

Collected Papers V. Phenomenology
and the Social Sciences

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ALFRED SCHUTZ

COLLECTED PAPERS V. PHENOMENOLOGY
AND THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

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Alfred Schutz

Collected Papers V.
Phenomenology
and the Social Sciences

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 Springer

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Editor's Note

The Collected Papers contained in this fifth volume, *Phenomenology and the Social Sciences*, were previously published between 1940 and 1998 or, in one case, not previously published. The Introduction and the abstracts have been written by me.

I wish to express my deep indebtedness and warm thanks Michael Barber for his help in selecting especially the inedita on relevance from the *Alfred Schütz Werkausgabe* and also some of the letters and for help finding translators for various parts of this volume.

The papers collected here and their original sources are “Husserl and His Influence on Me,” *Annals of Phenomenological Sociology* (1977): 40–44 and *Crosscurrents in Phenomenology*, edited by Ronald Bruzina and Bruce Wilshire (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978); *The Theory of Social Action: Correspondence between Alfred Schutz and Talcott Parsons*, ed. Richard Grathoff, (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1979); “Choice and the Social Sciences,” in *Life-World and Consciousness: Essays for Aron Gurwitsch*, ed. Lester Embree (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1972); *Reflections on the Problem of Relevance*, ed. Richard M. Zaner (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1970); “Outlines on Relevance and Action,” a translation of “Wiener Exzerpte” by Michael Walter, from *Relevanz und Handeln I: Zur Phänomenologie des Alltagswissens*, ed. Elisabeth List, *Alfred Schütz Werkausgabe*, Volume VI.1, edited by Richard Grathoff, Hans-Georg Soeffner, and Ilja Srubar (Konstanz: UVK, 2004), pp.45-54.; “Letters of Alfred Schutz to Felix Kaufmann” Alfred Schutz Papers, General Manuscripts 129, Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, General Collection of Rare Books and Manuscripts, Series 3, Box 27, Folder 631 (rights by permission of the Schutz Family), translated by Michael Walter; “Letters of Alfred Schutz to Eric Voegelin” (rights by permission of the Schutz Family), translated by Michael Walter from *Eine Freundschaft, die ein Leben ausgehalten hat: Briefwechsel 1938–1959*, ed. Gerhard Wagner and Gilbert Weiss (Konstanz: UVK, 2004), pp. 70–71, 280–285, 383–389, 417–420; “Letters of Alfred Schutz to Aron Gurwitsch,” *Philosophers in Exile: The Correspondence of Alfred Schutz and Aron Gurwitsch, 1939–1959*, ed. Richard Grathoff and trans. J. Claude Evans (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989); and “T. S. Eliot’s Theory of Culture”

(rights thanks to the Schutz Family). It was unfortunately impossible to include the best presentation by Schutz in the philosophy of the social sciences, namely "Positivistic Philosophy and the Actual Approach of Interpretive Social Science: An Ineditum from Spring 1953," but this important text is available at <http://www.springerlink.com/content/t52u22v305u28g04/>

And it needs to be mentioned that the out-of-print volumes I to IV of the *Collected Papers* will soon be available as e-books from Springer.

I wish finally to add a special word of thanks to Dr. Daniel Marcelle, my research assistant at Florida Atlantic University, for help in ways too numerous to list.

August 2011

Lester Embree
Delray Beach

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Introduction

This is the fifth volume of the six volume *Collected Papers* of Alfred Schutz. The other five volumes and how they will be referred to hereafter in this volume are as follows.

Collected Papers, vol. I, *The Problem of Social Reality*, edited and introduced by Maurice Natanson (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1962), hereafter: “CP I”;

Collected Papers, vol. II, *Studies in Social Theory*, edited and introduced by Arvid Brodersen (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964), hereafter: “CP II”;

Collected Papers, vol. III, *Studies in Phenomenological Philosophy*, edited by I. Schutz with an introduction by Aron Gurwitsch (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), hereafter: “CP III”;

Collected Papers, vol. IV, edited with preface and notes by Helmut Wagner and George Psathas in collaboration with Fred Kersten (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1996), hereafter: “CP IV.”

Collected Papers, vol. VI, *Literary Reality and Relationships*, is currently being edited by Michael Barber and should appear at the same time as the present volume, hereafter: “CP VI.”

The present introduction offers some comments in relation to the title of this volume about how that which is fundamental to Schutz’s thought is best characterized and then offers some remarks about the contents of this volume.

I. Schutz’s Project

The words “phenomenology” and “the social sciences” chosen for the title of this volume appear the terms most immediately and naturally associated with the rich and complex thought of Alfred Schutz (1899–1959) today. There are then two expressions in effect derived from them that have been widely used to characterize this thought overall, namely “philosophy of social science” and “phenomenological sociology.” But there actually are problems with both of these characterizations.

