



1 **A Problem in Schutz's Theory of the Historical Sciences with an**  
2 **Illustration from the Women's Liberation Movement\***

3 LESTER EMBREE

4 *Department of Philosophy, Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, Florida, USA*

5 *(E-mail: embree@fau.edu)*

6 **Abstract.** In the first part of this essay it is contended that Schutz's project is best called  
7 the philosophical theory of the cultural sciences; in the last parts it is shown that he offers  
8 satisfactory rudiments of a theory of the historical sciences except where the *differentia specifica*  
9 of those sciences is concerned. The central part is devoted to women's liberation as a case of  
10 "contemporary history" in relation to which Schutz's thought about the historical sciences  
11 needs correction.

12 **Schutz's Project**

13 What did Alfred Schutz (1899–1959) chiefly do and how should it be called  
14 in English? His own opinion is especially relevant here. In the first place,  
15 he reported that his highest degree was in "the philosophy of law" (Schutz,  
16 1977, p. 41; cf. Schutz, 1978, p. 102).<sup>1</sup> Secondly, when his colleague Leo  
17 Strauss praised him as a philosophically sophisticated sociologist for writing  
18 "Equality and the Meaning Structure of the Social World," Schutz replied on  
19 20 October, 1955 that he preferred to be called a "sociologically sophisti-  
20 cated philosopher."<sup>2</sup> Then again, if his bibliography is considered, almost all  
21 of Schutz's writings are philosophical. Some of them are interpretations of  
22 Husserl, James, Sartre, and Scheler, but most of them are phenomenological  
23 investigations. He did chiefly teach in a Department of Sociology and had  
24 several important sociological students, but he also had several important stu-  
25 dents in philosophy. He appears, then, to have been a philosopher and is no  
26 more a "phenomenological sociologist," as some say, than Merleau-Ponty is a

\*This essay was presented as the Alfred Schutz Memorial Lecture at the meetings of the Society for Phenomenology and the Human Sciences, Baltimore, Maryland, October, 2001 and co-sponsored by SPHS, the Center for Advanced Research in Phenomenology, Inc., and the American Philosophical Association. I thank Dr. Elisabeth Behnke for substantive suggestions as well as help with the expression on this text. Professors Michael Barber, David Carr, Steven Crowell, NASU, Hisashi, Thomas Seebohm, and YU, Chung-Chi are also thanked for their critiques of the substance, but are nowise to blame for errors that remain. Dr. Martin Endress of the *Alfred Schutz Werkausgabe* is thanked for identifying two original German expression in Schutz texts.

child psychologist because he taught in that science for some years. But how 27  
was Schutz a philosopher and what did he philosophize about? 28

*The Theory of Science* 29

One might call Schutz's project "philosophy of social science," although this 30  
expression does not occur in his oeuvre. But then both "philosophy" and 31  
"social sciences" need to be carefully comprehended. It is actually better to 32  
say that what he pursued was, to use his own words (although he did not use this 33  
exact phrase), the "theory of the cultural sciences." It is better to say "theory" 34  
than "philosophy," not only because "theory" includes more than a search 35  
for the rules of thinking or methodology in the narrow signification but also 36  
because it names a discipline that accommodates reflections on science by the 37  
scientists themselves as well as by philosophers: "It is a basic characteristic 38  
of the social sciences to ever and again pose the question of the meaning of 39  
their basic concepts and procedures. All attempts to solve this problem are 40  
not merely preparations for social-scientific thinking; they are an everlasting 41  
theme of this thinking itself" (Schutz, 1996, p.121; cf. p. 203). "Theory" is 42  
not exclusionary, which "philosophy" can be. 43

Schutz is under no illusions that the science he reflects on took methodology 44  
to a philosophical level: 45

On the one hand, methodology and studies in the logic of science have been 46  
concerned for more than two centuries primarily with the logic of the natural 47  
sciences and assume that their techniques of classification, measurement, 48  
theory-building, and empirical correlation are the only scientific ones. On 49  
the other hand, those social scientists did not have sufficient knowledge 50  
of the epistemological problems involved. They tried to overcome the dif- 51  
ficulties they had encountered in elaborating the concrete problems of the 52  
social sciences with which they were concerned by forging their own 53  
methodological tools without any attempt at clarifying the underlying philo- 54  
sophical position. They broke off their endeavors as soon as they felt them- 55  
selves sufficiently equipped with the conceptual frame of reference needed 56  
for their concrete social studies. (Schutz, 1997, pp. 125–26) 57

Newly arrived in the United States, Schutz unsuccessfully sought reflec- 58  
tions on methods and basic concepts by a scientist in Talcott Parsons (Embree, 59  
1980). During the 1930s he had had better luck with some economists, e.g., 60  
Fritz Machlup (Wagner, 1983, p. 166), but in the 1920s he seems to have been 61  
disappointed at what he found in Max Weber, "one of the greatest masters of 62  
the methodology of the social sciences," who himself had been disappointed 63  
at what he found about method in some philosophers: 64

As he himself stated in various personal documents, he looked in vain 65  
for help in the epistemological writings of his contemporary philosophical 66

