

4 / The Structure of the Social World: The Realm of Directly Experienced Social Reality, the Realm of Contemporaries, and the Realm of Predecessors

[A] INTRODUCTION

29. Preliminary Survey of the Problem

IN CHAPTER 3 we outlined the main features of a theory of our knowledge of other selves. We considered the general understanding we have of the other person's subjective experiences, and we found that this understanding is based on our own subjective experiences of him. Once the existence of the Thou is assumed, we have already entered the realm of intersubjectivity. The world is now experienced by the individual as shared by his fellow creatures, in short, as a *social* world. And, as we have already said repeatedly, this social world is by no means homogeneous but exhibits a multiform structure. Each of its spheres or regions is both a way of perceiving and a way of understanding the subjective experiences of others.

The present chapter will be devoted to a study of this multiform structure. We shall try to answer these questions: first, how such an inner differentiation is possible; second, what grounds we have for supposing that the social world has both unity and inner differentiation; and third, which of these differentiations may usefully serve as a basis for our analysis of understanding the other self. Only after we have answered these questions shall we be able to describe the different ways of understanding the other self peculiar to the different regions.

Even after having satisfied ourselves on these points, however, we should still be far from our main goal. As we have already seen, the question of the proper scientific approach to understanding others—a problem that is crucial for each of the social sciences—depends on a previous question. This is the question of the nature of intended

meaning. For there is a difference in kind between the type of naïve understanding of other people we exercise in everyday life and the type of understanding we use in the social sciences. It is our task to find what distinguishes two sets of categories from each other: (1) those categories in terms of which the man in the natural standpoint understands the social world and which, in fact, are given to the social sciences as material with which to begin, and (2) those categories which the social sciences themselves use to classify this already pre-formed material.

However, the two spheres overlap. For in a certain sense I am a social scientist in everyday life whenever I reflect upon my fellow men and their behavior instead of merely experiencing them. I live with them as a man among men, I encounter them continually in direct experience. My awareness of their presence and of their personal characteristics¹ is immediate. It is no less immediate, and indeed no less integral to my consciousness, than is my awareness of the physical world surrounding me, to the extent that this world is spatial; it includes both my own body and those of others, together with their movements. Your body, for instance, is spatial, not merely in the sense of being a physical object or even a physiological one, but in the sense of being a psychophysical object, that is, a field for the expression of your subjective experiences. And, in accordance with the general thesis of the other self, I not only consciously experience you, but I live with you and grow old with you. I can attend to your stream of consciousness, just as I can attend to my own, and I can, therefore, become aware of what is going on in your mind. In the living intentionality of this experience, I "understand" you without necessarily paying any attention to the acts of understanding themselves. This is because, since I live in the same world as you, I live *in* the acts of understanding you. You and your subjective experiences are not only "accessible" to me, that is, open to my interpretation, but are taken for granted by me together with your existence and personal characteristics. And this in the strict sense of our definition: while I am directly experiencing you and talking with you, the whole complicated substructure of my own interpretation of you escapes my attention. I am not interested in such matters; my living intentionality, my *attention à la vie*, has other goals at the moment. However, I can at any given time change all this and bring these acts within the focus of my gaze. For instance, I may ask, "Have I understood you correctly?" "Don't you mean something else?" "What do you mean by such and such action?" These are typical of the questions that I am forced to ask every day in

1. ["Meine Erlebnisse von ihrem Dasein und Sosein. . . ."]

my relations with other people. The moment I raise such questions, I have abandoned my simple and direct awareness of the other person, my immediate grasp of him in all his subjective particularity. I have abandoned the living intentionality of our confrontation. The light in which I am looking at him is now a different one: my attention has shifted to those deeper layers that up to now had been unobserved and taken for granted. I no longer experience my fellow man in the sense of sharing his life with him; instead I "think about him." But now I am acting like a social scientist. For the latter (when he is acting *as a social scientist* and not just as an ordinary human being) gains access to the subjective experiences of others by treating them as objects of thought rather than by immediately grasping them as they occur. We see, then, that the whole problem of the social sciences and their categories has already been posed in the prescientific sphere, i.e., in the midst of life in the social world. To be sure, it is posed here in a very primitive form. The social scientist, as we shall see, utilizes methods and concepts which are quite different from the ordinary person who is simply observing another.

Abstracting, however, from the refinements which occur once the scientific stage is reached, it is quite clear that the *starting point* of social science is to be found in ordinary social life. Our fellow men are not only objects of experience in everyday life but are also objects of thought. Now, this kind of everyday thinking about our fellow men can be an end in itself, or it can serve as a means to further ends, thereby entering into a broader meaning-context. For instance, we may want to adjust our own behavior to that of others, or we may want to influence their thoughts or their behavior. In such cases, we formulate our project in the future perfect tense, using our knowledge of what is in other people's minds as a means to our end.

However, this is not to say that all action oriented toward others or even all action designed to change their behavior necessarily (or even usually) presupposes a previous direction of the attention toward the lower levels of their consciousness. On the contrary: even though I am acting upon my fellow men and trying to influence their behavior, still, to the extent that I am living with them and directly grasping their subjective experiences, I can hardly be paying attention to the lower levels of their consciousness at the same time.

Since our aim is to illuminate just these constitutive processes of understanding others, our task will be in each case the description and clarification of these lower layers. We shall, to begin with, put aside any effort to describe those acts (*Handlungen*) of the ego in whose project the subjective experiences of the Thou are included. We shall, above all, come to terms with Max Weber's concept of *social action*

and then proceed to analyze critically his concept of *social relationship*. At this point we shall be able to make a close study of the peculiar backward reference which the subjective experiences of the other person included in the project of my action have to my own subjective experiences. All of these analyses, will, however, be merely preparatory to a further study of the general problem of life in the social world. To begin with, let us consider the fact that I face my fellow men in quite different and finely differentiated ways. For instance, I understand them in different conceptual perspectives. Again, I live through their subjective experiences in various degrees of intimacy. These are not merely differences in the way in which I grasp intentionally the other person's subjective experiences. They extend even to the very content of my act of grasping—to the intentional object itself. And, of course, others as well as myself experience these differences. For we have in common the same world of directly experienced social reality: the world surrounding me in my Here and Now corresponds to the one surrounding you in your Here and Now. My Here and Now includes you, together with your awareness of my world, just as I and my conscious content belong to your world in your Here and Now. However, this *domain (or realm) of directly experienced social reality* (as we intend to call it) is only one among many social realms. Just as the world of my actual perception is only a fragment of the whole world of my experience, and this in turn is but a fragment of the world of my possible experience, so likewise the social world (itself a portion of this "whole world") is only directly experienced by me in fragments as I live from moment to moment. This directly experienced social world is again, on its side, segmented according to conceptual perspectives. Beyond this domain of directly experienced social reality to which I am anchored by spatiotemporal community, there are still other social realms. Some of these I have once directly experienced and *can* in principle repeatedly re-experience in the same direct fashion. Others I can experience directly if I choose, but have not yet done so. These realms we will consider as one and call the *social world of contemporaries* (*soziale Mitwelt*). The social world of contemporaries coexists with me and is simultaneous with my duration. However, even though living *with* it, I do not live *through* it as a matter of direct experience. Let us call the other selves of the world of directly experienced social reality my "fellow men" (*Mitmenschen*) and the other selves of the world of contemporaries my "contemporaries" (*Nebemenschen*). We can then say that, living with my fellow men, I directly experience them and their subjective experiences. But of my contemporaries we will say that, while living among them, I do not directly and immediately grasp their subjective

experiences but instead infer, on the basis of indirect evidence, the typical subjective experiences they must be having. Inferences of this kind, of course, can be well founded. Now, we have already seen that in the domain of directly experienced social reality I can be both observer and actor. This is also true of the world of contemporaries. Here, too, I can not only observe, but also act, making the behavior and subjective experience of my contemporaries the in-order-to motives of my action.

But in addition to these two worlds, I can also be cognizant of a social world that existed before I myself did and which at no point overlaps with any part of my own life. With respect to this realm, *the social world of predecessors* (*Vorwelt*), or *history*, I can only be an observer and not an actor. Finally, I know that there is yet another world, one also inhabited by others, that will exist when I am no more, *a social world of successors* (*Folgewelt*),² men of whom I know nothing as individuals and with whose subjective experiences I can have no personal acquaintance. As a matter of fact, I only know their typical experiences by supposing that the latter will be the same as those of my contemporaries and my predecessors. This is a world which I can only vaguely grasp but never directly experience.

In using the term "world" for these domains or realms, we mean only that different people are consociates, contemporaries, predecessors, or successors to one another and that they accordingly experience one another and act upon one another in the different ways in question.

