

5. THE SOCIAL ARRANGEMENT OF THE LIFE-WORLD
OF EVERYDAY EXISTENCE

a. *The pregivenness of the Other and the intersubjectivity of the world taken for granted*

We have already established that the life-world is at the outset intersubjective. We brought out ⁴² that in the natural attitude of everyday existence, one accepts the existence of other men as taken for granted. The human bodies that I can find in my surrounding world are for me obviously endowed with consciousness; that is, in principle they are similar to mine. Further, it is obvious to me that the things of the external world are fundamentally the same for Others and for me. And, in addition, it is obvious that I can enter into relations with my fellow-men, that I can communicate with them, and, finally, that a structured social and cultural world is historically already given to me and my fellow-men. We want now to examine these aspects of the natural attitude in greater detail, beginning with the prior givenness of fellow-men.

The *fundamental axioms* of the social, natural attitude are, first, the existence of intelligent (endowed with consciousness) fellow-men and, second, the experienceability (in principle similar to mine) by my fellow-men of the objects in the life-world. The second must include modifying moments because of the experience of the spatial arrangement of the life-world,⁴³ the experience of one's individual zone of operation,⁴⁴ and the experience of one's biographical articulation.⁴⁵ It is from the experience of these structures that I know that "the same" Object must necessarily show different aspects to each of us. First, because the world in my reach cannot be identical with the world in your reach, his reach, etc.; because my here is your there; and because my zone of operation is not the same as yours. And, second, because my biographical situation with its relevance systems, hierarchies of plans, etc., is not yours and, consequently, the explications of the horizon of objects in my case and yours could take entirely different directions: the modifications of the

42. See Chap. 1, A.

43. See Chap. 2, B, 2.

44. See Chap. 2, B, 3.

45. See Chap. 2, B, 4, c, ii.

second fundamental axiom rest upon the first. More precisely, they follow from the explication of my experience of other men in my surrounding world. But in the fully social, natural attitude these modifications are then (for all practical purposes of everyday existence) set aside through the following pragmatically motivated basic constructions, or idealizations:

First, the idealization of the *interchangeability of standpoints*. If I were there, where he is now, then I would experience things in the same perspective, distance, and reach as he does. And, if he were here where I am now, he would experience things from the same perspective as I.

Second, the idealization of the *congruence of relevance systems*. He and I learn to accept as given that the variances in apprehension and explication which result from differences between my and his biographical situations are irrelevant for my and his, our, present practical goals. Thus, I and he, we, can act and understand each other as if we had experienced in an identical way, and explicated the Objects and their properties lying actually or potentially in our reach. And (this is added to and combined with the idealizations of the "and so forth" and of the "I can always do it again"), we learn to accept as given that we can in principle proceed in this manner, that is, we learn that not only is the world that we have experienced in common socialized, but also the world which I have still to experience is in principle socializable.

The idealizations of the interchangeability of standpoints and the congruence of relevance systems together form the *general thesis of the reciprocity of perspectives*. This thesis is for its part the foundation for the social formation and linguistic fixation of Objects of thought (Whitehead's "objects of thought")⁴⁶ which replace, or better, which substitute for the Objects of thought present in my presocial world. To prevent one from mistaking these Objects of thought as results of a *contrat social*, it must be emphasized that they are already encountered in language by every individual born into a historical situation. The fact that individuals can acquire the life-world's linguistic (that is, social) formation as the basis of their world view, rests on the general thesis of reciprocal perspectives. This general thesis, though, as we mentioned, assumes the existence of fellow-men

46. [See Alfred N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1969), p. 67.]

as unquestionably given. This characterizes the natural attitude from beginning to end. In the fully social, natural attitude it is taken for granted that the life-world which is accepted as given by me is also accepted as given by you, indeed by us, fundamentally by everyone.

At this point, the possibility of a further differentiation arises. The *we*, which in principle signifies everyone, can be restricted in scope. In reflective explication of a social encounter, of a conversation, I may experience that you have never, for the practical considerations of the present situation, experienced the world (in particular a specific sector of the world) as I have and as others, with whom I have shared similar situations, have. In order to maintain the general thesis of the reciprocity of perspectives (especially the idealization of the congruence of relevance systems), I come to the conclusion that you do not take my relevance systems into consideration at all. You are therefore not like "everyone," but rather something else. Thus, there are basically two possibilities: either I recognize that we are indeed not like everyone (i.e., that everyone is not like everyone else), but that rather there are various kinds of men—for example, us and you; or, it is also possible, as is to be gathered from ethnological material, that I might maintain the identity of us and everyone. In that case, you cannot be a ("normal") man. But with these observations, we anticipate questions that can only be handled later on. Here we will just mention that it is the relative-natural world view that makes one or the other of these solutions the "natural" one.

b. The immediate experience of the Other

i. The thou-orientation and the we-relation

All experience of social reality is founded on the fundamental axiom positing the existence of other beings "like me." The forms into which my experience of social reality is placed are in contrast very diverse. I experience other men in various perspectives, and my relation to them is arranged according to various levels of proximity, depth, and anonymity in lived experience. The breadth of variations in my experience of the social world extends from the encounter with another man to vague attitudes, institutions, cultural structures, and "humanity in general." We must now describe the structures in which the social world becomes built up in experience. We can first of all effect a rough distinction be-

tween the immediate experience of an Other and the mediate experience of the social world. Since we intend in due course to show that mediate experience is in essence derivable from immediate experience, we will begin with an analysis of the latter.

I immediately perceive another man only when he shares a sector of the life-world's space and of world time in common with me. Only under those conditions does the Other appear to me in his live corporeality: his body is for me a perceivable and explicable field of expression which makes his conscious life accessible to me. It is possible only then for my stream of consciousness and his to flow in true simultaneity: he and I grow older together. The encounter (the face-to-face situation) is the only social situation characterized by temporal and spatial immediacy. This essentially determines not only the style but also the structure of social relations and acts occurring in this situation.

How does such a situation become constituted? It is presupposed that I turn my attention to the Other. This advertence, which we designate with the expression *thou-orientation*, is a universal form in which an Other is experienced "in person." We will subsequently term such an Other a fellow-man. The thou-orientation arises simply through the fact that I experience something in the world within my reach as "like me." It must, however, be stressed that we are not here concerned with a judgment based on analogy. The thou-orientation is originally prepredicative. I do not just reflect polythetically: "this here is a man, as I"; rather, I actually grasp the man in his existence before me, in temporal and spatial immediacy. But the concept of the thou-orientation does as a consequence require that I also *know* what sort of a man (that is, in his "being-thus-and-so") is standing in front of me. It is clear that we are concerned here with a formal concept. Empirically, there is no "pure" thou-orientation. When I meet a fellow-man it is always also a particular man, or in any case a particular type of man with his particularities. The thou-orientation is thus continuously articulated in various stages of the concrete apprehension and typification of the thou.

The thou-orientation can either be unilateral or reciprocal. It is possible that I turn to you ⁴⁷ while you do not pay attention

47. [Schutz uses the second person familiar in this passage, in conformity with his main concept: *Du-Einstellung* (thou-orientation). We translate with the less distinctive "you" to conform with standard English usage, as this concept does not invoke, for Schutz, the special sense of intimacy commonly attached to the second per-

to my existence. It can, though, also be the case that I turn to you as you do to me. In the case of a reciprocal thou-orientation, a social relation becomes constituted. We will designate this with the expression, *we-relation*. Analogous to what was said about the thou-orientation, we can again speak formally about a "pure" *we-relation*—which is constituted in a "pure," reciprocal thou-orientation. One must not forget, however, that the *we-relation* is also actualized only in various stages of concrete apprehension and typification of the Other.

