sociological analysis, is, therefore, that the crisis is a richer source of information than ordinary life, on which sociologists have focussed their attention. Granted that positive science is set upon the true and precise description of 'reality over there', here is an opening which permits the fulfilment of this task better than other occasions, since, through it, can be discerned parts of reality otherwise hermetically sealed off. What Morin in fact suggests is an extension of sociological strategy and method to those vast expanses so far laid fallow, but promising to bring in an unusually rich harvest. Morin is making a plea on behalf of a new object of exploration, thus far either neglected or unduly underrated.

Morin hopes that this new object of research, thanks to its unique features, will have a feedback effect on the status of the sociologist in the course of his research. In this important respect Morin steps beyond the modest reform already proposed by Coser and other American Simmelians, who, having suggested that conflict rather than consensus should be the proper object of sociological inquiry, have proceeded to analyse this new object in

traditional, functionalist terms. Morin thinks that the crisis, conceived as a spontaneous, self-developing process rather than another 'functional pre-requisite' of a rigid system, will force the student into permanent self-criticism. This will be a considerable improvement on academic sociology in its entirety, where 'la prétention ridicule du "marxisteléniniste" althussérien a monopoliser la science et a rejeter comme idéologie ce qui est hors de la doctrine n'a d'égale que celle du grand manager en sondages, qui rejette comme idéologie tout ce qui introduit le doute et la critique dans la sociologie officielle'. Self-criticism, the permanent revision of students' views, the realization that no set of research techniques can be trusted with the job of sifting the nugget of truth from the dross of appearances, will secure the proper dialectic relationship between the observer and the observed phenomenon. Morin is so overwhelmed by the dazzling prospects of crisis analysis, that he does not hesitate to describe the role played by the sociologist as an actor in the events under scrutiny. He exemplifies his forecast by invoking the Nanterre experience of half-baked would-be sociologists sweeping away the over-cooked dish of stale academic truisms.

It is, however, a very limited concept of actor which sustains Morin's far-fetched hopes. Having been transformed into actor, in a somewhat facile manner, by the sheer fact of being sceptical, the sociologist still remains a purely epistemological being, much like his more traditional predecessors. His only gain is his own self-criticism (an improvement, to be sure, not to be lightly dismissed); he still stays enclosed in the universe of pure meanings; the intoxicating feeling of changing the world turns out, under closer scrutiny, to come from changing the world of his ideas only. His praxis is cut to the measure of academic theory; his dialogue is among equals, a debate among students of reality rather than with reality itself. Morin's recipe is for the emancipation of the sociologist from the blinkers of commonsense: something to be strongly desired—but as a preliminary step, rather than as a finished emancipating alternative to sociology. There is, however, no further step in Morin's itinerary. He leaves us to hope for the joyful liberation of sociologists' imagination. Yet we do not know how the precious liberty of scholars will link—if at all—with the prospect of the emancipation of man. In short, Morin's is an offer to perform somewhat better, with more insight and perceptiveness, what is essentially the traditional role of positive sociology, confronting the human world as an object 'over there', which can be described, but not communicated with.

As we shall now see, yet another attempt to break through the fetters of commonsensical recanting of reality—made by Henry S. Kariel in 1969 (16)—stops short of an open challenge to the strategy of positive sociology. Lacking the rejuvenating experience of the Paris spring, and perhaps put off as much as stimulated by the wilder aspects of social unrest in the 1960s, Kariel is even more careful than Morin in circumscribing his programme as one for 'professional use' only. Like Morin, he locates the remedy in the field of object-selection and the choice of analytical framework. Differences in wording conceal the structural identity of programmes. If Morin dubs his ideal for social science as a sociology of the present, Kariel, on the other hand, singles out the preoccupation with the present as the undoing of academic sociology. 'The constitution of the present, they assume, is valid, or at least given. For them, "the present" is not so much a concept as a benign state of being'. The original sin of positive social science consists precisely in its inability, or unwillingness, to lift itself above the horizon of the present. Even the practitioners of futuristics, who claim the mantle of utopians—made only of the most solid and reliable modern fibre:

> begin with the present, that which 'is'. They perceive what various forms of system analysis have shown to exist: man as egotistical utility and power maximizer, public policy as interest groups inputs, the economic sector as primary generator of community goods, governmental structures as hierarchical organizations, politics as a sacrifice of personal values, psychological and economic resources as scarce, and development as whatever leads toward the fulfillment of this empirically confirmed vision.

The trouble is, however, that the present itself is a complex product of past battles, and therefore starting from the present as a trustworthy baseline—objective and just as reasonable as we have been made to believe—means in fact 'to acquiesce in the policies of those in society who have the power to create reality, who are free enough to structure man's consciousness of space and time'. Such 'acquiescence' follows from presenting the unreal as the impossible; and presenting it as such is a necessary consequence of the decision to serve technical-instrumental interests, and consequently to advance positive science, which cannot be achieved otherwise.

Now what about the alternative? Like Morin, Kariel conceives of it as an intellectual operation. He would, given a chance, probably quote with approval Lyman and Scott's declaration of the principles of their 'sociology of the absurd':

> One can study the social world from the point of view of the superior or the subordinate; of the lover or his mistress; of the bourgeoisie or the proletariat; of management or labour; of the deviant or the person who labels him deviant; and so on. What is important is that one should have a perspective, but the particular perspective employed is irrelevant to the rectitude of theorizing. One can make true statements from any perspective, including those not consonant with any available ideology. (17)

The problem of truth is easy because there are many truths, no one better than the other, and each one remaining truthful only within the framework of an ideology. The inequality of ideologies in their practice of fixing social reality, in their access to the change of sedimenting objective structures, is to be offset the easy way—by proclaiming their intellectual equality. And then the sociologist is able sedulously to conform to positive criteria of truth-testing ('rectitude of theorizing') while disregarding the constraints imposed on truth-selection by the routine-commonsense compact, in the shaping of which various ideologies (existing and conceivable) play a highly unequal role.