67 colleagues, who belonged either to the neo-Kantian School or the so-called  
68 South-Western German School. These schools had influenced most of the  
69 writings of the historians and jurists studied by Max Weber at the beginning  
70 of his career, and he himself could not entirely escape their influence. But  
71 very soon he found that the conceptual frame of reference offered by these  
72 philosophers could not help him in building up a social theory applicable to  
73 the concrete sociological problems with which he was concerned. There-  
74 fore, he decided independently to investigate the methodological issues  
75 which he encountered, later professing his aversion to this job, which he  
76 compared with the sharpening of knives when there is nothing on the table  
77 to be carved. Guided by his intimate knowledge of the concrete problems  
78 of the social sciences and by an admirable feeling for relevant issues, he  
79 succeeded better than other social scientists in delimiting the realm of the  
80 social sciences and in describing the methods by which it can be explored.  
81 (Schutz, 1997, p. 126)

82 The meaning of basic concepts and procedures is clearly the aspect of  
83 science that deeply interested Schutz, but to what end? As he wrote to Adolph  
84 Lowe on 17 October, 1955, "It is my conviction that methodologists have  
85 neither the job nor the authority to prescribe to social scientists what they  
86 have to do. Humbly he has to learn from social scientists and to interpret  
87 for them what they are doing" (Schutz, 1996, p. 146). He had earlier gone  
88 further in writing that "in this role, the methodologist has to ask intelligent  
89 questions about the technique of his teacher <i.e., the social scientist>. And  
90 if these questions help others to think over what they really do, and perhaps  
91 eliminate certain intrinsic difficulties hidden in the foundation of the scientific  
92 edifice where the scientists never set foot, methodology has performed its  
93 task" (Schutz, 1964, p. 88). What Schutz urges might be called a "gentle  
94 prescriptivism" because not only are the sciences carefully studied to eliminate  
95 foundational difficulties and to foster clearer self-understanding in scientists,  
96 but also because Schutz seems to accept that it is for the scientists to decide  
97 whether or not to accept advice offered by philosophers.

98 If Schutz thus favors communication with scientists as well as close exam-  
99 ination of what they do, did he call the multidisciplinary endeavor he favored  
100 "theory of science"? One might call it "methodology" in the broad signifi-  
101 cation used above, but this word has a strict signification whereby "the descrip-  
102 tion of ["definite operational rules"] is the business of a methodology of the  
103 social sciences" (Schutz, 1962, p. 255) and in many disciplines, at least in the  
104 United States, it has come to designate merely formal techniques. What other  
105 titles occur in the oeuvre? Between 1940 and 1945 Schutz used the expression  
106 "methodology and epistemology" on six occasions (Schutz, 1978, p. 9, 101;  
107 Schutz, 1964, p. 64; Schutz, 1996, p. 48, 251), nevertheless commenting to  
108 Parsons, "I fear that in this country the terms methodology and epistemology  
109 are used in a more restricted sense than their equivalents in German and I  
110 accepted these terms only because I could not find any better translation for

“*Wissenschaftslehre*” which includes both logical problems of a scientific theory and methodology in the restricted sense” (Schutz, 1978, p. 101). This is the only time he uses “*Wissenschaftslehre*,” but “*wissenschaftstheoretischen*” already occurs in the first sentence of *Der sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt* (1932) (Schutz, 1932/1974: 9/xxi, cf. Schutz, 1932/1974, p. 15/7), mistakenly translated as “theoretical writings.” Then again, “*wissenschaftstheoretischen Einstellung*” is used in 1936 (Schutz, 1996, p. 121), although oddly translated as “theoretical-scientific approach” when “science-theoretical attitude” would be more accurate. “*Theorie der Sozialwissenschaften*” is also used on the first page of the *Aufbau* (Schutz, 1932/1974: 9/xxxi) and again in the German original of Schutz’s last essay, “Some Structures of the Lifeworld” (1959), where Gurwitsch translated it as “theory of the social sciences” (Schutz, 1966, p. 131); in letters Schutz received from Gurwitsch “*Wissenschaftstheorie*” occurs in 1941, 1945, and 1954 (Schutz, 1985: 99/48, 136/75, 273/172) and is correctly translated as “theory of science.” Writing in English in 1945 and 1953, Schutz himself finally does use “theory of the social sciences” (Schutz, 1972, p. 565; Schutz, 1997, p. 136).

Incidentally, although its rigid translation is “science,” “*Wissenschaft*” in German is best comprehended as designating a disciplined cognitive practice that can include deductive nomological theory and experimentation, but is in no way confined to them. Thus biography, for example, is a *Wissenschaft*, as is jurisprudence. The three *Wissenschaften* that especially concerned Schutz from the outset were economics, jurisprudence, and sociology, with political science coming soon after and ethnology and linguistics eventually added to the list.

In sum, there are at least three reasons why “theory of science” and its transform, “science theory” (“science-theoretical[ly]” is the modifier form), appears to be the best expression for what Schutz was chiefly engaged in: (1) it can cover the clarification of basic concepts as well as the articulation of rules of procedure; (2) it can include both *scientific* science theory, i.e., theory of science done by scientists, as well as *philosophical* science theory done by philosophers; and (3) the theory of science is where scientists and philosophers can meet and learn from one another.

One difference of much philosophical science theory is the concern with founding all the other sciences in one discipline. For positivists, the founding discipline would be physics and for Husserl it would be transcendental phenomenology. What is the founding discipline for Schutz? Beginning in the *Aufbau* (Schutz, 1932/1974, p. 55/43), Schutz identifies his approach in the theory of science with what Husserl called “constitutive phenomenology of the natural attitude” or “phenomenological psychology.” He writes:

One can always reactivate the process which has built up the sediments of meaning, and one can explain the intentionalities of the perspectives of

153 relevance and the horizons of interest. Then all these phenomena of mean-  
 154 ing, which obtain quite simply for the naïve person, might be in principle  
 155 exactly described and analyzed *even within the general thesis [of the natural*  
 156 *attitude]*. To accomplish this on intersubjectivity is the task of the mundane  
 157 cultural sciences, and to clarify their specific methods is precisely a part of  
 158 that constitutive phenomenology of the natural attitude of which we have  
 159 been speaking. (Schutz, 1962, p.136; Schutz, 1962, p. 208; Schutz, 1996,  
 160 p. 108; Schutz, 1996, p. 269; cf. Husserl, 1989, 412 ff.)