All these considerations merely serve to outline the vast theoretical field of the social world, the methodical exploration of which is the task of the social sciences. Throughout this book we shall be limiting ourselves to the theory of the understanding of other people in the broadest sense of such understanding, a theory which also embraces the use and interpretation of signs as well as the creation of other products and their interpretation. Our path is clearly set before us. We shall have to ascertain how our knowledge of each of these regions draws its original claim from the general thesis of the other self, in other words, from the simultaneity or quasi-simultaneity of the other self's consciousness with my own. We shall also have to discover the proper approach to the subjective meaning of the products of each of these worlds. We shall have to find how the phenomena of meaning-determination and meaning-interpretation are carried out in the spheres in question. We shall have to discover the principles of conti-

2. The striking expression *Folgewelt*, which is greatly preferable to *Nachwelt* (world to come), is taken from Schiller's inaugural lecture, *Was heisst und zu welchem Ende studiert man Universalgeschichte?* [Schiller's *Werke*, ed. Ludwig Bellermann and Benno von Wiese (Leipzig, 1936-37), Vol. IX.]

nunity between the spheres. We shall have to determine which spheres are alone accessible to the methods of the social sciences. Finally, we shall have to get clear as to what methods the social sciences should employ in order to carry out research adequate to their objects.

[B] SOCIAL BEHAVIOR, SOCIAL ACTION, SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP

30. Max Weber's Concept of "Social Action." Other-Orientation and Affecting-the-Other

WE HAVE ALREADY CONSIDERED, in our preliminary study in Chapter 1, Weber's definition of social action: ³ "Action is social insofar as, by virtue of the subjective meaning attached to it by the acting individual (or individuals), it takes account of the behavior of others, and is thereby oriented in its course." We must bear in mind that Weber, when he speaks about social action, does not mean that action which we have distinguished (in Chapter 2) from "behavior in the broadest sense." Instead, for him, action of any sort means inner or outer "behavior" in a still unclear sense, provided that "meaning" can be attributed to the person behaving. Accordingly, there fall under this concept not only all intentional Acts deriving from spontaneous activity, whether or not they be projected beforehand and thus qualify as action, but also all passively emerging subjective experiences which are only in a general sense intentionally related to another person.

Following the logic of our own terminology, we prefer to take as our starting point, not social action or social behavior, but *intentional conscious experiences directed toward the other self*. However, we include here only those intentional experiences which are related to the other *as other*, that is, as a conscious living being. We are leaving out of account intentional Acts directed only to the other person's body as a physical object rather than as a field of expression for his subjective experiences. Conscious experiences intentionally related to another self which emerge in the form of spontaneous activity we shall speak of as *social behavior*. If such experiences have the character of being previously projected, we shall speak of them as *social action*. Social behavior so defined will embrace all specific Ego-Acts (*Ich-Akte*) which are intentionally directed upon a Thou as upon another self having consciousness and duration. Here we include experiences such as feelings of sympathy and antipathy, erotic attitudes, and feeling-activities of all kinds. All these subjective experiences of con-

3. See sec. 2, p. 15.

consciousness would no doubt be called social action by Weber, if we are to judge by the examples he adduces. On the other hand, this would be limited to *previously* projected behavior by his definition of it as action oriented to the behavior of the other person. For only a previously projected piece of behavior can be oriented, since orientation necessarily presupposes a project. However, even then, not every such previously projected action "toward another" would be social action. Suppose, for instance, that I act toward the other person as if he were merely a physical thing, paying no attention to his subjective experiences as another self. My own conscious experiences accompanying my action are here not, following the above definition, intentionally directed toward the other self. My action, therefore, is in this case no social action. Weber would apparently agree with this point. Remember that he said the collision of two bicycles does not have the status of social action but that the conversation that follows is indeed social action. The doctor who performs an operation on an anaesthetized patient truly acts "upon the body" of that patient, but this is not social action in Weber's sense. The soldier keeping in step with the man in front of him is not engaging in social action either, for, as a rule, he is orienting his behavior not to the other man's consciousness but to his body, and then only to his bodily movements as such, and not as clues to his conscious experiences.

However, our interpretation of the experiences of consciousness related intentionally to the other self does not completely fulfill the requirements of Weber's definition. For, according to this definition, social action must be related to the other's *behavior* and not merely to his being there or having the characteristics he has. And here we encounter further difficulties. One difficulty lies in the fact that Weber's concept of behavior is itself totally unclear. In fact, according to him, behavior need not even be meaningful. Now, indeed, it is possible to interpret him in such a way that his "orientation to the other's behavior" is equivalent to our "general thesis of the other self." In other words, it would be orientation to the fact that *the Thou has duration*, that it has certain subjective experiences and is conscious of them. If we accepted this interpretation, we could go on to say that social behavior must be oriented to the behavior of the other person in the sense that it is oriented to his consciousness and the subjective experiences being constituted therein. It would now become quite immaterial whether the Thou was actually "behaving" in our sense, that is, producing conscious experiences out of spontaneous activity.

Fritz Sander ⁴ has submitted Max Weber's concept of social behav-

4. Sander, "Der Gegenstand der reinen Gesellschaftslehre," *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaften*, LIV (1925), 329 ff., esp. 335.

ior to a critique that is ingenious and in many ways decisive. He points out that, according to Weber's definition, every perception of another's body is already social action and that this concept is therefore too broad and imprecise to determine the object of social science.⁵ Sander's example is very instructive. No doubt even the interpretive perception of the other person's conscious experiences is a meaningful action related and therefore oriented to the other's behavior. It is, therefore, by Weber's definition a social action. Then too, according to our terminology, it is a conscious experience intentionally related to another self, provided always that it is a question of genuine interpretation of the other. (Acts of interpretation of one's own experiences of the other self would as such not qualify as Acts intentionally related to the other self.) Any conscious experiences arising from spontaneous activity and directed toward another self are, by our definition, social behavior. If this social behavior is antecedently projected, it is social action. An example of the latter would be my turning my attention to another's consciousness *in order to* note what occurred therein. Here the goal of the act (*Handlungsziel*) is merely to understand the other person's subjective experiences, and the in-order-to motive (with its corresponding attentional modifications) is entirely exhausted in that goal. I do not go beyond that goal and seek to modify the other person's subjective experiences.

We have engaged in this analysis of the perception of another self in order to clarify the basic nature of all experiences intentionally directed toward the other self, whether these experiences are behavior or not. They are all distinguished by a certain attitude of the ego toward the other person's duration. This attitude is founded on the general thesis of the other self as a being itself both conscious and experiencing. We shall call this attitude "Other-orientation." Other-orientation can come into existence in the social sphere only if it is founded not merely on the positing of the transcendental alter ego but on that of the mundane alter ego. It is based, however, on the positing of the latter's existence (*Daseinssetzung*), not on the positing of its particular characteristics (*Soseinssetzung*). It postulates that a Thou lives, endures, and has consciously lived experiences; just which experiences these are and what implications they have remains undetermined. Furthermore, Other-orientation *can* in principle be one-sided: while it pertains to its essence to be related to an Other, it can both exist and continue without any reciprocation on the part of the Other.

5. Lack of space unfortunately rules out a detailed account of Sander's argument, with which I by no means agree on all points. The specialist will easily spot the points of deviation.

Therefore, Other-orientation does not have an external effect in the usual sense of the word. It may exist without any communicative act and without any expressive action. No use may be made of signs, nor any interpretation of them. Other-orientation in principle includes no more and no less than all the attitudinal acts of the Ego related to a Thou and therefore also all feeling-activities, such as love and hate. One may question, of course, whether it is really appropriate to call all acts of Other-orientation "social acts."

However, when Weber speaks of the meaningful relationship of social action to the behavior of others, he is hardly thinking of Other-orientation in the broad sense defined above. Nevertheless, there does seem to be hovering before his mind a specific type of connection between the social action and a piece of behavior on the part of the other person. Social action no doubt exists for him only in two types of situation: either (a) where the social actor intends by means of his action to induce the other person to behave in a particular way—if, that is, the goal of his action is to produce a certain effect on the other person's consciousness; or (b) if this same social action was induced by the other person's behavior—if, in other words, the perception and interpretation of the already enacted behavior of the other person is the genuine because-motive of the social actor. Weber's concept of social action covers both of these cases. Social action can, as he puts it, "be oriented to the past, present, or expected future behavior of others."⁶ Once again we see coming to the fore that conceptual ambiguity which we noted several times before: Weber fails to distinguish between orientation to the past action and orientation to the future action of the other person; he fails to distinguish between genuine because-motives and in-order-to motives and, as a result, includes situations quite unlike one another under the same basic concept. But let us return to the main course of our analysis.