Similarly, Kariel invites us to consider politics, or indeed social life, as a play, in which there are players, each with his own characteristic vantage point; none can be legitimately selected, on intellectual grounds alone, as privileged, more 'truthful' than the rest.

> To perceive this expressive aspect of experience, we need merely follow the clues of Hannah Arendt and conceptualize political action as a form of play, as characteristically a performing act…. Should we wish to understand the way action signifies the presence of ordinarily unrealized structures of being, we cannot regard it as conclusively significant in any other sense, for example, of 'really' signifying some predefined intention or of being 'really' functional to some predefined structure. We must see it as a form of play: complete in itself.

Kariel seems to dispose of the troublesome question of testing the truth of statements which challenge commonsensical 'hard facts' simply by denying, by the power of words alone, the presence of such facts. There are no 'predefined structures' which channel the course of the game independently of players' realized or unrealized needs; there are no 'predefined intentions' which are forcibly attached to the positions from which individual players start their game. The play is 'complete in itself', so let us stop worrying about how to detach it from the strings of inert routine: it is not attached to them to start with. It is only misled and misleading social science which has encouraged us to believe as much. What we need in order to endow our products with emancipatory power, is simply to shift our 'attention à la vie' toward new regions, and sympathetically look through the cognitive perspectives of all partners. 'Valuing the needs of the child over those of the existing school, or…the needs of the worker over those of the organization, they (sociologists following this advice—Z.B.) introduce options. Positing countervailing values, they enlarge understanding'. Again, as in Morin, the rest is silence: we do not know how such 'enlarged understanding' gained by sociologists or political scientists may possibly result in an extension of the freedom of men. In effect, it is only the sociologist who is likely to gain in his own, intellectual, emancipation, by visiting diverse observation points, since the players themselves have been already entrenched, perhaps too well, in observation points of their own. Kariel, like Morin, seems to be preoccupied, perhaps unwittingly, with the unbinding of the sociologists' imagination rather than of the men they imagine, All truths are relative, partial and one-sided; everybody knows his partial truth anyway; let sociologists, therefore, enjoy insight into all truths, instead of falling into the conservative trap of futilely pursuing the only, real, genuine truth. What sets sociologists apart and here defines their unique professional role is not truth-testing, but ironic distance from truths: sociologists alone know, what others are too blinkered to notice, that truths are many and all are faulty. Here lies the crucial difference between Kariel and Morin. The first denies the existence of this 'depth' of reality which the latter would wish us to penetrate. Explicitly, Kariel proposes to analyse social life as a play. In actual fact, his programme boils down to an invitation to an intellectual play, extended to sociologists alone.

Manfred Stanley (18) likewise considers the question of the way in which social science may transcend commonsense, but posits it somewhat differently, refusing to budge from the position that truth—one and indivisible—can in principle be established, that establishing it is a worthy occupation, and that this occupation is the domain of science. He is, however, aware, that the commonsensically 'obvious', and empirically most clearly given reality, is not the only frame withhin which truth can be measured. If there are other frames, they must nevertheless be empirically accessible, even if in a much more tedious and intricate way. Stanley wishes to show that one can, while proceeding according to the rules of empirically founded positive science, still render the scholarly discussion of potential realities legitimate and valid.

The hope Morin attached to the phenomenon of crisis, Stanley links, more specifically, to the process of 'delegitimation'. Stanley agrees with the ruling Durksonian paradigm in that the 'normalcy' of a social order is founded on successful legitimation, i.e., wide acceptance of norms, values, and meanings which uphold the kind of behaviour which ultimately enacts and re-enacts the web of relationships perceived as the order in question. Hence 'delegitimation' stands for any disruption of the order—all cases in which significant

pockets of population, or sections of publicly relevant behaviour are deflected from the routine pattern of conduct. On the strength of the tacitly accepted paradigm, unusual behaviour is to be linked, for the sake of explanation, to some set of mental processes. Stanley calls such processes 'experienced deprivation'. Contrary to the habitual view of the majority of sociologists, delegitimation is not an episodic event, a departure from the 'natural state', caused by moral unintelligibility, ignorance, or psychologically prompted deviance. It is, on the contrary, a constant and, in its own way, regular phenomenon, which provides a willing sociologist with the permanent opportunity of catching a glimpse of reality cleansed of one-sided commonsensical interpretations. It is constant because the experience of deprivation results from scarcity, which in its turn is a permanent feature of the social order. We know since Durkheim's times at least, that any society goes so far in inspiring respect and desire for its values that sooner or later it finds it difficult to deliver on its own pledge: there are normally more people attracted by society-supported values, than values to be offered, distributed and appropriated, One can almost say that desirability and scarcity of values are inextricably linked to each other. Hence, scarcity is a 'normal' phenomenon—and given the normalcy of scarcity, one may expect the experience of deprivation to be fairly common. Finally, people who experience their situation as deprivation will sooner or later be prompted to act in such a way as to minimize that unpleasant experience, and a change of social order will take place as a result.