I can, then, only share in the conscious life of another man when we encounter each other in a *concrete we-relation*. When you talk to me, for example, I can explicate the Objective significance of your words (make them explicit in a highly anonymous system of signs). Besides, I participate in the step-by-step constitution of your speaking in the genuine simultaneity of the *we-relation*. As a consequence, I can (more or less adequately or inadequately) grasp the subjective meaning-configuration that your speaking and your words have for you. The processes of explication through which I grasp my consociate's subjective meaning-configuration do not, precisely considered, belong to the *we-relation*. My fellow-man's words are above all signs in an Objective context of significance. Further, they are also indications ("symptoms") of the subjective meaning that all his experiences, including his actually present speaking, have for him. It is I, though, who explicate the signs in Objective and eventually subjective meaning-contexts. The process of explication consequently does not belong to the *we-relation*, though it presupposes it.

The flow of concrete experiences in which the *we-relation* is actualized exhibits thoroughgoing similarities "in content" with my inner flow of lived experiences. A fundamental difference, though, remains: my flow of lived experiences is a flow within the inner time of my own stream of consciousness. There is, indeed, genuine simultaneity of the flow of lived experiences in the *we-relation*, although I meet a fellow-man whose here is a there for me. Although we speak of the "immediate" experience of a fellow-man, this experience is internally, also in the precise meaning of the word, "mediated." I grasp my fellow-man's flow of lived experiences only "mediately," in that I explicate his

son familiar by, for instance, existential philosophers. Thou-orientation is, as Schutz says, a formal concept for him.]

movements, his expression, his communications as indications of the subjectively meaningful experiences of an alter ego. But among all my experiences of the other I, what is mediated least is the encounter of the fellow-man in the simultaneity of the we-relation. Thus we will continue to speak, even though it is not completely accurate, of an immediate experience of the fellow-man.

This immediacy is preserved only as long as I live in the we-relation, that is as long as I participate in the joint flow of *our* experiences. When I turn *reflectively* to our experiences, then I have, so to speak, placed myself outside of the we-relation. Before I can consider a we-relation, its living phases of lived experience must be broken off or have faded away. I live in a we-relation and subjectively experience it only when I am absorbed in our common experiences. I can reflect upon them, but only *ex post facto*. Then, past common experiences can be grasped in great clarity, exactly, as well as in unclarity and confusion. The more I give myself over to reflection, the less I live in the common experience and the more distant and mediate is my consociate. The Other whom I experienced immediately in the we-relation becomes in reflection the Object of my thought. We will pursue this point later.⁴⁸ It is granted that I can also decide during a social encounter to "step out of" the we-relation. In this situation I can also decide to transform my fellow-man into a typical consociate.

ii. The social encounter

The "pure" we-relation, which is constituted in a reciprocal thou-orientation, consists of the bare consciousness of the existence of an Other. It does not necessarily include the apprehension of his specific characteristics. But just such an apprehension belongs to all concrete social relations. The extent of my knowledge of the Other can naturally be quite varied. That means, therefore, that the concrete social relations which have the character of an encounter are indeed founded on a "pure" we-relation. But it is not sufficient that I am sympathetic toward my fellow-man and that I see that he is sympathetic toward me. In addition, I must grasp more or less exactly *how* he is sympathetic to me. In the community of space and time, in the vivid presence of the fellow-man, I succeed at this through immediate observation. In contrast to the reflective grasping of the essential fea-

48. See Chap. 2, B, 5, c, i and ii.

tures of the "pure" we-relation, I actually grasp the Other in a certain determinacy. I also experience *us* only in the determinacy of our reciprocal relation. Thus, for example, I experience *us* in a friendly relation between me the younger person, and him the older; or the well-established superficial relation between me the customer, and him the salesman. These two examples show that the we-relation can become actualized in various ways. My social partner appears to me in spatially, temporally, and sociobiographically differentiated perspectives of apprehension that exercise a certain control over my experience of Others. Further, I do not subjectively experience partners in we-relations in the same nearness and depth of lived experience. Finally, I may in a we-relation attentively follow the experiences of my partner. That is, I may "livingly enter into" the processes of his consciousness and into his subjective motivations (as, for example, is the case when a third party observes the meaningless conversation between two lovers). Or I may only be indirectly interested and instead concentrate on his acts and their Objective consequences (as when the two of us saw through a tree trunk, it can be all the same to me "what he's thinking while he does it" as long as he keeps the rhythm of our sawing). Or I may concentrate on the Objective meaning of his communication (as, e.g., in a scientific discussion). The we-relations always become actualized in the dimensions cited. The gradations of immediacy are developed in various connections between these dimensions, within the (formal) we-relation, constituted via a reciprocal thou-orientation in spatial and temporal community. We will illustrate this conclusion by an example.

The act of love, as well as a superficial conversation between two strangers, is an example of the we-relation. In both cases, fellow-men meet each other in a *face-to-face situation*, as it is termed in sociological terminology. However, what a difference in the "immediacy" of the relation! But completely apart from this, that at one time a complete synchronization of inner time is achieved by means of the prevailing respective meaning-modalities and at another time it is not, there are further large differences in the perspectives of interpretation, in the proximity and depth of the lived experience. But it is not only my experiences of Others that vary in these dimensions, but rather (as I experience through "mirroring" in an Other) his also. We may say that variations in the degree of immediacy characterize the we-relation as such. This involves us in another problem which is of great im-

portance for the subjective experience of the social world, and with which we will have to deal more closely in the analysis of the transition from immediate to mediate experience of social reality.

In an encounter, the conscious life of the Other is accessible to me through a maximal abundance of symptoms. Since he stands bodily before me, I can apprehend the processes in his consciousness not only by means of what he deliberately shares with me, but also through observation and interpretation of his movements, his facial expression, his gestures, the rhythm and intonation of his speech, etc. Every phase of my inner duration is coordinated with a phase of the conscious life of the Other. Since I perceive without interruption the continual manifestations of the subjective occurrences in my fellow-man, I remain tuned in to them without interruption. An especially important consequence of this circumstance is the fact that my fellow-man is in a certain sense presented to me as more "alive" and more "immediate" than I am to myself. Naturally I "know" myself much better than him: my biography is recallable by me in an infinitely more detailed fashion than it is by someone else. But this is knowledge about me, memory of my past, and demands a reflective attitude. Because, however, I unreflectively live and merge in the actual experience, my fellow-man is before me in his relation to me with a greater abundance of symptoms than I am to myself—as long as we remain just in the temporal and spatial communality of the we-relation.

Until now we stressed the immediacy of my experience of my fellow-man. But to every concrete situation in which I meet an Other, I bring with me my stock of knowledge, i.e., the sedimentation of past experiences. This stock of knowledge naturally includes as well a network of typifications of men in general, their typically human motivations, patterns of action, hierarchies of plans, etc. It includes my knowledge about schemata of expression and interpretation, and my knowledge of Objective sign systems, especially of a language. Subordinated to this general knowledge, there is further the detailed cognizance of motivations, acts, schemata of expression, etc., of certain types of men, e.g., of men and women, young and old, healthy and sick, farmers and city dwellers, fathers and mothers, friends and enemies, Americans and Chinese, etc. Finally, my stock of knowledge may also include prior experiences of this completely determined fellow-man. In the course of the we-relation I use my knowledge,

test it, modify it, and acquire new experiences. My whole stock of knowledge is in any case subject to change, sometimes a negligibly small one, but sometimes a decisive one. My experience of my fellow-man in the we-relation is thus in a complex meaning- and interpretational-context: it is the experience of a man, it is the experience of a typical actor on the stage of the social world, it is the experience of this completely determined, unique fellow-man in this completely determined situation.

We have until now described a stratum of my experience of the fellow-man. A further essential component of this experience is that I also grasp *his* attitude to me. He also experiences my action not simply in an Objective interpretative context, but also as an expression of my conscious life. Further, I apprehend the fact that he experiences me as someone who experiences his conduct as an expression of his subjectivity. In the we-relation our experiences are not only coordinated with one another, but are also reciprocally determined and related to one another. I experience myself through my consociate, and he experiences himself through me. The mirroring of self in the experience of the stranger (more exactly, in my grasp of the Other's experience of me) is a constitutive element of the we-relation. As Charles H. Cooley has already shown in a penetrating fashion, the reciprocal mirroring is of fundamental import for the process of socialization.⁴⁹ It must still be noted that the complex refractions of the processes of mirroring do not, like individual rays, come into the grip of consciousness. Indeed, neither the we-relation nor the fellow-man are reflectively grasped in it, but are rather immediately experienced. My experience of my own course of lived experience and of the coordinated course of the lived experience of my fellow-man is unitary: experiences in the we-relation are common experiences.