161 One can still consider Schutz a philosopher even though he resorts to “phe-  
 162 nomenological psychology” for a philosophical purpose because in his time  
 163 that was not an independent positive science, but something still distinguished  
 164 *within* Husserl’s philosophy, psychology – like ethics – having long been a sub-  
 165 discipline of philosophy. One can recognize “On Multiple Realities” (1945),  
 166 which belongs “to the field of phenomenological psychology; that it is, it will  
 167 be restricted to the constitutional analysis of the natural attitude” (Schutz,  
 168 1996, p. 26), as well as Part II of the *Aufbau* as phenomenological psychology  
 169 engaged in for science-theoretical purposes.

#### 170 *The Cultural Sciences*

171 The probably unavoidable expression “philosophy of social science” is also  
 172 problematical with respect to the genus and species of science that Schutz  
 173 focused on. Regarding the formal sciences, he seems to have said nothing  
 174 concerning the theory of grammar or the theory of mathematics, but he does  
 175 agree with Husserl on the use of formal logic to unify all of science (Schutz,  
 176 1962: 49). There are some remarks regarding the naturalistic sciences that  
 177 are interesting (Schutz, 1962: 58, 129; Schutz, 1996: 106, 124; Schutz, 1997:  
 178 135), but they seem insufficient for inferring an outline of a theory of such  
 179 sciences. The case is worse for psychology, where, although several Gestaltists  
 180 are mentioned (Schutz, 1962: 168 n., Schutz, 1970: 93, 119), only William  
 181 James is at all appreciated in anything like a science-theoretical perspective  
 182 (Schutz, 1966: 1 ff.).

183 What this leaves can be called “the social sciences in the broad significa-  
 184 tion.” The general field of the social sciences in this signification is approached  
 185 by adopting the theoretical attitude and by *not* performing the abstraction that  
 186 thematizes nature for the naturalistic sciences (see Part III C below). Schutz’s  
 187 overlapping lists of particular disciplines in this genus are interesting. For ex-  
 188 ample, in the *Aufbau* of 1932 Schutz writes that, “the social sciences [*Sozial-*  
 189 *wissenschaften*] include, according to our own concept, such widely separated  
 190 disciplines as individual biography, jurisprudence, . . . pure economics,  
 191 . . . history of law, history of art, and political science” (Schutz, 1932/1974:  
 192 341/242). He also mentions history of politics (Schutz, 1932/1974: 191/136),  
 193 economic history (Schutz, 1932/1974: 192/137), and the histories of music

and philosophy (Schutz, 1932/1974: 297/211). In 1940, he lists “concrete sci- 194  
ences of cultural phenomena (law, the economic and social world, art, history, 195  
etc.)” (Schutz, 1962: 122). In 1953 he lists “sciences of human affairs – eco- 196  
nomics, sociology, the sciences of law, linguistics, cultural anthropology, etc.” 197  
(Schutz, 1962: 58) In that same year and then later he mentions “a theoretical 198  
science of the mythological and religious experience of men” (Schutz, 1997: 199  
131; cf. Schutz, 1962: 332 f., Schutz, 1962: 337). And since he says “I can un- 200  
derstand the acts and motives . . . of the caveman who left no other testimony 201  
of his existence than the flint hatchet exhibited in the showcase of some mu- 202  
seum” (Schutz, 1978: 53), the genus may in addition be presumed implicitly 203  
to include archaeology (cf. Schutz, 1932/1974: 151/109, 282/201, 294/209; 204  
Schutz, 1962: 10, 17). Finally, Schutz’s thought about literature might also 205  
belong here. (Embree, 1998). 206

It would be useful to find a better title than “social science in the broad 207  
signification” for this whole group of disciplines not usually taken together in 208  
the United States of late, particularly since Schutz also recognizes and chiefly 209  
refers to what can by contrast be called “the social sciences in a strict signifi- 210  
cation.” He does use *Geisteswissenschaften* in the title of §28 of the *Aufbau*, 211  
where it is translated as “cultural sciences” (cf. Schutz, 1932/1974: 9/xxxii, 212  
22/14), and also in his 1932 review of Husserl’s *Méditations Cartésiennes*, 213  
where it is translated as “human sciences” (Schutz, 1996: 164). “Human sci- 214  
ences” is a widely accepted translation of that expression today, but a German 215  
expression also actually accepted by Schutz himself is “*Kulturwissenschaft*,” 216  
which is of course best translated as “cultural science.” He repeatedly ac- 217  
cepted this as well as “social science” as translation for *Geisteswissenschaft* 218  
in his “Phenomenology and the Social Sciences” of 1940, which originally 219  
had *Kulturwissenschaften* in its title, and the various sciences listed above can 220  
accordingly be thought of as thematizing different aspects of the sociocultural 221  
world. One can prefer “cultural sciences” for the broad signification that is 222  
sometimes expressed with “social sciences.” 223

Whatever the genus of the cultural or human sciences be called, it has for 224  
Schutz two species. There are social sciences in the strict signification that 225  
thematize others who share time with a given self, i.e., those whom Schutz 226  
technically calls “contemporaries,” and then there are the historical sciences, 227  
which are concerned with “predecessors,” i.e., those whose lives do not over- 228  
lap those of the living. Among the former would fall cultural anthropology, 229  
economics, jurisprudence, linguistics, political science, social psychology, 230  
and sociology and among the latter would fall biography, history (including 231  
the histories of art, economy, law, literature, music, and philosophy), and ar- 232  
chaeology. It is not clear where the science of myth and religion would fall for 233  
Schutz. Interestingly, he explicitly mentions more historical sciences than so- 234  
cial sciences in the strict signification. Then again, there are enough particular 235  
historical sciences corresponding to particular social sciences that one might 236

237 wonder if such pairings are always possible for him, and thus that musicology,  
238 for example, might be a social science in the strict signification for him.