Thus far we are still well within the habitual universe of discourse of mainstream academic sociology. Stanley's is, therefore, an interesting attempt to develop a strategy of testing knowledge about alternative, non-routine realities, by means which are considered legitimate by Durksonian social knowledge, and may be accommodated to the dominant paradigm. Essentially, Stanley's strategy consists in what one might call 'mental experimenting', which, however, at no point, departs from empirically accessible features of present or past reality. It is by carefully exploring the present reality and scanning the logic of past occurrences, that one can establish sound answers to the following questions:

> First, in what specific ways can a given society (viewed as a structure of meanings) be thought of as a field of 'potential scarcities'? Second, under what conditions are such potentialities selectively concretized into 'experienced patterns of deprivation' among particular sectors of the population? Third, under what conditions are these experiential deprivations linked to remedial social action?

Stanley, as we see, assumes the regularity of 'irregular' behaviour; starting from this assumption, one can as safely predict disruption of the current order as one does, encouraged or absolved by the Durksonian paradigm (and, for good measure, by its critics), predict its continuity and perpetuation. Hence, in principle, one can empirically investigate, and predict on empirical grounds, the conditions under which such disruption of the present order may take place, which will eventually lead to the emancipation of man—to the establishment of human freedom.

Emancipation, as one might expect, is also defined in terms of meanings. Freedom:

> means that every person is an interpreter of the meanings that comprise the social world, i.e. a hermeneutical agent. Indeed, social control essentially is the particular socio-cultural

> process through which the fact of every person's moral agency is successfully concealed from particular categories of the population and differentially delegated to other sectors.

Lack of freedom, in other words, results from a part of society being deprived of, or surrendering, or not realizing, their meaning-, purpose- and norm-establishing faculty, and relying in these vital respects on the discretion of others. Similarly, power in society consists in monopoly or privilege in the field of meaning-interpretation and lasts as long as the latter continues. Stanley senses in the phenomenon of power so defined the permanent source of ever re-curring experiences of deprivation. Power, so to speak, generates resistance to itself which in turn leads towards its progressive limitation. This progress is entirely located in the sphere of meanings; liberation is a matter of illumination, and hence, almost by definition, co-extensive with the activity of social science. The intimate relation between emancipation and the social sciences is assured by the nature of the first. Now that we have satisfied ourselves that social science can deal with alternative realities without violating its own rules of truth-testing, we can see how a revolution in society can be tackled by sociological means without revolutionizing sociology itself.

Stanley's sociologist is again an observer and a detached analyst. It is true that his interest is in alternative realities rather than in the accomplished one. But whatever his cognitive objectives, the present—the only field accessible to empirical investigation—remains the sole object of his research. In fact, Stanley proposes to apply the principles sociologists always jealously guarded, to problems they did not dare to attack: if sociologists, traditionally, restrict themselves to sorting out the real and the realistic from among the interpretations of current reality, Stanley wishes to stretch the field of such sorting to embrace possible realities, still located in the future. If Stanley were right, then the sociologist could, in advance, on the strength of available and testable evidence, sort out the 'true', realistic extrapolations of the present, from a pool of possibilities albeit much larger than any ordinary sociologist would at present be prepared to consider. The extrapolations Stanley explores include those which—far from assuming a smooth continuation of present trends—presage a drastic reversal of the current routine and commonsensical meaning interpretations. With eyes properly aimed and focussed, one can discern, in the universe of facts ordinarily covered by research, signs of emerging scarcity (a lack of community, which finds its expression in increasingly fashionable nostalgia—the 'perception of the past in terms of the phenomenology of present scarcities'—being a characteristic example); knowing, in addition, again from testable evidence, the condition under which such scarcity is likely to engender the experience of deprivation, and when such experience may lead to a remedial action, one can sort out, in a way legitimized by positive science, the truth of a prediction apparently at odds with the realities of to-day. What Stanley leaves unsaid is the major irritant of all seekers of true knowledge about the future: the feedback effect of the prediction, Its presence will inevitably trigger off some action, which will make the content of prediction more or less probable—more or less 'true': the prediction will be 'fed' into reality, and, subsequently, reality will be different from what it was before. Stanley, in line with the general tendency of positive sociology, does his best to enclose the totality of the testing process, complete with its conclusive and irreversible findings, within the area directly controlled—and, indeed, structured—by the tester himself; thereby preserving the exclusive rights of the sociological profession to validate men's knowledge of their affairs, only now also including men's future.

We have considered thus far three, fairly typical, proposals of the solution to the vexing dilemma of transcending commonsense while retaining the possibility of testing the truth of alternative interpretations. None of the three seems entirely satisfactory. Apart from their essential similarities, each points in a somewhat different direction, each being prepared to sacrifice another parcel of the institutionalized habits of positive social science. Kariel's sacrifice seems to be the most radical of the three; but then it goes beyond acceptable limits, in fact begging the question by disavowing the very concept of truth testing and, indeed, of truth as such. Having done that he can offer us little help in our search. For a similar reason, we can draw little inspiration from another radical solution, proposed half a century ago by Ernst Bloch in the recently increasingly popular 'Geist der Utopie'. Bloch assumes from the start the ahistorical, truly anthropological nature of 'Prinzip Hoffnung'—the genuine springboard of the perpetual quest for human emancipation. The thrust for emancipation, as well as such progress as has actually been made in history, is ascribed to an elusive faculty of the drive toward 'regnum humanum', toward yetunfulfilled perfection—a genuine 'telos' built into human kind, more lasting than human history and more powerful than any historically erected barriers to human self-perfection. If that were so, then concrete investigations of specific historic conditions can do little in illuminating the human potential of generating alternative realities. The drive towards the Kingdom of Reason is in itself irrational and cannot be presented as an orderly, deterministic, or indeed regular process. Much like Munchhausen by his hair, man can lift himself above his historical condition simply by a sudden recognition of what authentic being could be. Man's essence is always in front of him, pursued but not caught up with, to be found only deep in man's hopes, but not in anything already crystallized in his existence.