In anticipation of the analysis of the structure of action, it is worth noting that this is important not only for the structure of social relations but also for the structure of social action in an encounter.⁵⁰ I can observe the success or failure of the concrete plans of my fellow-man in the course of his action. On the other hand, outside the we-relation on the basis of my stock of knowledge, I can calculate the Objective chances for the success of certain goals or acts, planned by typical actors, and I can associ-

49. [*Human Nature and the Social Order*, rev. ed. (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), pp. 152-63.]

50. See Chap. 4.

ate typical results of acts. But I can immediately grasp the result of the act of a fellow-man only in the course of common experiences, and in relation to his conscious life, since there I coexperience the course of the action.

We said ⁵¹ that the natural attitude is characterized by the assumption that the life-world accepted by me as given is also accepted by my fellow-men as given. We also demonstrated that this "obviousness," touching on the basic thesis of the reciprocity of perspectives, has its origin in the experience of the Other within the world in my reach, and becomes a component of that which is taken for granted in the fully socialized natural attitude. This obviousness is continually confirmed as the result of we-relations in which Others become fellow-men whose world in reach for the most part comes to coincide with mine. This circumstance is of great import for the construction of my stock of knowledge as such. I can always test the adequacy of my interpretative schemata, which are used in apprehending the expression schemata of my fellow-man by referring to the objects in our common surrounding world. When it is established that he interprets his experiences, or at least such objects as are before us, in a similar fashion to the way I do, I have a point of departure in that his expressive schemata sufficiently agree with my interpretative schemata, in any case for all practical purposes.

In general, it is thus in the we-relation that the intersubjectivity of the life-world is developed and continually confirmed. The life-world is not my private world nor your private world, nor yours and mine added together, but rather the world of our *common experience*. Furthermore, as just a marginal note, a breaking off, or even just a radical restriction, of the continual confirmation of this character of the world has grave consequences for the normal development of its intersubjectivity. The component of self-evidencies which is the underpinning for the life-world to which we are accustomed is, for instance, endangered in solitary confinement, even often demolished. The technique of brainwashing appears very probably to turn this circumstance to good account.

c. The mediate experience of the social world

i. From immediate to mediate experience of the Other

The encounter is only one relation, even if in its immediacy it

51. See Chap. 2, B, 5, a.

is the most originary and genetically important social relation. But we have found that within the temporal and spatial immediacy of the we-relation, differences in the immediacy of my experience of the Other already stand out; these are determined by the perspectives of interpretation, by depth, nearness, and intensity of lived experience. This gradation extends in general into my experience of the social world, the main sphere of which, not immediately experienced, consists of contemporaries. We wish this to characterize those other men with whom I do not actually have a we-relation, but whose life falls in the same present span of world time as mine. We can best pursue the gradations of immediacy by a simple example of the change of a person into a mere contemporary. I find myself face to face with an acquaintance. He excuses himself, shakes my hand, and departs. He turns around and calls out something to me. He is still farther, waves to me once more, and disappears around the corner. It would be difficult, if at all meaningful, to determine exactly when the we-relation came to an end, when the fellow-man who was given to me in immediate experience became simply a contemporary, of whom I can presume or maintain one thing or another on the basis of my stock of knowledge with greater or lesser probability ("in the meantime he has probably gotten home"). A qualitative change in my experience of him has entered in, no matter when one would want to fix its point in time. One could illustrate the gradations of immediacy in other ways, for example by describing typical forms of communication, ranging from a conversation during an encounter to a telephone conversation, to the exchange of letters, to news transmitted via a third person, etc. In all these cases there is manifested a decrease in the abundance of symptoms through which the conscious life of another is accessible to me. While we may establish the differentiation between immediate and mediate experience of the Other, because it involves more than merely quantitative differences, we may not forget that it involves two poles between which there are many empirically transitional forms. This statement will now be further substantiated.

The transition from direct to indirect experience of the Other seldom intrudes upon us in the natural attitude of daily life. In the routine of everyday life we unite both our own conduct and that of other men in meaning-contexts which are relatively independent of the *hic et nunc* of actual experience. This is one reason why the immediacy or mediacy of an experience

(viz., the social relation) does not become a problem and does not require interpretation in the world of work. But the deeper reason for this is the fact that the immediate experience of the fellow-man would retain its constitutive characteristics, even if he became a mere contemporary. The actual immediate experience becomes a past, but then again a remembered, immediate experience.

We realize without further ado why the fellow-man with whom we spoke, whom we loved or hated, who was thus and not otherwise, should suddenly have become "different," only because he is not there at the moment. We still love or hate him, and nothing in the everyday course of events forces us to notice that our experience of him has been essentially changed in its structure. That this is the case, however, can be proven only by a careful description. Memory of the fellow-man does in fact include the constitutively essential characteristics of the (past) we-relation, which are fundamentally distinct from the features of an attitude (and from conscious acts in general) concerning mere contemporaries. In the we-relation the fellow-man was bodily present; I could grasp his conscious life in the greatest abundance of symptoms. We were tuned in to one another in temporal and spatial community. I was mirrored in him, he in me; his experiences and my experiences formed a common course: we aged together. But as soon as he leaves me, a change takes place. I know that he is in one sector of the world, which is now in history and not in my present reach. I know that his period of duration is inserted in the same world time as mine, but our conscious processes are not bound in genuine simultaneity. I also know that he must have become older, and, when I reflect on it, I also know that strictly speaking he must have changed with every new experience. But in the everyday natural attitude, without reflection I leave all this out of consideration and hold fast to the familiar representation of my fellow-man. Until I revoke it, I will credit those components of my stock of knowledge which concern this fellow-man and which have been sedimented in living we-relations, with invariability—and, indeed, until revoked, that is, until I acquire conflicting knowledge. This is knowledge about a contemporary with whom I do not empathize within a thou-orientation. He is in any case a contemporary who was at one time my fellow-man and concerning whom I have firsthand experience, and therefore experience that is

fundamentally different from knowledge which I have about men who were never more than mere contemporaries.

This brings us to a point which we already indicated when we said that the formal structure of attainability and restorability, which characterizes the spatial experience of the everyday life-world, can also be transferred to the subjective experience of the social world.⁵² The immediately surrounding social world, the living we-relation, can be taken as analogous to the world in actual reach; the restorable we-relation as analogous to the world in restorable reach; the social world of my contemporaries with their subdivision according to different probabilities for attainability as analogous to the world in attainable reach. In order to interpret this analogy, we must go into the essence of those social relations in which (to speak through Max Weber)⁵³ "there is an opportunity for the continuous *repetition* of behavior appropriate to a sense (that is, holding good for it and accordingly anticipating it." We are in the habit of viewing a marriage or a friendship primarily as a social relation belonging to a type of encounter that has a certain intimacy of lived experience. The reason for this lies in a fact already discussed: we tend to understand courses of acts as unities within larger (and more lasting) meaning-contexts, irrespective of whether this unity is also subjectively constituted in this way, in the plans and interpretations of the persons concerned. With a closer examination, the unity (of the meaning) of a marriage or a friendship which is thus established is resolved into multifaceted relations situated in social time ("golden wedding," "childhood friendship"), which partly consist of living we-relations, partly of relations among contemporaries. Strictly speaking, these social relations are not continuous but rather "repeatable."