The intentional Acts (*Akte*) directed to an Other, insofar as they are projected acts (*Handlungen*), that is, spontaneous behavior according to an antecedent project, can have as their in-order-to motive the bringing-about of a certain conscious experience in the other person. We shall call a social action of this kind "affecting-the-Other" (*Fremdwirken*). Every such action is performed within an Other-orientation and in fact is a social action, but not every Other-orientation or even every social action involves affecting-the-Other. It is easy to see that affecting-the-Other is confined to antecedently projected social Acts (*Akte*) arising from spontaneous activity, in other words,

genuine social action (*Handeln*) in the sense of our own definition, given above. In order to act socially upon an Other's consciousness, I must pay attention to the flow of his consciousness as it occurs. Further, I must have anticipated in phantasy in the project of my act (in the future perfect tense) the conscious experiences to be brought about in the Other either as my final goal or as one of my intermediate goals. If my in-order-to motive is merely to get the other person to understand me, then, of course, what I manage to bring about in his consciousness is my final goal. But what I can get him to think or feel is only a means if what I am really interested in is influencing his behavior. A piece of social *behavior* in the significant sense lacks the character of having been projected and is for that very reason not a case of affecting-the-Other. Goethe's famous line, "And if I love you, what business is it of yours?" is a good example of feeling that is Other-oriented yet not at all seeking to affect the other person.

Obviously, it is the affecting of the other person, or, as we shall call it from now on, "social affecting" (*soziales Wirken*), which has served as the model for Weber's concept of social action. Once we realize this, we can without difficulty translate his definition into our terminology. The fact that social action is meaningfully related to the behavior of others implies that the actor (since he is Other-oriented in his action) turns his attention to the subjective experiences of the Other in their constitutive structure. The fact that the social actor meaningfully orients his action to the other's behavior as it occurs implies that the attention so given takes place within a special motivational context. Within this motivational context the other person's subjective experiences are anticipated in the future perfect tense as part of the actor's project.

However, we are speaking here only of the expectation of another's *future* subjective experiences, through which expectation one's own action is given an in-order-to motive. Now, Weber insists emphatically that social action can also be oriented to the past behavior of others. If he were right, we should have a case of social action if one's attention to another person's subjective experiences functioned as the genuine because-motive of one's own action.⁷ However, our study of the genuine because-motive has shown that the meaning-context of the latter can only be constituted out of the *already motivated* subjective experience *in the past*. In this connection, it is always possible that the coordination of an action to a genuine because-motive is itself on hand in the form of a "maxim" in experience. This is true universally and in no

7. Cf. Sander's distinction between Acts directed to the future behavior of others and Acts directed to the past behavior of others, *op. cit.* p. 361.

way depends on whether the motivating experience is related to an Other or not. In every case one can ask meaningfully what the genuine because-motive was only after the action has occurred, or at least after the project has been formed. Suppose, to use an example of Weber's, that I wish to avenge myself for a past attack. In such a case, my purpose is projected before one can meaningfully say that it was motivated by the attack, i.e., before one can say that it was revenge for the attack. I could, as a matter of fact, hesitate between retaliating and overlooking the attack. In fact I could even submit to the attack without contemplating revenge at all. Now, surely what makes my action social is not that its *activating stimulus* was someone else's behavior as opposed to a natural event. What makes my behavior social is the fact that its intentional object is the expected behavior of another person.

We should not, therefore, place actions which affect others on an equal plane with actions which are affected by others. This term "action affected by another" (*fremdbewirktes Handeln*) is the term we shall apply to an action motivated in a genuine "because-fashion" by the actor's attention to another's already past subjective experiences. This does not mean that such an action can occur without Other-orientation. Rather, while attending to the other person's subjective experiences at the time of the production of the synthetic because-context, I am, of course, performing intentional Acts directed toward another person. Also, the because-context itself depends on the attentional modifications of my experiences of the Other, which I now look upon in the pluperfect tense. However, if I look for the because-motive, then my action was already projected before I performed an Act (*Akt*) of orientation toward another person. But this action is for just that reason not an Other-oriented Act (*Akt*) and is therefore not social behavior. The projected action is one thing; quite another thing is that specific attention to the constituted project or the finished act (*Handlung*) in which the meaning-context of the true because-motivation is constituted. In the case of an action affected by another person, it is not the action itself but the meaning-context of its because-motivation that takes place within Other-orientation. We shall go more deeply into this when we deal with social relationship.

It is clear that we could set up a continuous series beginning with conscious experiences intentionally related to another person, going on through social behavior and social action, and ending finally with social affecting. It is not without reason that we have drawn a contrast between the latter and all the other members of the series, namely, those covered by the term Other-orientation. Let us try to make this

distinction a little clearer by taking another glance at meaning-establishment and meaning-interpretation.

In the final paragraph of Chapter 3 we spoke of the subjective meaning which I attribute to each product I take as evidence of what goes on in another's mind. We now see that my attention to someone else's subjective meaning always takes place in, and draws its validity from, an Act of Other-orientation. Every product and therefore every sign that I see has, apart from any Other-orientation, an objective meaning for me; but by interpreting it as a sign of another's conscious experiences, I can bring it within an Other-orientation. Notice that we say "within an Act of Other-orientation," not "within an Act of affecting-the-Other." For when I read a book, rehearse another's train of thought, or seek to discover the origin of a tool, I am merely oriented to others; I am not in any way affecting them.

But if I originate a sign for someone else to interpret, it is different. Now I am Other-oriented, to be sure, but it is a specific kind of Other-orientation. I am now affecting another. Had I merely originated the sign for my own use, i.e., without any Other-orientation, I should not have been involved in affecting another. But the origination of a sign within an attitude of Other-orientation is an *act of communication*. The in-order-to motive of this act is the bringing-about of certain conscious experiences in the mind of the person to whom it is addressed. We can therefore say that *all communication is social affecting* and that *all heeding of communication presupposes Other-orientation*. The same holds true for all other products. If I make a tool for others to use, then I "see to it," in the future perfect tense, that they know what the tool is for.

Our next step will be to show that, within each of the social spheres, Other-orientation and affecting-the-Other occur in correspondingly different forms. The most striking difference lies in the degree of anonymity of the object. Our views here stand in contrast to those of Max Weber, for whom it is a matter of indifference whether the "others" which are the object of social action are "individual persons and . . . known to the actor as such . . . or constitute an indefinite plurality and [are] entirely unknown as individuals."⁸ Nor does Weber tell us how, if at all, the quality of my acquaintance with the other person modifies my "orientation" (*Orientierung*) toward him. We, on the other hand, will seek to work out in detail the different forms of Other-orientation and affecting-the-Other to be found in the world of directly experienced social reality and the world of mere contemporaries.

31. Weber's Concept of Social Relationship. Orientation Relationship and Social Interaction

THERE WERE TWO NOTABLE omissions in the preceding section. Nothing was said about the other person's conscious experiences while I am oriented toward him. And nothing was said about the experiences which I seek to bring about in him when I affect him. For what is essential to Other-orientation is that the other person *exist*, not that he have characteristics of one kind or another. As a matter of fact, both Other-orientation and affecting-the-Other can, in principle, be one-sided. In neither the concept of affecting-the-Other nor in that of Other-orientation is it implied that the partner must respond by an Other-orientation of his own. This is also true of Weber's concept of social action. But of course such a response *can* always occur: this indeed follows from the general thesis of the alter ego and from the fact that the two partners are contemporaries. As a matter of fact, whenever we engage in social behavior, we take into account the possibility of such response.

When two people do become reciprocally oriented toward each other, we have what Weber calls a "social relationship." By this he means "the behavior of a plurality of actors in so far as, in its meaningful content, the action of each *takes account of* that of the others, and is oriented in these terms." He continues,

The social relationship thus consists entirely and exclusively in the existence of a probability [*in der Chance*] that there will be, in some meaningfully understandable sense, a course of social action. For purposes of definition there is no attempt to specify the basis of this probability.⁹

Weber's view that a social relationship exists only where there is social action in a meaningful sense itself contains an ambiguity, as we have shown in Chapter 1. The ambiguity spreads from this point to almost all the basic concepts of his sociology. It is based on his failure to make a clear distinction between the subjective comprehension of other people that takes place in everyday life and the objective interpretation of them and their experiences that takes place in the social sciences. Let us look again at his statement that a "social relationship consists entirely and exclusively in the existence of a probability that there will be . . . social action." *For whom does this*

9. *Ibid.*, p. 13, sec. 3 [E.T., p. 118].

probability exist—the actor, or the social scientist who observes him? In attempting to answer this, Weber advances two contradictory views on the same page. First he says that the two parties are socially related to each other “insofar as even though, partly or wholly erroneously, one party *presumes* a particular attitude toward him on the part of the other and orients his action to this expectation. This can and usually will have consequences for the course of action and the form of the relationship.”¹⁰ What Weber is referring to here is what is sometimes called “subjective probability,” namely, the subjective expectation on the part of the one party that the other will manifest a reciprocal orientation. But in the very next paragraph he proceeds to say,

It is *only* the existence of the *probability* that a certain type of action will take place which constitutes the “existence” of the social relationship. Thus that a “friendship” or a “state” exists or has existed means only this: that *we the observers* judge that there is or has been a *probability* that on the basis of certain kinds of known subjective attitude of certain individuals there will result *in the average sense* a certain specific type of action.