> The real nature of the essence is not something already found in a finished form, like water, air, or fire, or even an invisible universal idea, or whatever figure may be used to absolutize or hypostatize these real quanta. The real or the essence is that which does not yet exist, which is in quest of itself in the core of things, and which is awaiting its genesis in the trend latency of the process…. Of course, the Not-Yet must not be thought of as though there already existed, say in the atom or in the subatomic 'differentials' of matter, everything that would later emerge, already present and encapsulated in minuscule form as inherent disposition. (19)

There is nothing, therefore, in the sensually accessible, accomplished reality, which can throw light on the vast expanse of the unfulfilled human potential. In choosing the vantage point for the critique of reality we can count on the guidance of nothing more reliable and trustworthy than our capability of postulating the vantage point we have chosen. It is conscience, in which 'the still distant totality is reflected', and philosophy which 'opens ultimately at and in the horizon of the future', which constitute the true 'point of Archimedes', lending human action enough support to turn the course of history upside down. (20) Bloch's is truly an Enlightenment-like call for courage and self-reliance: knowing is daring, the search for knowledge and the search for certainty go different ways, for, in order to advance on the road to truly emancipating knowledge, man closes his eyes to things posited by the reality-at-hand as certainties. Nowhere has man's hope been conclusively victorious, but it has not been ultimately frustrated either. Men will go on

hoping whatever happens, since hoping for the not-yet-reached essence is the truly human existence.

Potentiality, alternative, future, hope—all these are to Bloch descriptive categories of human reality, and not methodological precepts for sociology. His interest in emancipation stems from the same preoccupation as Heidegger's interest in hermeneutics. It is elucidation of human existence rather than the construction of an objective science of this existence, which Bloch, like Gadamer, is after. And a sociologist searching for hard-and-fast methodological rules for an 'emancipatory science' is bound to be as frustrated reading Bloch, as a historian in search of cut-and-dried rules of 'understanding history' will be studying Heidegger.

All the other ideas considered thus far, do intend to offer a practical counsel to sociologists. In order to do so, they all agree that the verification of emancipatory knowledge, if at all conceivable, is the business of social scientists; to be admitted as attainable, it must be construed in such a way that it may be accomplished, in all its stages, by and inside the community of the students of human affairs (sociologists or philosophers). For all the authors we have discussed above, as well as for their more orthodox colleagues, the genuine meaning of the question 'how can knowledge of alternative realities be tested?' boils down, though often implicitly, to the question 'how can knowledge of alternative realities be conclusively tested by scientists and by means only they employ?' It is back to this common, though tacit, assumption, that the failure to reach a satisfactory solution can be traced. There is one sacrifice not one single author we have so far visited has been prepared to accept: the sacrifice of the unique, privileged vantage point of social scientists and their self-sufficiency as the judges of the true and the untrue.

This last, but decisive, step has been made by Jurgen Habermas—perhaps by Habermas alone—in his recent re-interpretation of the Marxian view of the relation between social knowledge and social reality. Articulating the Gramscian tradition of Marxism in the vernacular of modern social science, Habermas stands the chance of getting the message through to that audience which has viewed with equanimity offers wrapped in unfamiliar vocabulary. In direct discourse with modern sociology and its most topical problems, Habermas re-states the Marxian case for truth-process—for the course of truth-verification to be extended beyond the laboratory field administered by professional scientists, and so to be transformed into the process of authentication.

TRUTH AND AUTHENTICATION

There are three interests, which, according to Habermas, generate human preoccupation with knowledge and crystallize in theoretical statements about facts, and in cognitive strategies. These are technical, practical, and emancipatory interests. The first two, though aimed at different aspects of practice, share a common status. From 'communication'—the pre-reflective articulation of routine practice, the commonsensical recognition of 'facts'—they detach 'discourse', free from the immediate compulsions of action, which is subject to its own, reasoned rules and is able to supply reasoned justification of what has been simply recognized as factual. It is thanks to the relative autonomy of discourse that theoretical statements about the phenomenal domain of things and events (in the case of the technical interest), or persons and utterances (in the case of the practical interest) can

be made and justified. The autonomy of discourse is never complete. It is always set in motion by the necessities or queries arising from within the practice of communication; and its results, if they be of practical application, are expected to be fed back into the mainstream of rationally orientated action and orientations of everyday communication. But the process of the justification of theoretical statements, of the transformation of the 'merely recognized' into 'actually known', is wholly enclosed in the realm of discourse, where it can be consciously and purposefully controlled and rule-regulated. In so far as communication may be seen as an anthropological, generic condition of man, so technical and practical interests arise immediately from all communication, as unavoidable attempts 'to clarify the "constitution" of the facts about which theoretical statements are possible'. (21) Being governed by its own set of rules, which—unlike the stuff they are applied to and the products of their application—are in no way embedded in, or dependent on, that communication which constitutes the texture of social life, discourse can legitimately claim a transcendental status, which is subsequently upheld and embodied in the autonomy of its holders (the scientists) as the knowing agents and the testers of valid theory.

The status of emancipatory interest, and the kind of knowledge which may result from its exertion, however, is different. Above all, emancipatory interest—contrary to Bloch—is not an extra-temporal, generic feature of the condition of man as a communicating being. 'This interest can only develop to the degree to which repressive force, in the form of the normative exercise of power, presents itself permanently in structures of distorted communication—that is, to the extent that domination is institutionalized'. Distorted communication constitutes a situation of inequality between the partners of a dialogue; a situation in which one of the partners is incapable, or incapacitated, to the extent of not being able to take up a symmetrical posture toward his opposite unmber, to perceive and to assume the other roles operative in the dialogue. Such a situation is effected, on a permanent basis (if measured by the life-span of men involved), by institutionalized domination, which deprives some partners from those means and assets without which taking an equal stand in dialogue becomes impossible. Only then can emancipatory interest emerge: it is, from the outset, a product of social and/or individual history.