239 Many seem to think that Schutz was a philosopher or theorist of the social  
240 sciences in the strict signification, but if most of his science theory relates to  
241 the social sciences in the broad signification, he is actually a philosophical  
242 theorist of the cultural sciences. This interpretation would be further supported  
243 if a theory of the historical sort of cultural sciences can be discerned when his  
244 scattered remarks are collected and interpreted. Schutz speaks in some places  
245 of the science of history (*Wissenschaft der Geschichte*, Schutz, 1932/1974:  
246 297/211, Schutz, 1996: 4), mentions Leopold von Ranke and Jacob Burchardt  
247 in the *Aufbau* (Schutz, 1932/1974: 296/210), and in a late essay mentions  
248 historical writing by Marcel Granet, Arnold J. Toynbee, and Eric Voegelin  
249 (Schutz, 1962: 333 n. 48). Furthermore, in two letters to Voegelin in 1952 he  
250 also mentions the philosophy of history (*Philosophie der Geschichte*, Schutz,  
251 1985: 296/188; cf. Schutz, 1996: 227), which would seem to include some  
252 efforts by Husserl (Schutz, 1962: 139). And although they are scattered, there  
253 are far more remarks explicitly about the historical sciences than about the  
254 formal sciences and the naturalistic sciences put together, enough so that,  
255 except for one difficulty returned to in the last part of this essay, his theory of  
256 history can be fairly well delineated.

257 The present writer is not the first to consider a Schutzian theory of history  
258 possible. Schutz's friend Gurwitsch wrote that "the problem [of history and  
259 historical knowledge] does not play a role of primary importance for Schutz,  
260 who concerned himself rather with the relations between contemporaries liv-  
261 ing in the same world. . . . Clarification of the foundation of the social sciences  
262 (in the more restricted sense of the term) prepares for and contributes to the  
263 clarification of the foundation of the historical sciences" (Schutz, 1966: xxxi).

### 264 **Some Contemporary History**

265 It will be convenient to interpret Schutz's statements relevant to his theory of  
266 the historical sciences in relation to an example of contemporary history. The  
267 following summary comes primarily from Susan Brownmiller, *In Our Time:*  
268 *Memoir of a Revolution*, (1999) and secondarily from Kathleen Berkeley, *The*  
269 *Women's Liberation Movement in America*. (1999) Brownmiller is a journalist  
270 who relies on what she calls participant observation. She herself led some of  
271 the movement's actions, participated in more, interviewed over 200 partici-  
272 pants, and gained access to documents not yet archived. She appears the most  
273 insider of insiders for Women's Liberation. Kathleen Berkeley, by contrast,  
274 also draws on a wide array of sources, but they are chiefly books by fellow  
275 historians; she writes as a historian, and there is no sign that she was ever a  
276 participant in the movement, which absence would be all the more significant  
277 if she had been.

Berkeley and Brownmiller agree that the Women's Liberation Movement 278  
 strictly so-called began in the mid-1960s and ended in the mid-1980s. Berkeley 279  
 explains how it is part of the larger Women's Movement that goes back to 280  
 the middle of the 19th century and continues today. Both agree that there 281  
 were two wings to the recent movement, a liberal wing and a radical wing. 282  
 Berkeley covers both, with more emphasis on the liberal wing, and Brown- 283  
 miller strongly emphasizes the radical wing. The radical wing is what the 284  
 expression "Women's Liberation Movement" strictly denominates, but this 285  
 title is often extended to refer to the whole movement in that time, because, 286  
 as both again agree, innovation regularly spread from the radical to the liberal 287  
 wing during the twenty years of Women's Liberation. 288

The questions that a historian ought to ask about such a movement for social 289  
 change must include: (a) Who conducted it, which includes the question of 290  
 what sort of groups was in it? (b) How was it motivated and how did it begin? 291  
 (c) What were its actions? And (d) How did it end? Some of Schutz's thought 292  
 can be connected with these questions in the following exposition under these 293  
 headings, while other thought will be related in subsequent parts. 294

*What Type of Group Led Women's Liberation?* 295

Schutz always recognized that there are social groups, and this is especially 296  
 evident in "Equality and the Meaning Structure of the Social World" of 1955. 297  
 For him, a group is a set of interacting individuals: "The attempts of Simmel, 298  
 Max Weber, [and] Scheler to reduce social collectivities to the social interac- 299  
 tion of individuals is, so it seems, much closer to the spirit of phenomenology 300  
 than the pertinent statements of its founder" (Schutz, 1966: 39). In addition, 301  
 it bears remembering that Schutz asserts in no fewer than sixteen places that 302  
 the individual is an abstraction from social life, (Schutz, 1962: 10, 11, 13, 53, 303  
 124, 167, 208, 218, 278, 306, 318, 347; Schutz, 1964:167; Schutz, 1970: 73, 304  
 134, 173) which is to say from the groups to which she belongs, something 305  
 well reflected if we follow Schutz and some sociologists, e.g., George Psathas, 306  
 in speaking of "members" rather than "individuals." 307