This second kind of probability naturally has nothing to do with the first, which consists in a context of meaning in the minds of one or both of the parties to the social relationship. It is rather part of the context of what is judged by an external observer, that is, a social scientist. In other words, what we have in this second case is objective probability. Now, what all this amounts to is that Weber’s very concept of social relationship itself becomes ambiguous. He is really dealing with two different kinds of situation and calling them both “social relationship.” In the first case, the actor’s subjective expectation establishes the probability of a reciprocal orientation, which by definition means that a social relationship exists. In the second case, it is the outside observer’s “objective” judgment which establishes this probability and *eo ipso* the relationship.

These two situations are by no means identical. For it can hardly be said that, just because an observer can see a social relationship existing, therefore the participant in the same relationship will also be aware of it. Nor is the opposite the case: what the participant sees, or thinks he sees, may be quite hidden from the observer. We must, therefore, seek the criterion on the basis of which the participant, on the one hand, or the observer, on the other, may conclude that such a relationship exists.

Let us begin with the situation confronting the external observer,

10. *Ibid.*, p. 14, point 3 [E.T., p. 119].

the situation which we, following Weber, have called the *objective probability* of the existence of a social relationship. The observer sees various indications of the existence of such and such subjective experiences of the observed person. The latter's body is, from the point of view of the observer, the field of expression of these subjective experiences. His bodily movements are indications of those subjective experiences arising from spontaneous activity. The cultural products he brings forth are signs of the constitutive processes going on in his mind. Now, what is meant by the statement that the *conscious experiences* of two or more persons under observation are *mutally related*? Apparently nothing more than that *for the observer* the outward indications he sees before him stand in a relation of correspondence to certain conscious processes. Perhaps the observer notices that the two people he is watching are united in a common task or are exerting a common influence on the external world. Or perhaps he sees that when A acts in a certain way, B follows in a certain other way. However, these series of acts are mere indications for the observer of what is going on in the minds of the actors. He is interpreting his own experiences of them, and doing so in such a way as to establish the meaning-contexts in which these conscious experiences must exist in the minds of the observed persons. He seeks to interpret the in-order-to and because-motives of their actions and to establish which goals are primary and which are intermediate, etc. In doing so, he imaginatively re-establishes the constitutive structure of these meaning-contexts, arriving at interpretations which are consistent, first, with his total experience of the social world and, second, with his knowledge of the character of the observed person. All this will hold true quite generally, whether it is a question of observing the individual conscious processes of one or more other people or of observing average or typical conscious processes. It will hold true regardless of whether the observed persons belong to the observer's world of directly experienced social reality, his world of mere contemporaries, or his world of predecessors. In every case the observer assumes an Other-orientation with respect to the observed, and it is this Other-orientation, of course, which alone makes possible the comprehension of subjective meaning.

The observer, therefore, seeks also to discover the conscious experiences for which the indications stand, and, from the correspondence he finds, he draws his conclusions concerning the social relationship. But the correspondence is then for him no longer an *objective probability* that the conscious processes of the people observed are really related to one another. For it is a part of the very concept of the *correspondence* of the *indications* that the latter can be established only between events already lying in the past. It is only by taking the

reaction as already given that the observer can establish that it corresponds to the Action (*Aktion*) preceding it. The statement asserting the existence of the correspondence is, therefore, in principle a statement in the pluperfect tense about events in the past. Of course, this does not prevent the establishment of a correspondence in simultaneity between the events in question. For the existence of such a correspondence can, as a repeatable maxim of experience, as an already constituted interpretive scheme in the consciousness of the observer, be part of his stock of knowledge, "ready to hand" ¹¹ for him.

However, there are different degrees of certainty with which an observer can conclude that a social relationship exists. This is based on the fact that the sureness with which the outward indications can be connected with inward subjective states itself depends on how well the observer knows the person he is observing. And, of course, the correspondence relation itself depends on this sureness. And so we have, in fact, *degrees of interpretability*. When I am observing my fellow men as they go about their ordinary activities, it is no great problem for me to decide whether they are or are not engaged in social relationships. I see these relationships in the sequence of their actions and reactions, in the coordination of the because-motive of the one to the in-order-to motive of the other. The same is true if I observe communicative acts such as the use of signs, even if I am not the person addressed. Granted that I know the interpretive schemes of the signs, I can treat the communicative acts in question as indications of the existence of a correspondence relation. More generally we can say that any social relationship within which a case of affecting-the-Other occurs can be identified as such with greater confidence than a social relationship in which no more takes place than intentional Acts of Other-orientation. The first type of social relationship we shall from now on call "social interaction" (*Wirkensbeziehung*),¹² and the second, "orientation-

11. Cf. sec. 27, p. 133.

12. [Literally, "relationship of affecting." It is our view, in agreement with Luckmann (cf. Schutz, *Collected Papers*, II, 23), that the term "social interaction" as used later by Schutz is an acceptable approximate rendering of *Wirkensbeziehung*. Cf. Schutz's essay "Making Music Together," *ibid.*, p. 160: "When sociologists speak of social interaction, they usually have in mind a set of interdependent actions of several human beings, mutually related by the meaning which the actor bestows upon his action and which he supposes to be understood by his partner," as in the case of two chess players. However, even though the extension of *Wirkensbeziehung* usually coincides with that of "social interaction," Schutz seems to have in mind a more generic concept for which there is no term in English. He explains this below on page 158, where he says that every *Wirkensbeziehung* is an act of affecting another with the aim of leading the other to have conscious experiences of a desired sort. It is not necessary that the other act at all, far less react upon the actor in the dictionary sense of "interaction." In other words, Schutz's concept of *Wirkensbeziehung* here seems to be broader than his

relationship" (*Einstellungsbeziehung*). It is easier to observe the effect that the action of one person has on that of another than it is to observe the attitudes they may have toward each other, e.g., sympathy or antipathy. In other words, it is easier for me to state with objective probability that two people are socially interacting than it is for me to say that they are merely oriented toward each other in a certain way. Any such conclusion must depend for its reliability upon how well the observed is known by the observer. Between them there are countless degrees of interpretability. Suppose, for instance, that a social relationship is based not on Acts of reciprocal affecting (*Akte wechselseitigen Fremdwirkens*) but on the fact that the partners merely carry out the same kind of action. By "the same kind of action" we mean actions oriented to a common interpretive scheme (such as a language, a legal system, a common conception of art, a shared fashion, common habits of life). In a case like this, if the observer is to estimate the objective probability of the existence of the social relationship, then his argument must take more factors into account. It must, of course, proceed according to the method of the "correspondence of indications" discussed above. But it will also be based on the observer's previous knowledge of the common interpretive scheme in question. Also it must include the interpretive scheme in the project of the actors who are being observed.

Now, how is that presumption—for that is what objective probability amounts to—of the existence of a social relationship transformed into certainty? Let us suppose that both action and reaction have occurred as expected; for example, A has asked B a question, and B has replied. At this point, what had previously been a matter of conjecture has become probable. But notice that it is still less than certain. Whether A and B really understand each other is something only they can say. What is needed is a statement from A saying that when he spoke he was really asking a question of B, and then a statement from B saying that when he spoke he was answering A. Both would, in short, have to testify that their actions were Other-oriented. Therefore, it is only by questioning the observed persons that the observer can be certain of the existence of a social relationship between them. However, no sooner does he start questioning them than he himself enters into a social relationship with one or both of them. More than this, whatever judgment the observer may make concerning the probability, possibility, or conceivability of the exist-

later "social interaction" and far broader than any "reciprocal affecting" (*Wechselwirkung*). Yet Schutz sometimes seems to imply that reciprocal acts of affecting-the-Other (*Akte wechselseitigen Fremdwirkens*) were involved in *Wirkensbeziehung*. See a few lines below this point.]

ence of any social relationship derives whatever validity it has from the possibility of thus questioning the person or persons who may be involved in that relationship. This very "possibility of being questioned" (*Befragbarkeit*) is a specific characteristic of the object of direct social observation.