Emancipatory interest is, therefore, interest in elucidating this history. It prompts the actor to bring up, to the level of consciousness (where they can be critically mastered), the unseen occurrences and actions which have shaped the present situation and sustain it as distorted communication. In so doing, the actor is helped by the 'rational reconstruction' of rule systems, which scientific discourse makes explicit and which determines the way in which experience can be processed and justified. But the dialogue which serves the emancipatory interest is not in itself such discourse. Nor does it aim to be the justification of the validity of the experiential recognition of 'facts'. Unlike discourse which arises from technical and practical interest, the dialogue actuated by emancipatory interest cannot be, at any stage, detached from its practical engagement in communication, in the life-process. It does not confine itself to the objective of reasoned justification; it wants, in addition, to test itself in the actual acceptance of its hypothetical solution in the praxis of the partners. It seeks not only to validate itself, but to 'authenticate'. It involves, therefore, a different, wider notion of truth-testing. The hypotheses it brings to light are vindicated when the partner in the dialogue accepts and takes up the role of which he has been deprived in the course of distorted communication. In Habermas's view, psychoanalytic therapy provides a typical pattern for the dialogue activated by emancipatory interest.

> In the patient's acceptance of the 'worked out' interpretations which the doctor suggests to him and his confirming that these are applicable, he at the same time sees through a self-deception. The true interpretation at the same time makes possible the authentic intention of the subject with respect to these utterances, with which he has till then deceived himself (and possibly others). Claims to authenticity as a rule can only be tested within the context of action. That distinctive communication in which the distortions of the communicative structure themselves can be overcome is the only one in which claims to truth can be tested 'discursively' together and simultaneously with a claim to authenticity, or be rejected as unjustified.

By its very constitution, the critical knowledge serving emancipatory interest differs from remaining types of knowledge in the way it is tested: it cannot be vindicated within the framework of institutionalized discourse, a domain of the experts. In the process of its vindication the experts—the institutionalized holders of tested knowledge which makes the 'rational reconstruction' of facts plausible—play an active, perhaps a crucial, role; but they do not monopolistically control the process. Nor may their verdict, argued solely in terms of discourse proper, be considered as final and conclusive, unless 'authenticated', i.e. confirmed in the act of rectification of communicative distortions. This realization sets Habermas apart from all previously considered sociologists who offered solutions to the problem of tested critical knowledge. They all, as we remember, tried to squeeze the problem of testing within the inadequate framework of institutionalized, scientist-operated, 'discourse'. They neglected the distinctive feature of 'dialogue' in which emancipatory hypotheses need to be vindicated. They neglected as well the paramount difference between 'reasoned justification', which is the end-ideal of discourse, and 'authentication', which is the requisite of dialogue.

Discourse—the mode of existence of positive science, which illuminates the constitution of reality in response to technical and practical interests—provides only the first, preliminary stage of the emancipatory process which reaches into realms positive science resolutely, and justifiably, refuses to trespass. It is by the positive analysis of reality, which seeks its legitimation in the sedulous application of the ordinary fact-finding means of positive social science, that the hypotheses of critical knowledge, aimed at the restitution of undistorted communication, are first advanced. At this stage, their truth or untruth is testable in a way which is in no respect different from other statements participating in the discourse. Since, however, what they propose is precisely the unfitness of the current condition to make the hypotheses workable, the impossibility of revealing their truth in the present situation of distorted communication, then the conditions of 'normal' communication (i.e., founded on the equality of partners) must first be established to lend the required authority to the results of the test. Critical knowledge asserts that current reality has the character of distorted communication. This assertion can be vindicated only if the communication comes to be mended. This, however, requires, in turn, the removal of the institutionalized dominance responsible for the distortions. In other words, it requires organized action. Authentication—becoming-true-in-the-process—can occur only in the realm of praxis, of which the institutionalized, partial discourse of professional scientists constitutes only the initial stage. And so, the crucial question of authentication (in opposition to verification) is: 'How can the translation of theory into praxis be appropriately organized?' (22)