What, then, is meant, for instance, when two friends speak of friendship? First, A, who stands in the relation of friend to B, may think of past we-relations with B. These we-relations, above all, form not an unbroken course but rather a series, broken by "lonely" sequences of lived experience and by different sorts of we-relations with Others. Second, A, when he speaks of his friendship with B, may not only think of past concrete we-relations but may also mean the fact that his conduct as such, or certain

52. See Chap. 2, B, 2, b, iii.

53. See *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Siebeck], 1925), p. 14, topic 4.

aspects of certain types of his conduct, are oriented to B, and indeed to the simple factual existence of B, or to certain attributes of B, or even to certain alternatives of action taken as possible for B. That means that A stands in a certain orientation to his contemporary B (a "he-orientation"), which is from time to time detached from an immediate thou-orientation, which is then followed by phases fulfilled by a pure he-orientation. Finally, A may also mean that the we-relation with B is fundamentally (ignoring technical obstacles) restorable and that with subjective certainty he expects as well that the depths of lived experience, the perspectives of apprehension, etc., which distinguished past we-relations to B, are restorable in future we-relations with B.

From the above, a general conclusion follows: there are social relations that essentially can be constituted only in the immediacy of living we-relations. Obviously, there are in addition certain conditions which are biographically imposed on me and which involve biosocial roles, such as children-parents (I can, at least in a legal sense, be the son of a man whom I have never seen). And there are also chosen relations for which a certain intimacy and depth of lived experience are constitutive: for example, an amorous relation, a friendship (phenomena like the intellectual epistolary "friendships" of the Renaissance, or the—albeit one-sided—infatuation with film stars, etc., would require a specialized examination). Thus, apart from the ordinary structure of such social relations, the opportunities for the restorability of a living we-relation play an important role. How long can one, for instance, be a father, a husband, a friend at a distance? Here, undoubtedly, the social transformation of time is also of great importance.

But then there are also social relations, which need not necessarily be formed first in living we-relations, as for example the relation between master and servant (here one should note the historical variation: the vassal relation, for instance, until the decline of feudalism, demanded an original—and basically restorable—we-relation; producer-consumer, etc.). It should be pointed out here that this raises a difficulty, which has not up to now been defined with sufficient precision by empirical sociology, an ambiguity in the conceptual pairs, "community and society," "mechanical and organic solidarity," "primary and secondary groups." To what extent personal structure is influenced by long-term sociohistorical changes in the predominance of one or another type of social relations, or by the regular repetition of living

we-relations in contrast to other sequences of social relations, is a question that must be left open at this point.

Above, we were concerned with the transitions of living we-relations to social relations between contemporaries. In doing so, we examined a border area lying between the immediate and mediate experience of the Other. The more we approach the latter, the smaller is the degree of immediacy and the higher the degree of anonymity characterizing my experience of the Other. We can divide the world of my contemporaries into various levels: fellow-men in earlier we-relations, who are now only contemporaries but with whom a living we-relation is restorable (with greater or lesser probability); those with whom a we-relation is no longer restorable (they are dead); contemporaries who were previously fellow-men of my present partner in a we-relation, who are for him so to speak "restorable" and for me "achievable" fellow-men (your friend X as yet unknown to me); contemporaries of whose personal existence I know, whom I will shortly meet face to face (Mr. Y, whose book I've read and with whom I have an appointment next week); contemporaries of whose existence I know "in general," that is, whose existence I can infer on the basis of my knowledge of the social world as reference points of typical social functions (postal officials, who dispatch *my* letter); institutional realities, about whose structure I have been instructed and whose staff is anonymous to me, although I could find out about the latter (the Parliament); institutional realities that are essentially anonymous and which I could therefore never encounter (the capitalistic economic system); socially formed Objective meaning-contexts (French grammar); and, finally, artifacts in the broadest sense, which like witnesses refer back to subjective meaning-contexts of an unknown manufacturer, consumer, spectator. All of these are examples of the increasingly anonymous strata of the social world of contemporaries, and the transitions of immediate experience of the Other into mediate experience of the social world.

ii. The contemporary as type and the they-orientation

Spatial and temporal immediacy, a presupposition for the thou-orientation and the we-relation, is absent in my experience of contemporaries. Contemporaries are not bodily present; therefore they are not given to me in prepredicative experience as this particular unique person. Nor do I have direct experience of their factual existence alone. I only know that certain contem-

poraries, or even a certain contemporary, coexist with me in world time. I also only know that these contemporaries or this contemporary exhibit certain characteristics. I know this on the basis of my prior experience and my stock of knowledge, through the help of various lifeworldly idealizations, but only with more or less certainty and probability. While I thus concretely experience a fellow-man immediately in his factual existence and his being-thus-and-so in the social encounter, I grasp the factual existence and being-thus-and-so of a contemporary only by means of derived typifications. Although the general problem of typification is more exactly examined below,⁵⁴ the experience of the social world cannot be described without anticipation of this analysis. Therefore it is within certain limitations that we turn to the investigation of those typifications which make it possible to grasp contemporaries.

One of the ways in which I can experience contemporaries is constituted in inferences from the previous direct experiences of fellow-men. We have already described this constitutional mode and have thus found that knowledge built up in immediate experience of the Other is constantly held, waiting recall, and is considered to be valid, even after the fellow-man has become a contemporary. Another way in which I experience contemporaries is similar to the first. The previous fellow-men of my actually present fellow-man are themselves grasped, insofar as I follow the example of my partner in the we-relation and take over from him the knowledge of an Other that he has acquired by direct experience and now holds constant. In this case, I cannot refer to my own immediate (or even to my past) experiences, but rather must first learn his information concerning the third person before I can accept as valid the knowledge contained in the communication.

In both cases the experience of a contemporary is based either on my own *past* experiences, both my immediate as well as my mediate experiences of Others, or on the transmitted remarks of an Other concerning a third. It is obvious that all knowledge thus transmitted refers back to an originary direct experience of fellow-men and is based on this. But I can also acquire knowledge of contemporaries in another way. My experiences of things and events in the life-world, of tools and artifacts in the broadest sense, contain references to the social world—to the

54. See Chap. 3, C.

world of my contemporaries and my forefathers. I can always interpret them as proofs of the conscious life of other beings "like me," as signs, marks, results of acts. But, indeed, such interpretations are in any case also inferred from my experiences of particular fellow-men. In the encounter with a fellow-man I was, in genuine simultaneity with my inner duration, witness to how his conduct was polythetically constructed, how he, step by step, realized his plans for acts, how he produced and used a tool, how he created and observed an artifact, and how he posited signs. I can interpret the finished tool, the artifact, the engraved or written sign, or the sign otherwise established in the outer world, as an indication of the stepwise subjective processes that have gone into them. Without the possibility of such a reference back to an originary basis, the tools, signs, etc., would be nothing but mere objects in the natural world.

My experience of contemporaries thus points to a necessarily indirect, mediated reference back to originary experiences. But that does not mean that I cannot focus on contemporaries with whom I am in social relations, in order to deal with them. The problem of social action will have to concern us later on. In the meantime we only want, by analogy to the thou-orientation (related to fellow-men in a social relation), to determine the concept of the *they-orientation* (i.e., he-orientation related to one or several contemporaries); we want to describe the essential characteristics of such an orientation and finally investigate the social relations founded on it.

In contrast to the way I grasp the conscious life of a fellow-man, the experiences of mere contemporaries appear to me as more or less anonymous events. The reference point of the they-orientation is a type for the conscious processes of typical contemporaries. It is not the factual existence of a concretely and immediately experienced alter ego, not his conscious life together with his subjective, step-by-step, constituted meaning-contexts. The reference point of the they-orientation is inferred from my knowledge and from the social world in general, and is necessarily in an Objective meaning-context. Only *post hoc* can I add interpretations referring to the subjective meaning-contexts of an individual, as is shown in the analysis of personal types. My knowledge of the social world is typical knowledge concerning typical processes. In whose consciousness these typical processes transpire, with whose factual existence they are bound—these are questions that I can basically leave open. Through their de-

tachment from the subjective processes in inner duration, these processes ("typical experiences of someone") come to contain the idealizations of "and so forth" and "again and again," that is, assumptions of typical anonymous repeatability.