Schutz divides groups in two ways. One distinction is between voluntary 308  
 groups and involuntary or existential groups. The latter are based on such 309  
 things as sex, national origin, mother tongue, and race, and the former in- 310  
 clude marriage, friendship, and partnership (Schutz, 1964: 250). Although 311  
 concerned with differences in sex, the groups making up the Women's Move- 312  
 ment were voluntary, some of them including men. The other distinction – one 313  
 Schutz accepted from William Graham Sumner – is that between in-groups 314  
 and out-groups. Little needs to be said here about how groups understand 315  
 themselves and one another, but clearly it is an important issue for history. 316  
 Indeed, one could interpret "Equality and the Meaning Structure of the Social 317  
 World" with gender substituted for race as the topic of prejudice, particularly 318

319 with regard to the question of groups striving for equality without assimilation  
320 to the dominant group – i.e., something concerning gender that is analogous  
321 to multiculturalism. Also on the basis of that essay, it can be presumed that  
322 while certain sexual differences would have been recognized on the biological  
323 level, the Women's Movement emphasizes cultural differences akin to those  
324 Schutz alluded to when he asked, "Could Marian Anderson sing Negro Spir-  
325 ituals in her unsurpassed way if she did not share with her fellow Negroes  
326 this specific cultural heritage, this specific conception of the world of which  
327 the Spirituals are a partial expression?" (Schutz, 1964: 259; cf. Schutz, 1962:  
328 350, 248/155).

329 Even though her memoir does chiefly refer to individual members,  
330 Brownmiller is emphatic about there being two types of voluntary groups  
331 within the movement:

332 NOW [the National Organization of Women] was a dues-paying mem-  
333 bership organization that welcomed the participation of men; its orga-  
334 nizational structure, with an elected national board and state divisions,  
335 was determinedly hierarchical. Women's Liberation, in name and spirit,  
336 sprang from the radical ferment of the civil rights, antiwar, and counter  
337 culture movements. Decentralized and antihierarchical, it functioned and  
338 flourished within an amorphous framework of small, ostensibly leader-  
339 less, usually short-lived groups . . . in which a male presence was unthink-  
340 able. NOW's commitment to equality of opportunity in employment was  
341 its strong suit. The fast-beating heart of Women's Liberation was analy-  
342 sis and theory. As a general rule, NOW preferred to rely on traditional  
343 forms of protest: committees and picket lines, lawsuits and lobbying, while  
344 Women's Liberation broke new ground through theoretical papers, imagi-  
345 native confrontations, and inventive direct action. The explosive creation of  
346 the antiviolence issues – rape, battery, incest and child molestation, sexual  
347 harassment – and later on, the controversial development of antipornogra-  
348 phy theory, belonged to the domain of Women's Liberation, as did the early  
349 surge of lesbian feminism and the rise of a vital, alternative feminist press.  
350 (Brownmiller, 1999: 7)

351 *How Did Women's Liberation Begin?*

352 Alfred Schutz does not specifically address how a movement for social change  
353 begins, but he does offer an account derived from W. I. Thomas about how  
354 crises occur in society.<sup>3</sup> Before a crisis there is "thinking as usual" relying  
355 on "cookbook" knowledge:

356 Any member born or reared within the group accepts the ready-made stan-  
357 dardized scheme of the cultural pattern handed down to him by ancestors,  
358 teachers, and authorities as an unquestioned and unquestionable guide in  
359 all the situations which normally occur within the social world. The knowl-  
360 edge correlated to the cultural pattern carries its evidence in itself – or,  
361 rather, it is taken for granted in the absence of evidence to the contrary.

It is a knowledge of trustworthy *recipes* for interpreting the social world 362  
 and for handling things and men in order to obtain the best results in every 363  
 situation with a minimum of effort by avoiding undesirable consequences. 364  
 (Schutz, 1964: 95) 365

This “thinking as usual” would seem to characterize American culture 366  
 before the 1960s. Of course it was recognized that women were somehow 367  
 different from men, and there were no doubt pockets of recognition of injustice 368  
 to women, but the notion of women as having shared concerns of their own 369  
 – much less organizations and intentions to change society – was not at all 370  
 widely recognized. Both Berkeley and Brownmiller venture into how that 371  
 preceding “consensus” itself arose, but it is sufficient here to say that there 372  
 was then a pre-crisis state of “thinking as usual” about women. 373

Schutz goes on to state four related assumptions that must hold for think- 374  
 ing as usual to continue: (1) that social life will continue such that the old 375  
 solutions will still work; (2) that knowledge handed down by “parents, teach- 376  
 ers, governments, traditions, habits, etc.” can be relied on; (3) that knowledge 377  
 about the general type or style of events suffices; and (4) that the systems 378  
 of “recipes as schemes of interpretation and expression” are not our private 379  
 affair, but are likewise accepted and applied by our contemporaries (Schutz, 380  
 1964: 96). It would seem, then, that a movement for social change can begin 381  
 when one or more of these assumptions fails. In that case, Schutz, following 382  
 Thomas, says, “a ‘crisis’ arises which . . . ‘interrupts the flow of habit and 383  
 gives rise to changed conditions of consciousness and practice’” (ibid). 384