Having settled the question of what the observer's criterion is for the existence of a social relationship, we must now try to determine the participant's criterion.

We have already seen that a social relationship exists for me if I, while maintaining an Other-orientation toward my partner, ascertain that he is, on his part, experiencing an Other-orientation toward me. I can ascertain that my partner is oriented toward me, therefore, only if I first orient myself toward him.

My partner's Other-orientation toward me is something I can come to know in several different ways. For instance, he may affect me, and I may then become aware of that fact. Or I may turn my attention to him and find that his attention is already on me. In both these cases, the social relationship is constituted through my own Act of attention. On the other hand, I can intend to affect my partner in such a way that his own attention to me is required if the project or purpose behind the act of affecting is to be carried out. But all this is not so much a description of how a person knows he is in a social relationship as it is a description of how such a relationship is generated. To use a good expression of Wiese, it is a description of the *action of contact* and of the *contact situation* (*des Kontakthandelns und der Kontaktsituation*).

There are two ways in which a person living in the social world can become aware that his intentional Acts of consciousness directed upon another person are reciprocated. He can either *live in* these mutually related conscious experiences or, stepping out, so to speak, of the social relationship, he can *contemplate* them as objects of observation. An example of the first case would be the following. I take up an Other-orientation toward my partner, who is in turn oriented toward me. Immediately, and at the same time, I grasp the fact that he, on his part, is aware of my attention to him. In such cases I, you, *we*, live in the social relationship itself, and that is true in virtue of the intentionality of the living Acts directed toward the partner. I, you, *we*, are by this means carried from one moment to the next in a particular attentional modification of the state of being mutually oriented to each other. The social relationship in which we live is constituted, therefore, by means of the attentional modification undergone by my Other-orientation, as I immediately and directly grasp within the latter the very living reality of the partner as one who is in turn oriented

toward me. We will call such a social relationship a "living social relationship."

The living social relationship can occur in several different forms. In its purity and fullness, as we shall show later in detail, it is tied to the bodily givenness of the Thou in the face-to-face situation. As such, it is a living face-to-face relationship or a pure We-relationship. From it derive their validity all intentional Acts of Other-orientation not belonging to the domain of directly experienced social reality, all ways of interpreting subjective meaning, and all possibilities of attending to the worlds of mere contemporaries and of predecessors. One of our primary tasks in this chapter will be to clarify the social relationships we have to the worlds of mere contemporaries and of predecessors on the basis of the pure We-relationship and to demonstrate how the former is deduced from the latter.

But I, who have been living within the social world, can also turn my attention to it by stepping outside it and transforming it into an object of observation or thought. What happens then is that I attend in the pluperfect tense to the intentional Acts I have already performed while Other-oriented and to what I have grasped in those Acts, namely, the Other's orientation toward me. I can, on the basis of this attention, then proceed to judge the objective probability of a mutual orientation. When I do this, I am, in a sense, engaging in self-observation. If, for instance, I try to affect another, it is only after my action is over and done with—and therefore already a success or failure—that I can know whether that person has oriented himself toward me. Of course, the project of my social affecting was accompanied by protentions anticipating such reciprocation. However, only if these protentions have been fulfilled can I, as an observer, make a "rational surmise" that a social relationship really exists here. My attitude is the same in this case as that of an outside observer. Also, from my point of view as observer, the presence at hand of an Other-orientation on the part of my partner—in short, of a social relationship—is a purely objective probability. The relationship, therefore, appears to me in different degrees of evidence and interpretability. Of course, there is a very significant difference between self-observation in such a situation and observation by a third party external to the relationship. For, as I look back on my project, I know with certainty the in-order-to motive of my action. I can, therefore, clarify for myself, in a kind of imaginative re-enactment, the meaning-context of the motivation, even if I have only a vague and confused awareness of it. I can, by observing the course of the action, ascertain whether my project has been fulfilled. Furthermore, I can call to mind the broader goal with respect to which my action on the other person was only an intermediate goal. Finally, I

can recall the attentional modifications undergone during the action by my intentional Acts as they were directed toward the other person. In the case of these complex processes of self-observation, the same interpretive principles apply as in the case of observation by a third party. The constitution of a social interaction is incomparably easier to discern than that of a simple orientation relationship. And there are many different stages in between these, it should be noted.

In the preceding paragraphs we have been seeking the criterion by which a person living in the social world knows that he is in a social relationship. We have still to deal with the second state of affairs which Weber includes in his concept of social relationship, the case, namely, where the actor orients his action to the subjective probability of the existence of a social relationship. Now it is by no means true that all behavior within a social relationship is oriented to the existence of that relationship. For this reason we must distinguish between (1) those Acts (*Akte*) which have been intentionally directed toward the partner and which have as their essential presupposition an Other-orientation on his part and (2) all other Acts (*Akte*) performed in Other-orientation within a social relationship. Only by doing this will we be able to ascertain in what sense it can be said that an actor assumes that his partner is oriented toward him and orients his own behavior to that assumption.

With respect to this point, our previous distinction between orientation relationship and interaction is of great importance. Let us take as an example of the first a love of whose reciprocation the lover is uncertain. In order for me to have a loving orientation toward my partner, it is by no means necessary that I know whether and how she is oriented toward me. My knowledge of my partner's attitude is purely secondary. No doubt I do, in certain circumstances, desire the other person to pay attention to me, to know of my love and to return it; but there may be other circumstances in which I desire no such thing. As the example shows, it is not essential to the Acts (*Akte*) of the orientation relationship that they be based on the knowledge of the existence or nonexistence of a reciprocal attitude. To be sure, my aim may be to bring about precisely this reciprocal attitude in the other person, and I may be concerned with the success or failure of this undertaking. In such a case, the pure orientation relationship is transformed into an interaction, which gives us quite a different situation. An interaction, then, exists if one person acts upon another with the expectation that the latter will respond, or at least notice. It is not necessary that the partner reciprocally affect the actor or even act himself. All that is required is that the partner be aware of the actor and interpret what he does or says as evidence for what is going on in

his mind. All the partner's subjective experiences will, naturally, be modified by his attention to the actor.

Every interaction is, therefore, based on an action of affecting another within a social situation. The *object* of the action is to lead the partner to have conscious experiences of a desired sort. The *necessary condition* of the action is that the partner be paying attention to the actor. But not every act of affecting-the-Other is carried out within a relationship of interaction, or indeed within any social relationship whatever; not every act of affecting-the-Other presupposes that the Other is oriented toward me. On the contrary, there are cases where affecting another presupposes precisely the latter's lack of awareness of me, presupposes that I remain unnoticed and anonymous, behind the scenes, so to speak. But cases like this are a derivative form of the pure situation of affecting-the-Other. In this derivative form I seek only to perform an act which induces certain conscious experiences in my partner, an act, however, which could just as well be performed by someone else and in different circumstances.

But whenever in affecting another I intend him to know that I am affecting him,¹³ then we have the relationship of interaction. His attentional attitude toward me has now entered into the very project of my act. It has become my in-order-to motive. It has become the "for-the-sake-of-which" of my affecting him, in the sense that it is either my final goal or my intermediate goal. Every time I establish a meaning, therefore, I will be looking forward to its interpretation by my partner. This expectation of mine will enter into the broader goal-context within which the meaning-establishment takes place. *Social interaction is, accordingly, a motivational context and, in fact, an intersubjective motivational context.* It is essential to the constitution of interaction that each act of affecting the partner be undertaken in order to bring about a certain reciprocal Other-orientation on his part. Let us now examine the unique structure of this motivational context.

32. The Motivational Context of Social Interaction

I MAY SO PROJECT my action that I picture you as being moved to a certain kind of behavior as soon as you have grasped what I am doing. I am then picturing your interpretation of my action as the because-motive of your behavior. Suppose, for instance, that I ask you

13. Whether in such a situation I am experienced by my partner as physically present or merely as an ideal type depends upon whether the interaction is one of direct or indirect social experience ["ob es sich um eine umweltliche oder mitweltliche Wirkensbeziehung handelt"].

a question. My in-order-to motive is not merely that you understand the question but that I get an answer from you. Your answer is the reason why (the "for-the-sake-of-which") of my question. Already in my project I had pictured the question as having been asked and you as having understood it and persuaded by that understanding to reply. What is pictured beforehand is *that* you will answer. Of course *what* you will answer remains undetermined within this particular context of meaning (putting a question and waiting for the answer). No doubt every such phantasying and every such expectation is accompanied by a wish, a feeling-tendency striving toward the consummation of the already sketched-out project. But it is quite certain that I perform a judgment in phantasy to the effect that my questioning will evoke a definite reaction from you. This judgment is detachable from the wish which is based on it, and can be studied separately. Let us therefore ignore the feeling-activity and ask what is meant by saying that an action I perform within a social relationship (which is, therefore, interactional) will induce the person to whom the action is addressed to behave in a certain way.