The unity of the contemporary is originally constituted in the unity of my experiences—more precisely, in the synthesis of my explication of the stock of knowledge concerning the social world. In this synthesis I can coordinate typical conscious processes within a single consciousness; I form an individualized type. The more easily I can associate this type with my experiences of a former fellow-man, the simpler this becomes. But the more that Objective meaning-contexts (stratified on one another and dependent on one another) replace subjective meaning-contexts, the more anonymous will be the reference point of my they-orientation. An individualized type is fundamentally a representation, not an experience of a concrete Other. Typical attributes are held to be invariable, so that the modifications of this attribute in the inner duration of a concrete Other are not adverted to. We will illustrate this point with a few examples.

When I put a letter in the mailbox, I expect certain contemporaries to interpret my wish (which I express by means of addressing and putting a stamp on the letter in the socially approved fashion, in a way adapted to this practical end) and to conduct themselves accordingly. My expectation, as we said first, referred to certain contemporaries. But it is clear that the reference point was not certain persons, but rather certain types of contemporaries (postal employees). The acceptance of money depends, in the words of Max Weber, on the subjective chance that contemporaries will accept these small physical objects as payment. Both are examples of a they-orientation referring to the typical behavior of typical contemporaries. When I conduct myself in a certain way and fashion, or omit the performance of certain acts, to introduce another example used by Weber, I do so in order to avoid the typically established conduct of typical contemporaries (policemen, judges).⁵⁵

In these examples my behavior is determined by the expectation that certain behavior is probable on the part of certain con-

55. [Alfred Schutz, *Collected Papers*, Vol. II: *Studies in Social Theory*, ed., with an introduction, by Arvid Brodersen (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1964), pp. 44-45.]

temporaries (mailmen, merchants, policemen). In relation to all these contemporaries I have a certain orientation. I include these contemporaries in my own behavior; in short, I have a social relation with them, which we characterize with the expression they-orientation. It must be stressed that these relations concern not concrete and specific other persons but rather types to which I ascribe certain attributes, certain functions, certain behavior. They are relevant for me only insofar as they conform to these typifications (probably more or less "well"). In the they-orientation I conduct myself on the basis of my knowledge of the social world: there are men who are "typical" postal employees, policemen, etc. Their behavior really stands for me in an Objective meaning-context. What they "think about it" is all the same to me, that is, the subjective meaning-contexts are for me (and for the they-relation) irrelevant, as long as they conduct themselves factually as postal employees, policemen, etc. My partners in they-relations are types.

At this juncture an important point must be added to the analysis of the thou-orientation and the we-relation. Typicality is a characteristic feature of the they-orientation and the they-relation. But that does not mean that it remains limited to this. Indeed, I cannot experience mere contemporaries other than in typification, but the same holds good, as we will see, for descendants and ancestors. Most important of all, my stock of knowledge of the social world consists of typifications. Since I already bring a stock of knowledge to every immediate encounter with a fellow-man, typifications also will necessarily play a role in the thou-orientation and we-relation. I also grasp the unique fellow-man who stands across from me face to face, with the help of typifications. Basically, there still remains an essential difference. My typifications of my fellow-man are brought into his uniqueness, which is immediately grasped in the living we-relation, and they are modified by this uniqueness. The typifications are "enlivened" in application to my fellow-man, are arranged and subordinated to the living reality. It should be noted in passing that the possibility arises that, even when one meets his fellow-man, one may "hold back" from the living we-relation and replace it, so to speak, with a they-relation. To a certain degree, this is the case reciprocally with examples of institutionalized acts, such as between buyers and sellers. The extent to which this is the beginning of the reification of the other person is a question that

cannot be investigated here.⁵⁶ We only want, with the aid of a single example, to follow this presupposition back to the origin of this problem in the lifeworldly experience of the Other.

Let us assume that I find myself face to face with several fellow-men. Our experiences appear to me as an unbroken and common flow. But I can also direct my attention to an individual; I can dissect the "we" into me and him. Let us assume that I am playing cards with three partners. I can turn my attention to one or the other. In the thou-orientation I grasp his conscious processes step by step, by means of his words, his facial expression, his hand gestures, etc. And, I submerge myself in the subjective contexts in which the game and his actions in the game appear to him. I can turn to all the card players, one after the other, in such an attitude. But as an unparticipating observer, I can also undertake a transposition: I transpose the observed situation from fellow-human immediacy into the typified world of contemporaries. I explicate the situation on the basis of my stock of knowledge: the three (or the four, for I can also "observe" myself in this sense) are playing bridge. Statements of this kind concern conscious life only insofar as the typical acts (playing bridge) are coupled with typical meaning-contexts for the player, and insofar as I can coordinate such meaning-contexts with the conscious life of the individual players. Then I can also assume that for each individual the process exists in a subjective meaning-context for him. But basically I only need to postulate that this behavior (somehow, subjectively) is oriented to the Objective meaning-context (rules for bridge). This postulate naturally holds good in general for "people who play bridge," whoever they may be, whenever and wherever they may be playing. It is thus a typifying and quite anonymous postulate, not at all limited to the players in front of me. It is indeed the case that no concrete experience by A can be identical with an experience by B, no matter how typical it might be in an Objective meaning-context, since it belongs to the conscious stream of an individual man in a specific biographical articulation. The concrete experi-

56. There is a steadily growing literature in this field, starting from the concept of alienation in Marx, as well as from the sociological concept of roles. [For a discussion see, for example, Istaván Mészáros, *Marx's Theory of Alienation* (London: Merlin Press, 1970). An especially clear discussion of Marx's theory of alienation is also found in *Die Marxistische Theorie* by Klaus Hartmann (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1970), pp. 120-24, 149-54, 333-35, 570.]

ence cannot be repeated. Only the typical "in it" can be repeated. Only insofar as I bracket the concrete fellow-men A, B, and C, and say "they" play cards, can I grasp representatives of the type cardplayer in them. But with that I have undertaken an explication through which the fellow-men A, B, and C were rendered anonymous.

In contrast, it may be said finally that A, B, and C, even when they play cards, are "still" my friends Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. If the objection is addressed to the already constituted courses of lived experience in the natural attitude, then it is justified. Regarding the constitution of everyday experience (e.g., "my-friends-Caspar-Melchior-and-Balthasar-are-playing-bridge"), it must be said that an anonymization of the living process and its transposition into an Objective meaning-context is a presupposition of my coherent experience. The Objective meaning-context, which was built up on the basis of my stock of knowledge and of the axioms, idealizations, and typifications peculiar to it, can secondarily be transported back into subjective meaning-contexts: I also use my typical knowledge in situations involving fellow-men. I grasp fellow-men as "people like . . ." But at the same time, I experience them in the we-relation as unique fellow-men whose conscious life manifests itself before my eyes. They thus have a double character: they are "people like . . ." and they are "thou's." On the basis of this double character of fellow-men there then occurs a third transposition: the mere contemporary, experienced by me as a type, is endowed with a conscious life like a fellow-man. But it must be established that I do not immediately experience the conscious life of the contemporary, but as it were "breathe" consciousness into the reference point of the they-orientation, into the type through an act of explication of mine. As a result, this consciousness remains just a typical, anonymous consciousness. It is clear that we have here touched on an important problem of the social sciences, that of the life-worldly basis of the so-called ideal type. In the following, we want to investigate a point important for the analysis of the life-world: the significance of the relation of typification and anonymity for the experience of social reality.

iii. The levels of anonymity in the social world

The foundational moment of the they-orientation is that one imagines the Other, whose existence is assumed or suspected, as a reference point of typical virtues, characteristics, etc. In this

orientation, apart from this basic moment, the specific experiences of Others are, in the they-orientation, differentiated into various aspects. The most important variable is the degree of anonymity. We can say that the world of contemporaries is stratified according to levels of anonymity. The more anonymous the type (by means of which a contemporary is experienced), the more strongly objectivated is the meaning-context that is foisted upon the Other.