It is true that before he immigrated to the USA in 1939, Schutz emphasized “*Soziologie*” as the name for the science of how individual humans understand and influence others directly and indirectly as well as unilaterally and reciprocally and offered little about collectivities or groups. But a few years after beginning his life in his new country he published “The Stranger” (1944) and “The Homecomer” (1944), which are contributions to just such a science but characterized as by him in American terms as “social psychology.” Only his “Equality and the Meaning Structure of the Social World” (1955) is arguably sociological in the American signification that he seems to have accepted from Talcott Parsons.¹ More significantly, while “On Multiple Realities” (1945)² and *Reflections on the Problem of Relevance* (1947 & 1951)³ are contributions to what can be called “phenomenological psychology,” (CP IV, p. 26) which differs from social psychology in analyzing individual human life without emphasizing relations with others, and also several writings about economics in CP IV, the remainder of his some three dozen publications are in or on philosophy. Hence, Schutz himself is only to a quite limited extent a sociologist qua social psychologist, which is nowise to deny that there are at least scores of phenomenological sociologists still legitimately taking inspiration from his thought.

As for the characterization of his thought as “philosophy of social science,” Schutz does not use this title, which seems not yet coined in his time, and both components in it are problematic. Neither substantive is well rendered in the opening two sentences of *The Phenomenology of the Social World*,⁴ which is the English translation of Schutz’s masterpiece, *Der sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt* (1932):

The present study is based on an intensive concern of many year’s duration with the theoretical [*wissenschaftstheoretischen*] writings of Max Weber. During this time I became convinced that while Weber’s approach was correct and that he had determined conclusively the proper starting point for the philosophy of the social sciences [*Theorie der Sozialwissenschaften*], nevertheless his analyses did not go deeply enough to lay the foundations on which alone many important problems of the human sciences [*Geisteswissenschaften*] could be solved (Original expressions added).

The *Geisteswissenschaften* for Schutz are more extensive than the “social sciences” as currently comprehended in the USA because they include not only the social sciences as usually comprehended, but also the historical sciences, archaeology included, history being usually comprehended there as a discipline in the humanities. Indeed, while he does not devote as many pages to the latter as to the former, he

¹ These three texts are reprinted in CP II, as is “The Well-Informed Citizen: An Essay on the Social Distribution of Knowledge” (1946). Parson’s usage is referred to in CP II, pp. 231–232 and p. 16 below. The difference can be said to be between beginning with so-called “methodological individualism” and eventually reaching collectivities and beginning with so-called “methodological collectivism” and eventually reaching individuals.

² Reprinted in CP I.

³ Reprinted in the present volume.

⁴ Trans. George Walsh and Frederick Lehnert (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1967). German words added.

does mention by name as many disciplines in the species of the historical as in that of the social sciences. (If one wishes to include scientific investigations of the so-called higher nonhuman animals—which Schutz did not—then “cultural sciences” might be preferred to “human sciences” to denote the genus of science of interest to Schutz.⁵) And by the above passage, it seems that “*Sozialwissenschaften*” can have this generic signification as well.

As for “*Theorie der Sozialwissenschaften*,” Schutz uses “theory of the social sciences” in the present volume, pp. 64, 75, 91, but, again, never uses “philosophy of the social sciences.” “Theory of economics” (88, 91), “theory of sociology” (65), and “theory of law” (64, 149) also occur in this volume. This is because careful study shows that he recognizes two forms of *Wissenschaftstheorie*, also called *Wissenschaftslehre* (this volume, pp. 63f.), an expression equivalent to that of “methodology” in the time before that term came to be focused on statistical techniques. Scientists such as Max Weber and Talcott Parsons reflect on the disciplinary definitions, basic concepts, and distinctive methods of their own sciences, while philosophers such as Alfred Schutz reflect on the same things for the various species and genera of science as well as for particular sciences. Schutz is greatly interested in the scientific as well as the philosophical theories of the cultural sciences, his theory of economics being arguably more complete than his theory of social psychology, but subjective meaning and its interpretation and the use of ideal types are, for example, claimed by him for all of the cultural sciences. He also believed his theory of science applied to cultural anthropology, religious studies, jurisprudence, political science, *etc.*

About *Wissenschaftslehre*, which can be rendered as “theory of science” and even “science theory,” it was of course the project of Edmund Husserl. In the review of the *Méditations Cartésiennes* (1931) that Husserl asked him to write, Schutz urged the expansion of the scope of his master’s phenomenological theory of science:

To Husserl’s list I would like to add a social science which, while limited to the social sphere, is of an eidetic character. The task <of such a social science> would be the intentional analysis of those manifold forms of higher-level social acts and social formations which are founded on the—already executed—constitution of the alter ego. This can be achieved in static and genetic analyses, and such an interpretation would accordingly have to demonstrate the aprioristic structures of the social sciences.—Of necessity the preceding expositions ... may have conveyed to the reader an idea of the fundamental significance of Husserl’s investigations not only for pure philosophy but also for all human sciences [*Geisteswissenschaften*] and especially for the social sciences. (CP IV, p. 164)

It might be mentioned here that Schutz takes not what can be called the “missionary approach” but rather the “ethnographic approach” to the cultural sciences. This is to say that he does not preach the great truths of naturalistic science to the benighted social studies, but rather assumes that cultural scientists know what they are doing and hence he seeks to learn from them about their science and hopes at most to help clarify some foundational difficulties that they have perchance overlooked.⁶

⁵ “Cultural science” (*Kulturwissenschaft*) is also used in the original of first essay of Schutz published in English, (CP IV, p. 106) but not thereafter.

⁶ Lester Embree, “Methodology Is Where Human Scientists and Philosophers Can Meet: Reflections on the Schutz-Parsons Exchange.” *Human Studies* 3 (1980): 367–73.

If enough has now been said about the “social sciences” in the title selected for this volume, what about the signification of “phenomenology” there? Schutz was involved in this tradition since the late 1920s. Along with others, such as Jean-Paul Sartre (1948, collected in CP I) and of course Aron Gurwitsch (this volume), he appreciated the work of Max Scheler and even accepted a commission from Maurice Merleau-Ponty to write extensively about that work late in the 1950s (see the two essays in CP III). Nevertheless, Husserl’s phenomenology was always the most important for him (see “Some Leading Concepts of Phenomenology” (1945, reprinted in CP I). All Husserlians appear to have substantial misgivings about one or another aspect of their master’s thought. Schutz had them regarding intersubjectivity and, indeed, did not see the need to follow Husserl into transcendental philosophy.

What Schutz accepted from beginning to end is what Husserl called in his “Nachwort zu meinen ‘Ideen’” (1930) “constitutive phenomenology of the natural attitude” or “phenomenological psychology.” As indicated above, Schutz made substantial contributions to such a psychology (Part II of his *Aufbau* may be added to the list), but, interestingly, he does not include psychology in his taxonomy of the cultural sciences (for what there is of Schutz’s theory of psychology, see the essay on William James in CP III). He does, however, accord phenomenological psychology a foundational role for the cultural sciences vaguely analogous to the role of physics in relation to the other naturalistic sciences for most thinkers in the positivistic tradition.

In sum, Alfred Schutz, who is hardly a phenomenological sociologist, is fundamentally concerned with the phenomenological theory of the cultural sciences, a form of *Wissenschaftslehre*, in ways that are not clear in the usual signification of the phrase “philosophy of the social sciences.”

II. The Contents of this Volume

This volume of the *Collected Papers* contains nine texts. The previous introductions, dated bibliographical notes, *etc.*, have been omitted here, but some might have significance for the history of Schutz studies. Some editorial notes are by me and marked as “LEE.” Those marked “RG” are by Richard Grathoff and those by Richard Zaner are marked “RMZ.” Otherwise, footnotes are by Schutz.

Some remarks about each of the papers might be of introductory use.

- (1) “Husserl and his Influence on Me” tells much about Schutz’s personal as well as intellectual relationship with the only man he came to call his master.
- (2) “*The Theory of Social Action* and Letters with Talcott Parsons” was previously published as a short book and shows not only a deep appreciation of the thought of arguably the leading sociologist in the USA at the time but also the failure of an attempt at intellectual dialog. The original edition is out of print.

- (3) “Choice and the Social Sciences” is chiefly devoted to the theory of economics and had originally to be excised for reasons of space limitation from “Choosing among Projects of Action” (1951), which is reprinted in CP I.
- (4) *Reflections on the Problem of Relevance* is another short book the original edition of which is out of print. It was edited from several substantial manuscripts and is arguably a contribution to phenomenological psychology.
- (5) “Outlines on Relevance and Action” are translated from the *Alfred Schütz Werkausgabe* and complement the previous texts.

The selected letters to (6) Felix Kaufmann, (7) Eric Voegelin, and (8) with Aron Gurwitsch show Schutz in dialog with friends. (It needs to be remembered that in his life Schutz had extremely few with whom he could discuss his work and he expressed much of his important thinking in his correspondence.)

Finally, (9) “T.S. Eliot’s Theory of Culture” is a previously unpublished essay composed in 1953 and ultimately intended for, but mistakenly omitted from, CP II that not only enhances understanding of what culture is for Schutz, but has more to say about social class than is expressed in the rest of his oeuvre.

My hope is that the initial or restored availability of these nine texts will foster not only more study of Schutz’s thought but also increase his influence on phenomenology in and of the cultural sciences.