Let us keep to the example of question and answer. The questioner phantasies in the future perfect tense that the person questioned will have answered him. He phantasies, therefore, that his questioning will become a genuine because-motive for the other person's replying, and he keeps that in mind as he formulates the question. Now, this seems to contradict our earlier statement¹⁴ that a because-motive can only be grasped in the pluperfect tense and within an Act of attention that takes as given a motivated act already performed. One could reply that the person who is phantasying pictures within his project in the future perfect tense that an (unspecified) answer has already been given. The act of answering thus appears as past to the questioner, and the answerer's motive appears in the pluperfect. However, this does not satisfy the demands of exact analysis. For how does the questioner know that his own question is the answerer's genuine because-motive? This is a presupposition of his, and indeed it seems to be presupposed in every question. The judgment that the question will probably motivate the answer is, in fact, the in-order-to motive of the questioner. The questioner "knows" that this is probably the case, just as he knows anything else from experience. He knows that, whenever in the past he himself replied to a question, the question was the genuine because-motive of his answer. He answered *because* he was asked. And he knows that the same is true of his friends and acquaintances. From

the whole context of his past experience, then, he derives the general maxim that the question is a genuine because-motive of the answer.

Of course the questioner does not really know that his question will actually enter the other person's consciousness when and if he does answer. Nor is he even sure that it has, once the answer has been given. To be sure, the answer fulfills the questioner's project together with the latter's empty protentions and anticipations. But it is still uncertain whether the person questioned has looked upon the question as the genuine because-motive of his answer. It remains uncertain whether the utterance which the questioner interprets as an answer is "based" on the question or occurs "independently" of it, that is, without any meaning connected with it. In other words, it is not known whether it was really meant as an answer. There is still more: when the person questioned replies, he does so in accordance with his interpretation of the question and with the aim of communicating something to the questioner. This project of answering takes place in free spontaneity in a pure in-order-to context. But he who answers must first understand the question and must, therefore, be oriented to his questioner. And his answer must be such that the questioner will accept it as a real reply to his question. The orientation of the answerer, therefore, reflects that of the questioner. But the answerer is enabled to see that the question was his genuine because-motive only if he gives special attention to his project of replying, which is already past, and to his interpretation of the question, which preceded that. This attention he can give, if at all, not as actor, but as a person reviewing his own behavior and freshly interpreting it. This becomes quite clear if we complete the picture by bringing in the elements of feeling which we previously left out of account. We then note that the questioner *wishes* an answer and that the person questioned is *disposed* to reply. But the latter is not aware of his disposition; he merely carries it out by answering. Only later does he realize that his own readiness to answer served as the because-motive of the actual reply. He can see this only by looking at the project of the reply or at the reply itself. Only then can he detect the wish of his questioner as the genuine because-motive behind the triggering of his own disposition to answer.

However, great caution is to be observed here. The very concept of an answer presupposes that a question has been asked. And it presupposes also that the questioner will interpret his partner's behavior subsequent to the question as the answer to that question. The completed situation in which we find question and answer confronting each other is, therefore, merely an abbreviation of a highly complex

state of affairs, within which involved processes of meaning-establishment and meaning-interpretation are elaborately interwoven with one another. We have already analyzed simpler examples of such processes. Nevertheless, we can be quite clear about the sense in which the question is the because-motive of the answer and the answer is the in-order-to motive of the question. What is essential is that the person who is interacting with another should anticipate the in-order-to motives of his own action as the genuine because-motives of the expected behavior of his partner and, conversely, that he should be prepared to regard the in-order-to motives of his partner as the genuine because-motives of his own behavior. This insight is of great importance, for it indicates the methods which are used in both everyday life and interpretive sociology to disclose the motives of the other person. Any affecting of the partner within a social relationship, therefore, presupposes that the partner is oriented to the actor in a special way. This orientation is such that the actor's in-order-to motives become the because-motives of the partner. Now, the actor need not be aware of this situation. All that is necessary is that at any moment he can bring it into focus by attending to it. But an Act of attention of this nature requires the actor to step outside the social relationship and interpret his own action within that relationship. In all such cases he can discover within his past experience the context of motivation constituting the partner's reaction. This may be specific experience of this particular partner, or it may be knowledge of the typical reactions one can expect when one affects another person in a typical way. We always carry about with us the knowledge of rules of this kind. We simply take them for granted, and, since we have no reason to question them, we never even bother to ask where we learned them. The amount of experience one has had of another person depends, of course, upon the social realm to which he belongs in relation to us: whether he is a fellow man in direct experience, a mere contemporary of ours, one of our predecessors, or one of our successors. The degree of accuracy with which we can estimate his reaction will depend upon which of these realms he inhabits. The motivational context of the interaction itself derives its validity from the direct social relationship, of which all other interactions are mere modifications. In the living intentionality of the direct social relationship, the two partners are face to face, their streams of consciousness are synchronized and geared into each other, each immediately affects the other, and the in-order-to motive of the one becomes the because-motive of the other, the two motives complementing and validating each other as objects of reciprocal attention.

The path is now open to the understanding of the structure of the

social world. We shall begin with the domain of directly experienced social reality and the pure We-relationship which constitutes it.

[C] THE WORLD OF DIRECTLY EXPERIENCED SOCIAL REALITY

33. The Face-to-Face Situation and the We-Relationship

I SPEAK OF ANOTHER PERSON as within reach of my direct experience when he shares with me a community of space and a community of time. He shares a community of space with me when he is present in person and I am aware of him as such, and, moreover, when I am aware of him as this person *himself*, this *particular* individual, and of his body as the field upon which play the symptoms of his inner consciousness. He shares a community of time¹⁵ with me when his experience is flowing side by side with mine, when I can at any moment look over and grasp his thoughts as they come into being, in other words, when we are growing older together. Persons thus in reach of each other's direct experience I speak of as being in the "face-to-face" situation. The face-to-face situation presupposes, then, an actual simultaneity with each other of two separate streams of consciousness. We have already made this point clear in section 20 of Chapter 3, when we were dealing with the general thesis of the alter ego. We are now adding to it the corollary of the spatial immediacy of the Other, in virtue of which his body is present to me as a field of expression for his subjective experiences.

This spatial and temporal immediacy is essential to the face-to-face situation. All acts of Other-orientation and of affecting-the-other, and therefore all orientations and relationships within the face-to-face situation, derive their own specific flavor and style from this immediacy.

Let us first look at the way in which the face-to-face situation is constituted from the point of view of a participant in that situation. In order to become aware of such a situation, the participant must become intentionally conscious of the person confronting him. He must assume a face-to-face Other-orientation toward the partner. We shall term this attitude "Thou-orientation," and shall now proceed to describe its main features.

First of all, the Thou-orientation is the pure mode in which I am aware of another human being as a person.¹⁶ I am already Thou-oriented from the moment that I recognize an entity which I directly

15. Cf. sec. 20, p. 102.

16. [Literally, "the pure form in which he appears to me" (*reine Erscheinungsform*).]

experience as a fellow man (as a Thou), attributing life and consciousness to him. However, we must be quite clear that we are *not* here dealing with a conscious *judgment*. This is a prepredicative experience in which I become aware of a fellow human being *as a person*. The Thou-orientation can thus be defined as the intentionality of those Acts whereby the Ego grasps the existence of the other person in the mode of the original self.¹⁷ Every such external experience in the mode of the original self presupposes the actual presence of the other person and my perception of him as there.

Now, we wish to emphasize that it is precisely the being there (*Dasein*) of the Other toward which the Thou-orientation is directed, not necessarily the Other's specific characteristics. The concept of the Thou-orientation does not imply awareness of what is going on in the Other's mind. In its "pure" form the Thou-orientation consists merely of being intentionally directed toward the pure being-there of another alive and conscious human being. To be sure, the "pure" Thou-orientation is a formal concept, an intellectual construct, or, in Husserl's terminology, an "ideal limit."¹⁸ In real life we never experience the "pure existence" of others; instead we meet real people with their own personal characteristics and traits. The Thou-orientation as it occurs in everyday life is therefore not the "pure" Thou-orientation but the latter *actualized* and *rendered determinate* to some degree or other.