Did a crisis arise for American women in the mid-1960s? Within what 385  
 became the liberal wing of the Women’s Movement, President Kennedy’s 386  
 Commission on the Status of Women in 1961 offered some help; he himself, 387  
 however, was indifferent about feminism, and sex-discrimination was left out 388  
 of his civil-rights legislation. President Johnson was no better, hesitating to 389  
 link the advancement of African Americans with women’s rights. What be- 390  
 came Title VII of the Civil Rights Act was added by a Southern conservative 391  
 in an attempt to derail the entire bill, and then the Equal Employment Op- 392  
 portunity Commission established by that law began by practically ignoring 393  
 sex-discrimination. According to the historian Berkeley, this became “a critical 394  
 factor in the 1966 resurgence of a mass feminist movement similar to that 395  
 which existed at the height of the Progressive Era (1900-1920)” (Berkeley, 396  
 1999: 20). 397

The origin of the radical wing is different. In 1964 a kind of memo was 398  
 written for a retreat of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee by 399  
 women volunteers tired of being confined to clerical and domestic tasks during 400  
 the Mississippi Freedom Summer. It included this comparison: “The average 401  
 white person doesn’t realize that he assumes he is superior. So too the average 402  
 SNCC worker finds it difficult to discuss the woman problem because of 403

404 the assumption of male superiority. Assumptions of male superiority are as  
405 widespread and deep-rooted and as crippling to woman as the assumptions  
406 of white supremacy are to the Negro" (quoted at Brownmiller, 1999: 13).  
407 Later during that retreat Stokeley Carmichael infamously joked: "What is the  
408 position of women in SNCC? The position of women in SNCC is prone"  
409 (ibid). Similar events occurred in other radical organizations. In one a woman  
410 was told, "Cool down, little girl, we have more important things to talk about  
411 than women's problems" (Brownmiller, 1999: 18).

412 The first radical women's group was soon formed in Chicago. Brownmiller  
413 quotes a member:

414 We talked incessantly. We talked about our pain, we discovered our righ-  
415 teous anger. We talked about our orgasms, and then we felt guilty for talking  
416 about our orgasms. Shouldn't we be doing actions? After all, the New Left  
417 was about action. We talked about the contempt and hostility that we felt  
418 from the males on the New Left and we talked about our inability to speak  
419 in public. What had happened? All of us had once been such feisty little  
420 suckers. But mostly we were exhilarated. We were ecstatic. We were ready  
421 to turn the world upside down. (Brownmiller, 1999: 18)

422 That group published a mimeographed newsletter until 1969. Overall, it  
423 would not seem difficult to identify the recipes within New Left thinking-as-  
424 usual that had failed for these women.

425 That is what happened within the Women's Movement. What of American  
426 society in general? In that context, the initiating event was Betty Friedan's *The*  
427 *Feminine Mystique* of 1966. It was based on some 200 questionnaires sent to  
428 her class of 1947 at Smith College in preparation for their fifteenth class  
429 reunion. Berkeley reports that "the book identified and popularized 'the prob-  
430 lem that has no name' that afflicted not only Friedan's Smith classmates but  
431 also hundreds of thousands of educated, white, middle-class suburban women  
432 who had exchanged their diplomas for a marriage license" (Berkeley, 1999:  
433 27). "The problem," she continues, "was one that each suburban housewife  
434 struggled with alone, until Friedan named it, collectivized it, and popularized  
435 it. 'As she made the beds, shopped for groceries, matched slipcover materials,  
436 ate peanut butter sandwiches with her children, chauffeured Cub Scouts and  
437 Brownies, [and] lay beside her husband at night, she was afraid to ask the silent  
438 question – Is this all? What kind of woman was she if she did not feel this mys-  
439 terious fulfillment waxing the kitchen floor?'" (ibid., quoting Friedan). Brown-  
440 miller says: "I'd read it in paperback a year later, around the time I went to  
441 Mississippi, and although Friedan had defined the problem largely in terms of  
442 bored, depressed, middle-class suburban housewives, who downed too many  
443 pills and weren't making use of their excellent educations, I'd seen myself on  
444 every page. *The Feminine Mystique* changed my life" (Brownmiller, 1999:  
445 3). In short, the recipe whereby marriage, children, and a house in suburbia

will bring happiness was widely recognized to have failed, especially for white, 446  
middle-class, and college-educated women. 447

*What Were the Actions of the Movement?* 448

In twenty years there were over a dozen issues that engaged the radical groups. 449  
The most important were childcare, sexual satisfaction, standards of beauty, 450  
abortion, rape, sexual abuse of children, battery, sexual harassment, women's 451  
health, lesbianism, and pornography. The exclusion of unescorted women 452  
from restaurants was easily eliminated, but a campaign against prostitution 453  
was abandoned when call girls protested the threat to their incomes. What 454  
constantly went on, however, were meetings of groups and a type of com- 455  
munication within them called "consciousness raising." This appears to be 456  
the fundamental action, no matter what particular issue was at stake or what 457  
further kind of action emerged from it. For Schutz, action includes social 458  
action, which is action that "involves the attitudes and actions of others and 459  
is oriented to them in its course" (Schutz, 1964: 13). Thus a style of group 460  
communication that is not only motivated by prevailing conditions in society, 461  
but is also designed to alter the attitudes of each new member as she enters 462  
the group, as well as strengthening the new attitudes emerging among all the 463  
participants, is already an example of social action before another specific 464  
action is chosen and carried out (Schutz, 1962: 67). 465