The anonymity of a type (an individualized social type) must be commented on in greater detail. We have already said that the "pure" thou-orientation arises from the immediate attention directed to the mere existence of the fellow-man, and that the grasping of the being-thus-and-so of a fellow-man is founded on this orientation. This does not prove true for the they-orientation. Basically, the latter consists in the fact that one imagines certain typical properties. In such conceptions I indeed posit such properties as existent, as now or earlier on hand to men. I need not, though, posit the availability of such a property in a certain Other, at a certain point in time, and in a certain place. The typical property is anonymous with reference to each individual person. As a consequence, the contemporary who, as we have shown, can be grasped only by means of such typifications, is in any case in this sense anonymous. This *factual existence* of the contemporary is not immediately experienced, but only suspected, assumed, or, rather, posited as taken for granted. In my *actual* experience the contemporary only has the status of a point of intersection of typical properties; his factual existence has for me the character of a subjective chance. From this it follows that the risk involved in those acts of mine that are directed to contemporaries, even in social encounters, is much greater in comparison with the act structure which as such and fundamentally has a chance character. What consequences this circumstance has for the structure of social relations between contemporaries is still to be shown.

But we can still speak of anonymity of individualized social typifications in another sense. The anonymity of a typification is inversely proportional to its fullness of content. The fullness of content for its part depends on the degree of generality, viz., the detail and determinateness of my stock of knowledge in relation to the typical property posited as invariable. The interpretation schema lying at the basis of a they-orientation may be inferred from immediate experiences of an earlier fellow-man; but it can

also be related to generalizations of social reality. In the first case the type, a personal type, will be relatively detailed and filled with content; in the second case, the typification will be relatively general and empty of content. We can say that the fullness of content of the individualized social type conforms to the relative immediacy of the experiences from which it was constituted.

But typifications are not in themselves secluded, isolated schemata of meaning but are rather bound to and built upon one another. The more typifications an individualized type is built on, the more anonymous it is, and the broader is the province of the schemata of meaning presupposed in the type as self-evident. The lower strata of the typifications (viz., the typifying schemata of meaning) do not come explicitly into the grasp of consciousness and are in a more or less vague way coposited as taken for granted and unproblematic. This can be easily illustrated. One need only consider how many "self-evident" and unclear schemata of interpretation underlie typifications like "citizen of the world," "vintager," "leftist intellectual liberal," "combatant," "American."

The degree of anonymity of an individualized social type thus depends, as we could say, on how easily the relation constituted through it (or the coconstituted relation) can be changed into a we-relation. The sooner I can immediately experience the typical characteristics of "someone" as properties of a fellow-man, as components of his conscious life, the less anonymous is the typification in question. This may be illustrated by two examples. Let us assume that I think of my absent friend Hans who faces a difficult decision. From sedimented immediate experiences of my friend, I have the individualized type "my friend Hans," who becomes the reference point of my present he-orientation. I may also formulate types of behavior: the observation "my friend Hans, before difficult decisions," becomes "people like Hans" are wont to conduct themselves thus and so under such circumstances. Although dealt with as typifications, these are minimally anonymous, their content is filled in considerably and inferred from past immediate experiences. Further, my contemporary Hans can at any time become fellow-man Hans. Let us take another example: my friend tells me about X, whom I do not know and whom he has recently met, and describes him; that is, he constructs typifications of X in which he fixes and posits as invariant his own experiences of the properties of X, by means of the speech categories of his stock of knowledge. The choice

of properties and their linguistic determination is therefore dependent upon my friend's stock of knowledge, upon his biographical situation, his motivations and plans when he met X, as well as upon his motivations and plans when he told me about X. While I listen to the description of X, I explicate the description of "people like X" with the aid of my linguistic interpretational schemata, with the help of my stock of knowledge, and in connection with my interests in "people like X" as well as in relation to my knowledge of my friend. The individualized social type X cannot be completely identical for my friend and for me. I may even question the characterization, or parts of it, and bracket these out on the basis of my (typifying) knowledge of my friend (my friend is easily excited, with "people like X" he has a blind spot, etc.). What is common in these two examples is that they are derived from immediate experience of a fellow-man, at first or second hand, and are relatively filled with content and not yet very anonymous. The memory of living fellow-men still permeates the typifications actually taking the place of the fellow-man. Such individualized types we will call *personal types*.

Another type-formation, at the same time more weakly individualized, grasps contemporaries only in reference to certain typical functions. Let us again take the example of the postal employee. My relation to the postal employee is much more anonymous than my relation to a personal type, since it is not concerned with Others whom I experience, have experienced, or probably will experience as fellow-men. Even if we should meet, it is extremely probable that we will both conduct ourselves on the basis of they-orientations "imported" into this situation, as it typically involves the institutionalization of such situations. If I post a letter, I need not (strictly speaking) refer to an individualized type "postal employee." I could, though, at least reflectively interpolate that his behavior stands for him in specific subjective meaning-contexts (salary, the chief, the comptroller, stomach upset—all these refer to Hans Müller); even more, I may refer to pure *types of behavior* (standardized courses of dispatching a letter, canceling, transport, delivery). It is of subordinate importance that I then associate the behavior types with someone ("anyone") who conducts himself just so and not otherwise. Such typifications, which closely approach pure behavioral types and which already have reached a higher degree of anonymity, we will characterize with the expression *functionary type*.

In contrast to the personal, the functionary type is relatively

anonymous. Both individualized types, including the latter, are relatively content-filled (and close to lived experience), if one contrasts them with the other typifying interpretational schemata for social reality. Typifications of so-called social collectives, although they still contain individualizations, are, for example, quite anonymous, since they can never be immediately experienced as such. The class of such typifications is again itself arranged according to levels of anonymity. "The Parliament," "the Board of Directors of the Rockefeller Foundation," "the bowling team" are typifications exhibiting relatively low anonymity within this class, since they are built on individualized functionary types or even personal types, which can at least in principle be converted into the immediate experience of fellow-men. Such a conversion is more difficult (even though it is subject to institutional manipulation) when it concerns collectives whose individualized substrata serve as the basis for unclear, fluctuating distinctions—as, for instance, "the enemies of our people." When the typifications are like "*the state*," "*the economy*," "*the social classes*," etc., they are completely unamenable to conversion into the living reality of a fellow-man. Highly anonymous Objective meaning-contexts and behavior-contexts are grasped in these typifications.⁵⁷ We still have to examine the question of the extent to which collectives (viz., the Objective meaning-contexts

57. The view that these Objective meaning- and behavior-contexts could be coordinated in a stream of consciousness and changed into a subjective meaning-context is a historical or, as the sociologist would say, an ideological, construction. The functions "of the state," "the will of the people," etc., can perhaps be explicated in an Objective meaning-context (e.g., in that of the historical sciences), so that the dangers inherent in these terms are hidden. Otherwise, this can only mean that the various aspects of Objective meaning-contexts are typical moments of subjective, conscious processes of state functionaries, representatives of the people, etc. As to this last possibility, one can by means of functionary types, and in principle also by means of personal types, become oriented in a they-orientation. *The* functions of *the state* cannot adequately be the basis of a consciousness, of a subjective meaning-context. The problem of a more exact analysis of the substrata of collective social realities remains one to be solved by sociology, and above all by the theory of socialization. These disciplines must exhibit the origin of the substrata in immediate and mediate experience of Others. An investigation of the possibilities and limits of the transformation of the meaning-contexts of social collectives into the subjective meaning-contexts of their functionaries (and, therewith, into the responsibility of the functionaries) is a problem of special import for jurisprudence and political science.

ascribed to them) are embodied in symbols that operate by instituting communities, and the way in which these symbols become taken-for-granted data of the social and cultural world into which the individual is born.⁵⁸

iv. Social relations between contemporaries

While social relations between fellow-men are founded on the thou-orientation, social relations between contemporaries are based on the they-orientation. Thus while social encounters proceed through the reciprocal mirroring of the immediate experience of the Other, social relations between contemporaries consist in grasping the Other as a (personal or functionary) type. As a consequence, social relations between contemporaries have in principle only a probable character. In such relations I must be satisfied with the chance and anticipation that the contemporary to whom I am oriented, for his part, is oriented to me, and indeed by means of a meaningfully adequate, complementary typification. We will illustrate this point with an example.