Now the fact that I look upon you as a fellow man does not mean that I am also a fellow man for you, unless you are aware of me. And, of course, it is quite possible that you may not be paying any attention to me at all. The Thou-orientation can, therefore, be either one-sided or reciprocal. It is one-sided if only one of us notices the presence of the other. It is reciprocal if we are mutually aware of each other, that is, if each of us is Thou-oriented toward the other. In this way there is constituted out of the Thou-orientation the face-to-face relationship (or directly experienced social relationship). We have already, in section 31, formulated the criteria for calling a person a partner in such a relationship. The face-to-face relationship in which the partners are aware of each other and sympathetically participate in each other's lives for however short a time we shall call the "pure We-relationship." But the "pure We-relationship" is likewise only a limiting concept. The directly experienced social relationship of real life is the pure We-relationship concretized and actualized to a greater or lesser degree and filled with content.

17. This originality is, of course, not "primary," since the conscious life of the other person is in principle inaccessible to me in direct perception. It is in Husserl's terminology a "secondary" originality (Husserl, *Logik*, p. 206).

18. *Ideen*, p. 138 [E.T., p. 208].

Let us illustrate this with an example. Suppose that you and I are watching a bird in flight. The thought "bird-in-flight" is in each of our minds and is the means by which each of us interprets his own observations. Neither of us, however, could say whether our lived experiences on that occasion were identical. In fact, neither of us would even try to answer that question, since one's own subjective meaning can never be laid side by side with another's and compared.¹⁹

Nevertheless, during the flight of the bird you and I have "grown older together"; our experiences have been simultaneous. Perhaps while I was following the bird's flight I noticed out of the corner of my eye that your head was moving in the same direction as mine. I could then say that the two of us, that *we*, had watched the bird's flight. What I have done in this case is to coordinate temporally a series of my own experiences with a series of yours. But in so doing I do not go beyond the assertion of a mere *general* correspondence between my perceived "bird in flight" and your experiences. I make no pretense to any knowledge of the content of your subjective experiences or of the particular way in which they were structured. It is enough for me to know that you are a fellow human being who was watching the same thing that I was. And if you have in a similar way coordinated my experiences with yours, then we can both say that *we* have seen a bird in flight.

The basic We-relationship is already given to me by the mere fact that I am born into the world of directly experienced social reality. From this basic relationship is derived the original validity of all my direct experiences of particular fellow men and also my knowledge that there is a larger world of my contemporaries whom I am not now experiencing directly. In this sense Scheler is right when he says that the experience of the We (*die Erfahrung vom Wir*) in the world of immediate social reality is the basis of the Ego's experience (*die Erfahrung des Ich*) of the world in general.²⁰ Of course we do not have the space in the present study to deal with the difficult phenomenological questions of how this We is constituted from the transcendental Subject or how the psychophysical Thou refers back to the psychophysical Ego.²¹ In fact, however, we can for our purposes leave these questions aside. We can begin with the assumption of the mundane existence of other people and then proceed to describe how our experiences of them are constituted from the pure We-relationship.

19. Cf. above, sec. 19, p. 99.

20. Scheler, "Erkenntnis und Arbeit," *Die Wissensform und die Gesellschaft* (Leipzig, 1926), II, 475 f.

21. For a treatment of these questions cf. Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations*, IV and V.

To explain how our experiences of the Thou are rooted in the We-relationship, let us take conversation as an example. Suppose you are speaking to me and I am understanding what you are saying. As we have already seen, there are two senses of this understanding. First of all I grasp the "objective meaning" of your words, the meaning which they would have had, had they been spoken by you or anyone else. But second, of course, there is the subjective meaning, namely, what is going on in your mind as you speak. In order to get to your subjective meaning, I must picture to myself your stream of consciousness as flowing side by side with my own. Within this picture I must interpret and construct your intentional Acts as you choose your words. To the extent that you and I can mutually experience this simultaneity, growing older together for a time, to the extent that we can live in it together, to *that* extent we can live in each other's subjective contexts of meaning. However, our ability to apprehend each other's subjective contexts of meaning should not be confused with the We-relationship itself. For I get to your subjective meaning in the first place only by starting out with your spoken words as given and then by asking how you came to use those words. But this question of mine would make no sense if I did not already assume an actual or at least potential We-relationship between us. For it is only within the We-relationship that I can concretely experience you at a particular moment of your life. To put the point in terms of a formula: I can live in your subjective meaning-contexts only to the extent that I directly experience you within an actualized content-filled We-relationship.²²

This is true for all stages of understanding another person in which attention to his subjective meaning is involved. For all my lived experiences of the other person (above all the directly apprehended other person), whether they manifest agreement or discrepancy, have their origin in the sphere of the We-relationship. Attention to the We-relationship in turn broadens the objective knowledge of other people which I have gained from the interpretation of my own experiences of them. It likewise broadens my objective knowledge of the particular person involved with me in this particular We-relationship. Thus the contents of the one undivided stream of the We are always enlarging and contracting. In this sense the We resembles my stream of consciousness in the flow of its duration. But this similarity is balanced by a difference. The We-relationship is spatial as well as temporal. It embraces the body of the other person as well as his consciousness. And because I grasp what is going on in his mind only through the medium of his perceived bodily movements, this Act of

22. [This paragraph is a paraphrase of the original.]

grasping is for me a lived experience that transcends my own stream of consciousness. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that, among all self-transcending experiences, the We-experience remains closest to the stream of consciousness itself.

Moreover, while I am living in the We-relationship, I am really living in *our* common stream of consciousness. And just as I must, in a sense, step outside my own stream of consciousness and "freeze" my subjective experiences if I am going to reflect on them, the same requirement holds for the We-relationship. When you and I are immediately involved with each other, every experience is colored by that involvement. To the extent that we are going to think about the experiences we have together, we must to that degree withdraw from each other. If we are to bring the We-relationship into the focus of our attention, we must stop focusing on each other. But that means stepping out of the face-to-face relationship, because only in the latter do we live *in* the We. And here we can apply at a higher level everything that we said about phenomenal time in our analysis of the solitary Ego. Attention to the lived experiences of the We-relationship likewise presupposes that these experiences are full blown and have already elapsed. And our retrospective grasp of the We-experiences can fall anywhere in the continuum from maximum clarity to complete confusion. And it can be characterized by all degrees of consciousness, just as self-awareness can. In particular, the greater my awareness of the We-relationship, the less is my involvement in it, and the less am I genuinely related to my partner. The more I reflect, the more my partner becomes transformed into a mere object of thought.

Having defined the concept of the We-relationship, let us now describe the specific characteristics that distinguish it from all other social relationships.

34. Analysis of the Face-to-Face Relationship

IN THE PRECEDING SECTION we described the special form taken on by Other-orientation and social relationship in the direct presence of the other person. This description in effect defined the new concepts of Thou-orientation and We-relationship, separating them out from the more general concepts of Other-orientation and social relationship as such. It is these concepts which give us the basis for our analysis of the directly experienced Other-orientation and the face-to-face situation.

If the *pure* We-relationship were merely a modification of social relationship in general, it could be identified equally with direct social

orientation and with social interaction. But, strictly speaking, the pure We-relationship is given *prior* to either of these. The pure We-relationship is merely the reciprocal form of the pure Thou-orientation, that is, the pure awareness of the *presence* of another person. His presence, it should be emphasized, not his specific traits. The pure We-relationship involves our awareness of each other's presence and also the knowledge of each that the other is aware of him. But, if we are to have a social relationship, we must go beyond this. What is required is that the Other-orientation of each partner become colored by a specific knowledge of the specific manner in which he is being regarded by the other partner. This in turn is possible only within directly experienced social reality. Only here do our glances actually meet; only here can one actually note how the other is looking at him.

But one cannot become aware of this basic connection between the pure We-relationship and the face-to-face relationship while still a participant in the We-relationship. *One must step out of it and examine it.* The person who is still a participant in the We-relationship does not experience it in its pure form, namely, as an awareness *that* the other person is there. Instead, he simply lives within the We-relationship in the fullness of its concrete content. In other words, the pure We-relationship is a mere limiting concept which one uses in the attempt to get a theoretical grasp of the face-to-face situation. But there are no specific concrete experiences which correspond to it. For the concrete experiences which do occur within the We-relationship in real life grasp their object—the We—as something unique and unrepeatable. And they do this in *one* undivided intentional Act.