In the case of psychoanalytic dialogue, this translation is made relatively simple by the willing submission of the patient. Though the process is by no means free of friction and, time and again, there are violent conflicts, the willingness on the part of one of the partners to conform to the role of patient helps the dialogue round most awkward corners. This assumption by no means holds in social life. Both the proponents of critical knowledge; and its possible recipients, may agree (though not inevitably) to the distribution of doctor and patient roles. The advocates of critique may refuse to attempt to enter meaningful dialogue with some of their potential partners and assume their inability to maintain such a dialogue. The possible recipients of critical knowledge may refuse to consider themselves as patients, and instead will view all attempts at re-defining reality as threats aimed at the very foundation of their routine existence which they do not experience as unfreedom. In case the critical hypothesis fails, by design or by default, to guide the partner's reflection and thereby to 'dissolve barriers to communication', it is forced to remain on the level of discourse and to forbear the chance of being transformed into a dialogue. It becomes then indistinguishable from other theoretical statements, and, like them, may be tested only as other statements are: as an expectation, whose content is compared with the actual development of processes in which the statement in question is not an operating factor. Hypotheses like Marx's prediction of the future trends of capitalist accumulation become statements testable by the ordinary means of positive science, in so far as they remain on the level of institutionalized discourse; posit the groups, whose situation is shaped by the above trends, as objects outside the discourse; and refuse, or are barred from, entering into some meaningful dialogue with such groups with the intention of influencing their processes of self-reflection. It is not the values chosen, or a peculiar critical scepticism, which sets off emancipatory knowledge as a body of statements qualitatively distinct from technical or practical knowledge. The genuine, and only, distinction is located on the verification-authentication axis; in other words, in the relation practically entered into by the knowledge in question with daily routine and its commonsensical reflection. In so far as this routine, complete with commonsense, remains in the position of a nature-like object 'outside' the realm of discourse (in such a way that its attributes are untouched by the fact that, within that discourse, certain hypotheses have been formulated) there is no reason to classify such hypotheses separately, as belonging to a special type of knowledge, serving other than technical and/or practical interests. This is a very important point, only too often misunderstood by scholars imprisoned within the arid 'fact-value' dilemma. Knowledge does not become critical or emancipatory by manifesting its dislike of reality or attaching a string of invectives to statements of fact. Nor can a statement claim emancipatory potential if it does not diligently observe the facts, retaining its impeccability as a factual statement. Within the framework of institutionalized scientific discourse, there is no evident difference in content, or in syntax, between statements which will eventually remain inside the cycle of technical and practical interests and their fulfilment, and those statements which may potentially address themselves to emancipatory interest. Such difference is brought into relief only beyond the framework of institutionalized discourse proper—when some statements, unlike others, start interacting with the actors they describe, transplanting routine life and its commonsensical reflection from the 'outside' into the 'inside' of communication, and passing from professional discourse into an open dialogue.

The emancipatory potential of knowledge is put to the test—and, indeed, may be actualized—only with the beginning of dialogue, when the 'objects' of theoretical statements turn into active partners in the incipient process of authentication. This type of relationship was exemplified by Marx as the interaction between social science—the scientific theory of capitalism—and the working class. Marx guessed that there was nothing in the objective predicament of workers which could protect communication barriers against the eroding impact of true social theory. Unlike the bourgeoisie, they would not consider an alternative reality, cleansed of the current form of dominance, to be a direct threat to the conditions which constitute the only acceptable, conceivable social identity. This is why exposure of the historical roots of dominance and the objective determinants of distorted communication, stood a chance of being willingly received by the workers, assigned to the losing end of the distortion. On this ground Marx expected the workers to take up, willingly and enthusiastically, the role of 'patients', in order to bring the causes of their condition to light, to re-define them and then to re-make them in the course of rationally conceived practical action.

In general terms, the genuine confirmation of the critique 'as emancipatory knowledge' remains unattainable unless such dialogue starts to develop. Genuine confirmation 'can only be gained in communication of the type of therapeutic "discourse", that is, precisely in successful processes of education voluntarily agreed to by the recipients themselves'. This 'negotiation of meanings', which ethnomethodologists smugly take for the bread and butter of ordinary routine, is in fact a rare and precious phenomenon on a social plane higher than the realm of small group, face-to-face, intimate contacts. It has to be fought for in order to be achieved. When it is achieved, the process of authentication—the epistemological corollary of emancipation—is set in motion. With that, the critique of reality enters its 'enlightenment' stage.

At this stage, critical theory departs from the theorist's writing desk and sails into the open waters of popular reflection—seeking actively to re-formulate the commonsensical assessment of historical experience and to help imagination to break through the 'conclusiveness' of past evidence. Sometimes, the port of destination is clearly written into the theory, while some other parts are explicitly declared off-limit. In other cases, however, no group is excluded a priori as a potential 'patient', on the ground that its peculiar communication disturbances are beyond remedy. Then (as in the case of the leading members of the Frankfurt school, disenchanted with the therapeutic amenability of the working class) what in fact takes place is 'the diffuse dissemination of insights individually gained in the style of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment'. On the whole, there is a growing tendency among critical theorists today towards the realization that, in Habermas's terse words, 'there can be no meaningful theory which per se, and regardless of the circumstances, obligates one to militancy'. (23) The answer to whether or not the distortion of communication along a specific borderline is so grave as to eliminate the possibility of repair, cannot be established by theoretical insight alone: it is, in fact, one of these crucial hypotheses which can be verified only in the course of enlightenment. There are, in other words, no barriers to communication which cannot be, at least in principle, dissolved. The burden of proof that this is not the case lies with the practice of education.

We know already how the strategy of scientific research defines success in terms of fact-finding and theory formulation, Clearly, enlightenment must have its own criteria of success,

which simultaneously serve the purpose of confirming the truth of critical hypotheses. To discover such criteria, one can again use the analogy of psychoanalytic dialogue. In therapy, the 'patient' must recognize himself in the interpretations offered by the therapist. If he does, then such interpretations are recognized by the therapist as true. The important distinction between this method of truth-testing and the method applied in the first, analytical stage, is that the hypothesis itself is active and operative in creating conditions in which it can become true. There is little chance that the would-be patient will ever arrive at the new interpretation entirely on his own, without a therapist, or, more generally, an external agent acting in the therapist's role, being around to offer an interpretation distinct from the one commonsensically imposed by the patient's situation. And so it is the protracted negotiation of the alternative interpretation which may eventually generate a new situ-ation in which this interpretation 'becomes' true by having been assimilated into the consciousness of the patient, and thereby 'authenticated'.