When I get on a train, my conduct is oriented to the anticipation that certain persons will undertake certain acts, which will in all likelihood bring me to my destination. With these persons I am in a social relation between contemporaries, or as we can also say, in a *they-relation*. This relation can occur, first, because my stock of knowledge contains the functionary type "railroad employee" ("people who do everything necessary so that people like me . . ."), and second, because under certain purpose- and situation-bound circumstances I *orient my conduct to this type*. Third, as a part of a factual lifeworldly relation between contemporaries, not only I orient my conduct to a certain type, but also others orient their own conduct to this type, viz., to a complementary type ("traveling person"). This means that I ascribe to my partner in the social relation an expectational and interpretational schema containing *me as type*. In this example, the relatively anonymous character of the functionary type becomes clear: I and my contemporary orient our conduct less to individualized types than to a typification of conduct, or as we can also say, to types of courses of acts. Social relations between contemporaries are determined through the subjective chances of the meaning-adequate complementarity of the typifications used by the partners. In place of the reciprocal confirmation (or modification or disconfirmation) of expectations in the immediate

58. See Chap. 6 [Vol. II].

experience of a we-relation, conscious acts (reflections, conceptions) concerning typifications enter into social relations between contemporaries, presumably orienting the behavior of the partner. The more standardized a typification schema is (under a circumstance of type X people of type A conduct themselves in the manner of type Z, as concerns people of type B), the greater is the subjective chance that the expectation of each of the partners in the relation will be confirmed. The subjective chances are graduated from mere conjecture (he could take me for X or Z; if for X, he could behave in the ways a, b, c; if for Z, in the ways d, e, f) to subjective certainty (he is listed in the address book as a stamp dealer; if I send him an order, he can conduct himself only thus and so). The typification schemata, to raise a point not yet discussed, can be standardized in various ways. Either the province of use and the kind of use are guaranteed by institutions (if I don't pay the fare, people of the type "railway police" will take typical actions oriented to the fact that I am a man of the legally determined type "fare-dodger," whether this typification is pleasing to me or not). Or the typification schemata are traditionally determined; that is, I know that their province of use and their kind of use have a general social distribution. Or the standardization refers to the fact that it concerns types of courses of acts, coordinated with a "rational" means-purpose schema.

These essential characteristics of social relations between contemporaries have several important consequences. First, in contrast to the continuing enrichment in a we-relation of my experience of my fellow-men, in a they-relation this obtains only with radical limitations. My experiences of contemporaries do indeed change my stock of knowledge of the social world, and the typifications underlying a they-relation can be modified. But this happens only to a negligibly small extent, as long as the sphere of interest, which determined the original use of the type, remains unchanged.⁵⁹

Our analysis of the general thesis of reciprocal perspectives is indicated by the second noteworthy point. In the we-relation I can always (again and again) find confirmation that my experiences of the life-world are congruent with your experiences of it.

59. In some studies, a somewhat naïve surprise has accompanied the discovery of a small influence of "personal contacts" on social "stereotypes."

We have seen that the extension of this to other men has been taken to be self-evident. But a confirmation in reference to mere contemporaries is not possible. It can only be maintained in a roundabout way through contemporaries who are former fellow-men and are "restorable" as fellow-men. Here, reference should again be made to the consequences of complete and relative isolation.

From the structure of they-relations, two further points arise here, though they can only be indicated in anticipation of the analysis of social action and the analysis of sign systems. Whether the relations assumed by me have actually arisen between a certain contemporary and me can only be determined from the outside, since social relations have a subjective chance-character. In projecting my acts I can take account of his motivations only insofar as they expressly belong to the type ascribed to him, as typical motivations *sufficient for the expected courses of acts*. If I mail a letter, I am presumably (in this case with subjective assuredness) in a they-relation with postal employees, for whom I (once again presumably, viz., with subjective assuredness) function as a "sender." Along with this I take into account that "people who become postal employees" are sufficiently motivated to undertake the actions of postal employees, as they for their part figure (and indeed with subjective assuredness) that "people who put letters in mailboxes" pursue the purpose of having the letter dispatched on its course. In whatever subjective meaning-context the letterwriting is for me, or the career of a postal employee is for him, is irrelevant for us both. In this sense his motives have nothing to do with mine. We will see later⁶⁰ how this situation differs from the structure of social action in an encounter.

The second point refers to communication.⁶¹ When I make myself understood to my partner in the social relation, I also use sign systems. In the they-relation, in contrast, I am almost exclusively referred to sign systems. In addition, there is the fact that the "more anonymous" my partner is, the "more Objective" must the use of sign systems be. This again makes clear how close the relation is between the degree of anonymity of the experience of social reality, and the replacement of subjective meaning-contexts by means of systematically objectivated mean-

60. See Chap. 5 [Vol. II].

61. See Chap. 6 [Vol. II].

ings. Thus I cannot presuppose that a contemporary, with whom I am in a they-relation, adequately grasps the nuances of my statement which are given by my intonation, by my facial expression, etc. (as well as by a "knowledge," won in immediate experiences, concerning how it all is to be interpreted, and what relation it has to my biographical situation, to my momentary mood, etc.). If I consciously want to share such nuances with him, I must transpose them into Objective categories of meaning, whereby they inevitably lose their nuanced character. In addition, communications with a contemporary must be posited as a totality. The risk that my preinterpretation of his reaction is inaccurate is consequently related to this totality, while I, step by step, immediately experience in the we-relation whether he has correctly or falsely understood me.

In concluding, the relation of the they-relation to the we-relation should be brought once more to mind. They-relations characterized by a relatively small degree of anonymity can be converted into we-relations, via various phases of transition. Conversely, we-relations of special immediacy and depth of lived experience are transformed into they-relations with a small degree of anonymity. This is an important factor in the development of a fixed meaning for social relations (e.g., of the depth of lived experience in a friendship), which is *relatively* independent of the structure of immediacy and mediacy. And finally, the transitions from immediate to mediate experiences, such as occur in the natural attitude of everyday life, are smooth and do not, for the reasons already discussed, force themselves on the consciousness.

v. The world of predecessors, history, generations

When I have lived through a we-relation or a they-relation, I can reproduce my experiences in them, step by step, in my memory, or I can grasp them monothetically in hindsight. In both cases the constitutive characteristics of these experiences, their immediacy or mediacy, remain preserved. But these experiences, which for their part were actual experiences of my conscious life, are essentially changed in one respect: they have received the place-value of historicality. That is, they are concluded, terminated. In the living phases of actual experience, there were horizons of open future; now there are no more. That which had a subjective character of chance in a social relation, for instance my expectations with regard to the future behavior

of my partners, is now absolutely sure. The expectations have been fulfilled or were disappointed. The temporal structures of experience, thus for example the time-structure inherent in action,⁶² can possibly be reproduced as such in memory; but the memory fulfilling my present conscious phase has another structure and has another position in my biographical situation. The present biographical situation is the present horizon of the remembered experience: "first I wanted this, then I looked for means to realize my goal, then I did this and that, etc."—but in *every one* of these remembered phases there is also the refrain: "I have actually only achieved this."

The dividing line between the world of my contemporaries and that of my predecessors is not sharp. I can surely view all memories of my own experiences of Others as experience of past social reality. Indeed, as we have just remarked, the constitutive characteristics of these experiences are preserved in such memories. These are experiences in which Others were present in simultaneity with my life. I can coordinate the past phases of the conscious life of these Others with past phases of my own conscious life. This means, above all, that in hindsight I can follow along in its inner duration the step-by-step construction of subjective meaning-contexts under my attention.