Concrete We-relationships exhibit many differences among themselves. The partner, for instance, may be experienced with different degrees of immediacy, different degrees of intensity, or different degrees of intimacy. Or he may be experienced from different points of view. He may appear within the center of attention or at its periphery.

These distinctions apply equally to orientation relationships and to social interactions, determining in each of them the directness with which the partners "know" each other. Compare, for instance, the knowledge two people have of each other in conversation with the knowledge they have of each other in sexual intercourse. What different degrees of intimacy occur here, what different levels of consciousness are involved! Not only do the partners experience the We more deeply in the one case than in the other, but each experiences himself more deeply and his partner more deeply. It is not only the *object*, therefore, that is experienced with greater or lesser directness; it is the *relationship* itself, the being turned toward the object, the relatedness.

These are only two *types* of relationship. But now consider the different ways in which they can actually take place! The conversation, for instance, can be animated or offhand, eager or casual, serious or light, superficial or quite personal.

The fact that we may experience others with such different degrees of directness is very important. It is, as a matter of fact, the key to understanding the transition from the direct experience of others to the indirect which is characteristic of the world of mere contemporaries. We shall be coming to this transition very shortly,²³ but meanwhile let us continue our examination of direct social experience by describing the nature of the face-to-face relationship.

First of all, let us remember that in the face-to-face situation I literally see my partner in front of me. As I watch his face and his gestures and listen to the tone of his voice, I become aware of much more than what he is deliberately trying to communicate to me. My observations keep pace with each moment of his stream of consciousness as it transpires. The result is that I am incomparably better attuned to him than I am to myself. I may indeed be more aware of my own past (to the extent that the latter can be captured in retrospect) than I am of my partner's. Yet I have never been face to face with myself as I am with him now; hence I have never caught myself in the act of actually living through an experience.

To this encounter with the other person I bring a whole stock of previously constituted knowledge. This includes both general knowledge of what another person is as such and any specific knowledge I may have of the person in question. It includes knowledge of other people's interpretive schemes, their habits, and their language. It includes knowledge of the taken-for-granted in-order-to and because-motives of others as such and of this person in particular. And when I am face to face with someone, my knowledge of him is increasing from moment to moment. My ideas of him undergo continuous revision as the concrete experience unfolds. For no direct social relationship is one isolated intentional Act. Rather it consists of a continuous series of such Acts. The orientation relationship, for instance, consists of a continuous series of intentional Acts of Other-orientation, while social interaction consists in a continuous series of Acts of meaning-establishment and meaning-interpretation. All these different encounters with my fellow man will be ordered in multiple meaning-contexts: they are encounters with a human being as such, with this particular human being, and with this particular human being at this particular moment of time. And these meaning-contexts of mine will be "subjec-

23. Cf. sec. 36, below, p. 177.

tive" to the extent that I am attending to your actual conscious experiences themselves and not merely to my own lived experiences of you. Furthermore, as I watch you, I shall see that you are oriented to me, that you are seeking the subjective meaning of my words, my actions, and what I have in mind insofar as you are concerned. And I will in turn take account of the fact that you are thus oriented to me, and this will influence both my intentions with respect to you and how I act toward you. This again you will see, I will see that you have seen it, and so on. This interlocking of glances, this thousand-faceted mirroring of each other, is one of the unique features of the face-to-face situation. We may say that it is a constitutive characteristic of this particular social relationship. However, we must remember that the pure We-relationship, which is the very form of every encounter with another person, is not itself grasped *reflectively* within the face-to-face situation. Instead of being observed, it is lived through. The many different mirror images of Self within Self are not therefore caught sight of one by one but are experienced as a continuum within a single experience. Within the unity of this experience I can be aware simultaneously of what is going on in my mind and in yours, *living through* the two series of experiences as one series—what we are experiencing together.

This fact is of special significance for the face-to-face situation. Within the face-to-face situation I can be a witness of your projects and also of their fulfillment or frustration as you proceed to action. Of course, once I know what you are planning to do, I may momentarily *suspend* the We-relationship in order to estimate *objectively* your chances of success. But it is only within the intimacy of the We-relationship itself that one can actually *live through* a course of action from its birth as a project to its ultimate outcome.

It is further essential to the face-to-face situation that you and I have the same environment.²⁴ First of all I ascribe to you an environment corresponding to my own.²⁵ Here, in the face-to-face situation, but only here, does this presupposition prove correct, to the extent that I can assume with more or less certainty within the directly experienced social realm that the table I see is identical (and identical in all its perspective variations²⁶) with the table you see, to the extent that I can assume this even if you are only my contemporary or my predecessor. Therefore, when I am in a face-to-face situation with you, I can

24. By "environment" I mean that part of the external world which I can directly apprehend. This would include not only the physical but also the social environment with all of its cultural artifacts, languages, etc.

25. See sec. 20, above, pp. 104-5.

26. [Cf. Husserl, *Ideas*, § 41.]

point to something in our common environment, uttering the words "this table here" and, by means of the identification of lived experiences in the environmental object, I can assure the adequacy of my interpretive scheme to your expressive scheme. For practical social life it is of the greatest significance that I consider myself justified in equating my own interpretation of my lived experiences with your interpretation of yours on those occasions when we are experiencing one and the same object.

We have, then, the same undivided and common environment, which we may call "our environment." The world of the We is not private to either of us, but is our world, the one common intersubjective world which is right there in front of us. It is only from the face-to-face relationship, from the common lived experience of the world in the We, that the intersubjective world can be constituted. This alone is the point from which it can be deduced.²⁷

I can constantly check my interpretations of what is going on in other people's minds, due to the fact that, in the We-relationship, I share a common environment with them. In principle, it is only in the face-to-face situation that I can address a question to you. But I can ask you not only about the interpretive schemes which you are applying to our common environment. I can also ask you how you are interpreting your lived experiences, and, in the process, I can correct, expand, and enrich my own understanding of you. This becoming-aware of the correctness or incorrectness of my understanding of you is a higher level of the We-experience. On this level I enrich not only my experience of you but of other people generally.

If I know that you and I are in a face-to-face relationship, I also know something about the manner in which each of us is attuned to his conscious experiences, in other words, the "attentional modifications" of each of us. This means that the way we attend to our conscious experiences is actually modified by our relationship to each other. This holds for both of us. For there is a true social relationship only if you reciprocate my awareness of you in some manner or other. As soon as this happens, as soon as we enter the face-to-face situation, each of us begins to attend to his own experiences in a new way. This particular attentional modification in which the two partners of a directly experienced social relationship are mutually aware of each other has special implications for the social interaction which occurs in that situation. *Whenever I am interacting with anyone, I take for granted as a constant in that person a set of genuine because- or in-order-to motives.* I do this on the ground of my own past experience

27. Cf. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, § 55.

of that particular person as well as of people generally. My own behavior toward that person is based in the first instance upon this taken-for-granted constellation of motives, regardless of whether they are his real motives or not. And here emerges the peculiarity of face-to-face interaction. It consists not in a specific structure of the reciprocal motivation context itself but in a specific *disclosure* of the motives of the other person. Even in face-to-face interactions I only project in phantasy the behavior of the other person as I plan my own action. This phantasy is, of course, merely the other's *expected* behavior, without the details as yet filled in and without, as yet, any confirmation. I have yet to see what my partner will actually do. But because he and I continually undergo modifications of attention with respect to each other in the We-relationship, I can actually live through and participate in the constitution of his motivational context. I interpret the present lived experiences which I impute to you as the in-order-to motives of the behavior I expect from you or as the consequences of your past experiences, which I then regard as their because-motives. I "orient" my action to these motivational contexts of yours, as you "orient" yours to mine. However, this "orienting oneself" takes place within the directly experienced social realm in the particular mode of "witnessing." When interacting with you within this realm, I *witness* how you react to my behavior, how you interpret my meaning, how my in-order-to motives trigger corresponding because-motives of your behavior. In between my expectation of your reaction and that reaction itself I have "grown older" and perhaps wiser, taking into account the realities of the situation, as well as my own hopes of what you would do. But in the face-to-face situation you and I grow older together, and I can add to my expectation of what you are going to do the actual sight of you making up your mind, and then of your action itself in all its constituent phases. During all this time we are aware of each other's stream of consciousness as contemporaneous with our own; we share a rich, concrete We-relationship without any need to reflect on it. In a flash I see your whole plan and its execution in action. This episode of my biography is full of continuous lived experiences of you grasped within the We-relationship; meanwhile, you are experiencing me in the same way, and I am aware of the fact.

35. Direct Social Observation

SO FAR WE HAVE BEEN studying the directly experienced social relationship in order to bring out the peculiar characteristics of the face-to-face situation in its purest form. Our analysis would, how-