Similarly, in the case of re-interpreting the historical experience of a group instead of individual biographical lore, the authentication of an alternative interpretation requires the previous active presence of a relevant hypothesis and a properly organized process of its negotiation. The activity of enlightenment, unlike the truth-testing activity of science, is not aimed at discovering that the interest it ascribes to a group is indeed the 'real interest' of the group in question, but at attaining a situation in which that group will actually adopt the ascribed interest as its own and 'real'. The enlightenment process consists, therefore, in a dialogue, in which critical theorists attempt to negotiate the alternative meanings they offer and apply persuasion to convince their partners of their adequacy. Whether they will succeed or not, depends, on the whole, on the degree of correspondence between the interpretive formula contained in the critical theory and the volume of experience collectively accumulated and commonsensically assimilated by the group. Such correspondence must be given the opportunity of being carefully considered and scrupulously assessed by all the participants: 'In a process of enlightenment there can be only participants'—and even the most spectacular success of theory in embracing human imagination and action ought not to be taken as a proof of the truth contained in the theory, unless the dialogue has been conducted in conditions of unlimited intellectual freedom. Authenticity is attainable, by definition, only in a situation of equality of the partners to the dialogue. The sign of authentication is precisely the former patient's emerging from his subordinate position on the receiving end of the dialogue, and assuming the role of a fully developed, creative agent of meaning-negotiation. A dialogue conducted in conditions of inequality of partners, or in a situation in which contending interpretations are suppressed or made inaccessible, proves nothing, whatever its tangible results; it certainly cannot lead to emancipation. Instead, it can only substitute one type of unfreedom for another, or one philosophical formula of unfreedom for another.

It is clear that the authentication test, peculiar to the process of enlightenment, lacks the elegance and the air of finality which characterizes the truth-testing of positive science. It is true that the scientific method of truth testing allows far more ambiguity than scientists would be prepared consciously to tolerate: if an experiment fails, there is always a possibility of at least two opposite interpretations (one of which is ineptness in the organization of experiment), and thus the sought-after refutation of the theory, which the experiment was designed to test, can be recognized as inconclusive and postponed. There

are, however, limits to such post-ponement, and the method contains (at least theoretically) a proviso which, if rigorously applied, will ward off the manifestations of vested interests arising, say, from subjective attachment of the theory under scrutiny. Having placed the world it investigates in the position of an object 'over there', and having excluded from its preoccupations those occurrences in which the conduct of the object may be influenced by knowledge of the scientist's intentions or interpretations, positive science at least prevents its practitioners from defending the theories they fail to confirm by blaming the failure on the 'obtuseness' or 'collusion' of the object. Such statements whose confirmation/refutation can be staved off by the deliberate action of the objects of research, are simply not considered as statements of positive science. Critical knowledge, however, the moment it opts for the test of authentication, does not accept that self-limitation, and therefore lays itself open to that volume of inconclusiveness and incertitude which is hardly tolerable on the level of scientific discourse.

The price the theory which subjects itself to the test of authentication pays for pulling down the barrier dividing the 'experimenter' and his 'objects', for dissolving the difference in status between them, is likely to be considered exorbitant by a science concerned more with certainty than with the significance of its results. In the process of enlightenment, the addressees of the theory must be endowed with the same faculties as the theoreticians themselves above all, with the faculties of reasoning, planning, behaving inorder-to-, pursuing subjective ends, etc. Therefore, the range of excuses which can be invoked to cast doubt on the conclusiveness of refuting evidence, is much wider here than in the discursive act of truth-testing. One excuse, however, is similar to the major self-defence of scientific theory: educators who fail to get their message through, may always (at least for a time) blame their lack of success on the technical imperfection of the educational process, and may try again, having rectified the genuine or alleged organizational flaws. This is an excuse isomorphic with the argument from 'impurity of experiment', frequently applied in scientific discourse, and in its turn put to the test before the relevant theory is finally refuted. But another excuse is peculiar to the test of authentication, inasmuch as it refers to the specific relationship between the theorist and his objects, typical of enlightenment dialogue. In a crude form, that excuse is reasoned along the following lines: people whose situation and prospects our theory intends to re-interpret would certainly embrace the theory and wholeheartedly approve of its arguments—were they only (i) more perceptive and open to reason, or (ii) less prone to barter away their prospects for a mess of pottage, or (iii) less completely and hopelessly stultified by their oppressors who hold their intellect to ransom. All three variations of the argument recognize 'the people' as potentially equal partners to the dialogue; indeed, they make sense only in the light of such recognition. Within the assumptions of authentication, they make reasonable hypotheses which can hardly be resolutely refuted. Nevertheless, the sheer possibility of their being invoked considerably detracts from the resolution with which the rules of refutation, specific to enlightenment dialogue, can be enforced. Hence the intrinsic inconclusiveness of all critical theory, which makes it imperfect by much more severe scientific standards. Hence, as well, the abstract possibility of the perpetuation of error and postponing the admission of failure indefinitely—unheard of in the field of scientific discourse.

It is all very well for Habermas to stress that processes of enlightemnent:

> merely support the theory's claim to truth, without valid-ating it, as long as all those potentially involved, to whom the theoretical interpretation has reference, have not had the chance of accepting or rejecting the interpretation offered under suitable circumstances. (24)

But one can easily see that it is not only the truth of the theory, but its untruth as well which is held in suspension by the above stipulation. In this light particularly, the unspecified nature of 'suitable circumstances', which, only when provided, can lend finality to the outcomes of enlightenment, deprives the authentication test of almost all exactitude and specificity and, consequently, of an authority comparable to that of scientific truth-testing. It seems that this degree of indeterminacy cannot be fully eliminated from critical knowledge, which intends to play an emancipatory role and, consequently, embarks on the adventure of enlightenment, submitting itself to the test of authentication. In other words, no available code of rules can free the agent of enlightemnent from private, subjective responsibility for his interpretation of history and the obstinacy with which he tries to render it acceptable to all. The design of enlightenment entails, as its irremovable constituent, the factor of courage and risk-taking. Enlightenment is aimed not at description and the instrumental perfection of 'human nature', but at changing it. The limits of such changeability can be tested only in practical trial. The utopian edge of culture, long remaining 'unrealistic', may suddenly start moulding human praxis when it meets with practical necessities generated by social reality itself. But there is no way of knowing in advance that such an encounter is certain , Emancipation is an effort aimed at the future, and the future, unlike the past, is indeed inseparably the realm of freedom for the acting man, inasmuch as it is the realm of uncertainty for the knowing man. The presence of the 'utopian' project is, nevertheless, a condition of its being at least possible.