This is not applicable to the world of my predecessors in the narrow sense. This world is *definitively* concluded; not only have the experiences lived through by my ancestors come to an end; but also the biographical articulation in which the individual experiences were joined together is definitively completed. With regard to the world of my predecessors, nothing more can be expected. For this reason I cannot experience ancestors as free; they can no longer act. The "freedom" of my mere contemporaries, as I experience them, is also limited, since I grasp them by means of typifications fixing motives and courses of acts as constant. I also grasp ancestors only by means of typifications; but in this case nothing is held constant that is not already invariable anyhow. Invariability characterizes all of my predecessor's world.

I can orient myself by means of typifications to my predecessor's world (to my grandfather, to Napoleon), but I cannot act in relation to them. My attitude toward ancestors also has a character other than that of the thou-orientation and the they-orienta-

62. See Chap. 5 [Vol. II].

tion. My behavior can be oriented to the behavior of my ancestors only insofar as their acts can become because-motives⁶³ for my actions, but with regard to my ancestors I cannot effect anything more. Social relations that are essentially reciprocal cannot exist with ancestors. Acts of my ancestors which are oriented to me (as the quite anonymous type "descendant"), for instance a clause in my grandfather's will, I can meet only with an attitude directed to my grandfather—apart from the fact already mentioned, that the act can become a because-motive of my behavior (e.g., I study at a certain university of his choice).

The experiences of the preceding world are obviously indirect. They can be transmitted by means of communication from my fellow-men or contemporaries, based on their own immediate experiences (childhood memories of my father) or can themselves be inferred (my father tells me of the Civil War experiences of his great-uncle). These examples show again how indistinct in everyday experience is the dividing line between the worlds of contemporaries and ancestors. My father is presently in a we-relation with me; his own childhood experiences are related to a time before my birth; they are "history" for me. And yet they are the experiences of a fellow-man. I can therefore coordinate his experiences, including those which are "history" for me, with the subjective meaning-contexts of the fellow-man present to me.

Apart from the role that communication between fellow-men and contemporaries plays in my experience of the world of predecessors, the deeds of my ancestors are decisive. They are expressions of their conscious life. We can distinguish various possibilities here. The deeds could be communications directed to the contemporaries of ancestors; they can also have been directed to descendants. Those ancestors can be specific persons or completely anonymous types. Insofar as the deeds involve communications, they are in any case in an Objective meaning-context, the sign system, and are thus by their very essence anonymous. But the signs are also manifestations of the conscious life of the one who posited them, and I can try to expound them as such. Through this change in my attitude I put myself in a kind of pseudo-contemporaneity with the historical subject. Historical research is indeed seldom directly interested in the conscious life of the historical subject. But it should not be forgotten that historical sources, documents, etc., always allow a backward refer-

63. *Ibid.*

ence of such a kind, since they presuppose and pass on experiences of social reality on the part of the sign-positing subject. The world of predecessors was the contemporary world of ancestors; it contains the same fundamental arrangements of subjective experience of the social world, beyond immediacy, anonymity, etc., as does the world of contemporaries.

While the precedent world as well as the contemporary world is experienced by means of typifications, there exists, however, an important difference. The ancestor lived in a world radically divergent from mine. The general theory of the reciprocity of perspectives, lying at the basis of the socialization of the life-world, confirmed in the we-relation and expanded, with restrictions, into the world of contemporaries, is, strictly speaking, not applicable to the precedent world. Through linking the world of contemporaries with the world of predecessors by means of the overlapping of generations, we indeed try also to extend the general thesis to the past. In the natural attitude of everyday life, I am not reflectively-theoretically turned to the past; but *pragmatically* the task of extending the general thesis cannot be forcibly brought before my eyes (there are no ancient Teutons to confront me—as contemporary Chinese very probably can—and prove to me that not “everyone” experiences the world as you and I do). Furthermore (and completely ignoring the infiltration of a historical attitude into the modern relative-natural world view), it is probable that one also begins to suspect, in the natural attitude, that the meaning-contexts in which the experiences of the ancestors existed diverge decisively from those of contemporaries. The reason for this is found in the experience of difference between the world views of different *generations*.

It is indeed just through the transmission of my experience of elders that the precedent world is originally constituted as a social world “like mine.” All experiences of my ancestors were experiences belonging to an inner duration, a subjective meaning-context, as well as being constituted in encounters with Others, and in mediate social relations. I am in we-relations with my father, he was in we-relations with his father and so forth, back to the darkest past no longer graspable by typifications having full content; but this is also perceived as social past. At the same time, however, it is precisely in my experience of the elder that perhaps the most important modification of the general thesis of reciprocal perspectives is developed. My elder is a fellow-man in whom the interchangeability of standpoints and the con-

gruence of relevance systems is confirmed for me. But he is also a fellow-man in whom I experience the risk pertaining to the "self-evidencies" contained in the general thesis. He thinks otherwise about this and that than I. Through him I learn to have insight into the dependency of relevance systems upon the biographical situation. And even an intimate associate ("my father") "thinks differently." It is again precisely through my experience of elders that a biographical-historical difference *within* the contemporary world is forced upon me. Many of the horizons that for me, in my biographical situation, still are open, are for the elder, the fellow-man in our common situation, already closed (marriage, choice of profession, the first-born); what in my current experience is related to anticipations or expectations is already fulfilled for him, sedimented in his memory. He already was "in my position," namely, in a typical situation of a typical young man. He also went into this situation with expectations which were analogous to mine now, but he now already knows "how it turned out." He appeals to his "personal experience" and cannot comprehend that he cannot convey it to me.

No matter how static a society may be, there must of necessity be a disposition toward the experience of generations and thereby a disposition toward a naïve insight into the historicity of the social world. It is quite clear that this still does not tell us anything about the social conditions for the development of a historical consciousness (much less of a historical world view). But just as the world of predecessors is constituted for me through the chain of generations, so also a modification of the general thesis of reciprocal perspectives enters "after the fact." The "content" of the we-relations of my ancestors must have been different. They were in different meaning-contexts: the "same" experience in another meaning-context cannot have been "the same." With diminishing fullness of content and increasing anonymity of my typifications of the precedent world, I reach a point at which I can only say: the experiences of an ancestor were human experiences; they must have had "some kind" of subjective meaning. The risk of applying more or less content-filled typifications to ancestors is much greater than that regarding such an application to the contemporary social world. This even holds good for my interpretation of sign systems, which are Objective but deposited in the past. Sign systems are "self-evidently" invariable; they do not have the "open" horizons of a living, conscious process. However, I cannot *directly* test the

posited equivalency of my interpretational schemata for sign systems with the corresponding expressional schemata of my ancestors. This can be done only indirectly, with the help of "internal" evidence, founded again on assumptions and interpretations that are built up one on another. How much more simple is the evidence of assertions related to the world time (for example, the carbon dating of archaeological finds), than that of assertions related to the historical time of the social world.

vi. The world of successors

The world of successors is fundamentally "open" and indeterminate. My experience of it can only take place by means of highly anonymous typifications. Strictly speaking, I cannot legitimately apply individualized types to it—the nearest one can come, and even here there is a high risk of inaccuracy, is to apply functionary types. I have *one* point of contact with posterity, again through the subjective experience of generations. I can assume that this child, or if not this child then another, will live on past my death, that the properties of his conscious life which I presently immediately experience will be unfolded in the future. Beyond that, I can only assume that as long as there is a posterity my successors will unite a subjective meaning to their lived experiences, that they will live in a world. But in which? Surely there are differences in historical life-worlds: this future-directed question is unanswerable by us today, for even in the natural attitude of a man from a static society, the applicability to this succeeding world, of *typifications* pertinent to his contemporary world, is at least in principle out of the question.

6. THE COURSE OF LIFE: ONTOLOGICAL LIMITS, SUBJECTIVE CONDITIONS OF BIOGRAPHICAL ARTICULATION AND SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION

In our description of the experience of the life-world we stumbled onto the boundary conditions of this experience which are imposed on everyone. They form the limits within which subjective experience of the life-world is arranged in certain structures. Subjectively, they can be experienced as transcendencies of the everyday world. World time limits subjective duration; one ages in it and it forms the absolute boundary of life-plans. The fixed course of world time conditions subjective action; it forces