However carefully selected in the first, scientific trial of truth testing, theories emerge from the second test—that of authentication—neither conclusively confirmed nor conclusively disproved. There is, therefore, no single, unambiguous route leading from the second enlightenment stage, to the third—that of practical action aimed at adjusting social reality to the newly accepted set of meanings. It is on this decisive threshhold where courage and the decision to take risk become indispensable vehicles; and, to be sure, where the gravest and most costly mistakes can be made, more often than not confounding the very emancipatory intent of action. Particularly important in this context is the choice between the continuation of the dialogue (supported by the hope that improvement in the organization of education can increase its chance of final success), or its termination, on the assumption that the communication has been broken definitely and beyond all chance of repair. The crucial decision, in other words, concerns the classification of the opposite number as a partner in the dialogue or implacable enemy. That is, the choice between the pragmatics of persuasion and the pragmatics of struggle.

Once again the therapeutic analogy may help to elucidate some dimensions of the problem. Having failed repeatedly to draw his patient into a meaningful dialogue, the analyst is tempted to put the blame squarely on his opposite number. Instead of revising the formula he has tried to negotiate, he will then define the patient's ability to enter the dialogue as being irreparably damaged, and classify the patient himself as incurably ill. Under closer scrutiny, this conclusion seems to convey the analyst's failure to obtain communication, rather than any objective attributes of the patient himself. This conclusion

makes sense only as the summing-up of a series of repetitive, but abortive attempts to start a dialogue and to force the partner into acceptance of the formula considered by the analyst to be true. Since, however, any dialogue can confirm or disprove the discussed formula only tentatively—no dialogue, whatever its course, contains conclusive proof that the decision of the analyst to terminate communication was 'true'; that, in other words, it indeed rightly reflected certain 'objective' qualities of the patient.

In practice, the decision of an ideologically committed group to declare another group as organically closed to communication and to classify it as a case in which limitation of freedom by force is justified, is even less controlled by the formal requirements of verification than the decision of the analyst to confine his prospective partner to the mental hospital. Groups engaged in the process of enlightenment do not enjoy the greenhouse conditions of pure dialogue, neither can they invoke the special authority granted to them by established institutions or commonsense. Even if able to control the rationality of their own conduct and judgment, they would find it practically impossible to accept the evidence of their failure as final. Once taken, their decision to blame the obstinate partner for the breakdown of the dialogue and to declare him 'incurably ill', will act as a self-fulfilling prophecy, thereby lending a spurious air of veracity to a rule-of-the-thumb verdict. Indeed, once placed outside the dialogue, in a subordinate and unfree position, the condemned group will never be able to engage in dialogue. In view of the seriousness of the danger, one has to emphasize as strongly as possible that, whatever the course of the dialogue, it will never supply conclusive evidence for a hypothesis that one of its partners is inherently unable to embrace the truth and that, therefore, struggle is the only rational and viable attitude. We know only too well how often this vital fact tends to be forgotten in politics and how disastrous the results of forgetting it might be.

In the absence of rules which can guide decisions taken on this threshold with anything approaching algorythmical exactitude, one has to settle for more lenient and equivocal heuristic guidelines. These can go only in the direction of shared responsibility and the creation of conditions where—one would hope—the guidance of human action by reason will be unimpaired. This general direction has been selected on the assumption, that given real freedom to exercise their judgment and reflect on all aspects of their situation, men will eventually make the right choice between alternative interpretations; or, to put it in a somewhat more cautious form—the freer the conditions of judgment, the higher is the probability that true interpretations are adopted and false rejected. Hence, at each stage of the long process of verification of critical knowledge, proper care is to be taken in eliminating intellectual and physical constraints upon judgment. At the level of theoretical discourse, all information, and the procedure of testing it, must be open to general scrutiny and all criticism carefully considered before the assumption of its validity. At the stage of enlightenment dialogue, all necessary effort must be made to lift all participants to the status of full intellectual partners in communication, and to avoid interference of non-intellectual means in the clash between competing interpretations. Finally, if a decision has been taken to enter a third stage—that of struggle—on the assumption that the communication with some group has been irreparably broken, all decisions must be made again dependent upon the consent of all participants, preceded by thorough and uncurbed scanning of alternative means of action. These heuristic guidelines are, in effect, exemplifications of the general principle: the liberation of man can be promoted only in conditions of liberty. The concept

of critical knowledge serving the emancipatory interest of man cannot but agree with the seminal principle and the intellectual 'spiritus movens' of the Enlightenment: that the emancipation of reason is a condition of all material emancipation.

Those who seek knowledge of the kind whose veracity one can be fully certain of at the moment one formulates it, will obtain little comfort from such vague heuristic guidelines for authentication as the self-reflection of critical knowledge can offer. But, then, the one thing men can be certain of, more than of anything else, **is** that they have never, so far, attained the kind of freedom they sought. And freedom means uncertainty as much as certitude means resignation. But before he may be a thinker, a symbol-maker, a homo faber—man has to be he-who-hopes.

NOTES

CHAPTER 1
THE SCIENCE OF UNFREEDOM

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