At least as something deliberately engaged in on a regular basis, *conscious-* 466  
*ness raising* is something original to Women's Liberation, where it was also 467  
named. Brownmiller calls it "a group exercise designed to unlock the door 468  
to collective truths unmediated by the opinions of men" (Brownmiller, 1999: 469  
5). She went to her first meeting two weeks after the Miss America protest. 470  
There were thirty women in blue jeans, long hair, and no makeup. Soon they 471  
were talking about the abortions they had had or had not been able to get. 472  
Brownmiller seems to have trumped everybody when she reported having not 473  
one but three. 474

Saying "I've had three illegal abortions" aloud was my feminist baptism, my 475  
swift immersion in the power of sisterhood. A medical procedure I'd been 476  
forced to secure alone, shrouded in silence, was not "a personal problem" 477  
any more than the matter of my gender in the newsroom was "a personal 478  
problem." My solitary efforts to forge my own destiny were fragments of 479  
women's shared, hidden history, links to the past and future generations, 480  
and pieces of a puzzle called sexual oppression. The simple technique of 481  
consciousness-raising had brought my submerged truths to the surface, 482  
where I learned that I was not alone. (Brownmiller, 1999: 7) 483

Brownmiller emphasizes that such realizations led to recognizing the po- 484  
litical dimensions of the personal: 485

486 Small-group consciousness-raising took hold ... suddenly and sponta-  
487 neously among American women in the suburbs and the cities ... Not  
488 everyone was temperamentally suited to the c.r. process, which required a  
489 high degree of honesty about intimate matters in front of relative strangers.  
490 Many of the "naturals" had been in group therapy or just adored talking  
491 about themselves. Others (I include myself in this category) had to over-  
492 come an inbred reluctance to speak confessionally, thinking it somewhat  
493 narcissistic. But we all believed in the political importance of our task. We  
494 expected that the pooled information would clear our heads and lead to  
495 analysis and theory, and it did. (Brownmiller, 1999: 79)

496 For example, where theory is concerned,

497 Artist Pat Mainardi's paper is called 'The Politics of Housework.' In it she  
498 examines every weaseling excuse that men put forward to avoid sharing the  
499 household duties, culminating, of course, with 'Housework is too trivial to  
500 even talk about.' Mainardi's paper is a knockout. It gives political impor-  
501 tance to a formerly private and personal female complaint. In a household  
502 where both partners work, why are *we* the sex that does the unpaid, repeti-  
503 tive, boring, time-and-energy-consuming tasks? Where is it written in the  
504 book of law that we're supposed to do the laundry, dust the table, and wash  
505 the dishes? After I read Pat Mainardi's paper, I no longer thought of house-  
506 work as my private battle with the man in my life. It's part of the universal  
507 male-female problem. – New thinking that flows from a reexamination of  
508 women's daily lives is what this new movement is all about. As Pat Mainardi  
509 insists, 'Participatory democracy begins at home.' As Carol Hanish writes  
510 in her paper on consciousness-raising and action, 'The personal is political.'  
511 – *The personal is political?* Housework is political. Abortion is political.  
512 Standards of feminine beauty are political. Women's oppression is politi-  
513 cal. Sexual satisfaction is political. A reevaluation of male-female relations  
514 is political. What else were we on the verge of discovering? What other  
515 so-called trivial issues and private battles consigned to the "personal" will  
516 we bring to light and redefine as political? (Brownmiller, 1999: 45)

517 Many insights were gained in such meetings, and some gained outside them  
518 were brought to them for refinement (Brownmiller, 1999: 96). This eventually  
519 led to challenges about members claiming individual authorship and royalties  
520 for books. In fact, there was actually quite a bit of conflict within and between  
521 groups (see, e.g., Brownmiller, 1999: 53 f.). But there was still a series of  
522 impressive direct actions that impacted on the wider American society. In  
523 1968 there was actually no bra burning in Atlantic City, but there was a  
524 Freedom Trash Can into which girdles, high heels, falsies, eyelash curlers,  
525 fake lashes, tweezers, and tubes of mascara were thrown (Brownmiller, 1999:  
526 39). Also, the policy of speaking exclusively to women journalists began then,  
527 as did national media coverage.

528 Then again, the technique of the *sit-in* was borrowed from the civil-rights  
529 movement. Over one hundred women staged one at the editorial office of the

*Ladies Home Journal*:

530

The decision to target the *Journal*, the quintessential magazine of the 'American Housewife' with a readership of 14 million, was a political statement in and of itself. As the demonstrators anticipated, their action netted media attention; once reporters and camera crews were in place, a statement was handed out that indicted the *Journal* for 'dealing superficially, unrealistically, or not at all with the real problems of today's women: job opportunity, day care, abortion . . . .' After a protracted standoff, a settlement was reached in which the women were given the opportunity to produce an eight-page supplement to be included in a future issue. When the supplement appeared in the August 1970 issue, it contained information on women and work, how to start consciousness-raising groups, a contact list of women's liberation groups, a proposal for a housewife's bill of rights . . . . (Berkeley, 1999: 47)

531  
532  
533  
534  
535  
536  
537  
538  
539  
540  
541  
542  
543

Another technique was the *speak-out*. Brownmiller writes: "Speak-outs based on the New York women's model were organized in other cities within the year, and subsequent campaigns to change public opinion in the following decade would utilize first-person testimony in a full range of issues from rape and battery to child abuse and sexual harassment. The importance of personal testimony in a public setting, which overthrew the received wisdom of 'the experts,' cannot be overestimated. It was an original technique and a powerful ideological tool" (Brownmiller, 1999: 109). On Berkeley's account, one action began from a conference:

544  
545  
546  
547  
548  
549  
550  
551  
552

The 1970 publication of *Women and Their Bodies* (soon to be retitled *Our Bodies, Ourselves*) gave the women's health movement its proverbial shot in the arm. This project, conceived and written by a small, radical feminist collective from Boston, grew out of a workshop held during the spring of 1969. Following the success of the conference, a dozen women conducted a free course on women's health issues for individuals and community groups; so popular was this course that the women, who eventually incorporated themselves as the Boston Women's Health Book Collective, decided to publish their research on women's health issues. The book became a runaway best-seller with over 200,000 copies sold by 1973 and over 2 million by the end of the decade. Much of the book's focus, like the women's health movement in general, centered on such topics as heterosexuality and homosexuality, reproduction (from menstruation to menopause), abortion, violence against women, and lessons in self-defense. The authors' growing awareness of the politics of health care also led them to include a critique of the American health-care system. (Berkeley, 1999: 63).

553  
554  
555  
556  
557  
558  
559  
560  
561  
562  
563  
564  
565  
566  
567  
568

Brownmiller's account of the workshop on women's health is slightly different. When the chair of the overflowing workshop expressed outrage at her obstetrician, it "unleashed a freewheeling exchange on patronizing male doctors, childbirth, orgasm, contraception, and abortion that was so voluble and

569  
570  
571  
572

573 intense that nobody wanted to go home. – ‘Everybody had a doctor story . . .  
574 . We put aside our prepared papers and did consciousness raising’” (Brown-  
575 miller, 1999: 181).

576 Brownmiller wrote a book on rape, and considers the theorizing on this  
577 issue to be the radical movement’s “most successful contribution to world  
578 thought” (Brownmiller, 1999: 194). This is not the place to present that theory,  
579 but her remark to *Good Housekeeping* can be quoted: “Rape is to women as  
580 lynching was to blacks. It’s a conscious process of intimidation that keeps all  
581 women in a state of fear” (Brownmiller, 1999: 204). There was the action of  
582 *monitoring* of rape cases that came to trial (Brownmiller, 1999: 218). Hotlines  
583 were established; by 1976, there were over 400 Rape Crisis Centers across the  
584 country and every state in the union had revised its laws on rape.

585 Pornography was and is the most divisive issue for the movement. This is  
586 also not the place to analyze the antiporn and anti-antiporn theories, but the  
587 direct action of *browsing* deserves mention: “While pretending to peruse the  
588 porno racks in convenience stores, they’d drip glue on the magazine pages and  
589 insert messages such as ‘Pornography Hurts Women’” (Brownmiller, 1999:  
590 301). On a larger scale there was a campaign of tours of the sex industry in New  
591 York’s Times Square, which the media especially loved (Brownmiller, 1999:  
592 305). Brownmiller remarks in 1999 that the “anti-porn initiative constituted  
593 the last gasp of radical feminism. No issue of comparable passion has arisen  
594 [since 1985] to take its place” (Brownmiller, 1999: 324).

#### 595 *How Did Women’s Liberation End?*

596 Why the Women’s Liberation phase of the Women’s Movement ended is not  
597 clear. How such a phase ends is as much a historical question as how it started.  
598 There was the usual burning-out in the radical groups, but for some reason, a  
599 new generation of volunteers did not arise (Brownmiller, 1999: 329). Could  
600 it be said that a new pattern of “thinking as usual” was established? It is  
601 said that the *Zeitgeist* changed with the election of President Reagan and the  
602 rise of the New Right, but this is not clearly an explanation. The movement  
603 lost the public’s attention by the mid-1980s. Pornography was the last and  
604 most divisive issue for Women’s Liberation. The liberal wing has of course  
605 continued. Comparison with other radical movements for social change in  
606 that and other eras would no doubt shed some light.

607 Finally, that much was accomplished in the two decades of Women’s Lib-  
608 eration might be recognized in retrospect:

609 Imagine a time – or summon it back into memory – when a husband was  
610 required to countersign a wife’s application for a credit card, a bank loan,  
611 or automobile insurance, when psychiatrists routinely located the cause  
612 of an unsatisfactory sex life in the frigid, castrating, ball-breaking female  
613 partner, when abortion was an illegal, back-alley procedure, when rape was

the woman's fault, when nobody dared talk about the battery that went on 614  
 behind closed doors, or could file a complaint about sexual harassment. 615  
 And remember the hostile humor that reinforced the times: the endless 616  
 supply of mother-in-law jokes, the farmer's daughter, the little old lady 617  
 in tennis shoes, the bored receptionist filing her nails, the dumb blonde 618  
 stenographer perched on her boss's lap, the lecherous tycoon chasing his 619  
 buxom secretary around the desk. (Brownmiller, 1999: 3) 620

Alfred Schutz died in 1959, which is before the radical social movements 621  
 against racism, the Vietnam War, sexism, etc., of the 1960s began, but he had 622  
 become sympathetic with the efforts of oppressed groups to attain equality, 623  
 and included age- as well as sex- and race-based inequalities in his concern. 624  
 (Embree 1999: 254) Against the revolutionary position, he was a reformer 625  
 who advocated a "strategy by which the evil of social tensions can at least be 626  
 diminished. This educational goal can in my opinion be reached," he wrote, 627  
 "only by a slow and patient modification of the system of relevances which 628  
 those in power impose on their fellow-men" (Schutz, 1964: 262, cf. Embree, 629  
 2000). The efforts of Women's Liberation were hardly slow and patient, but 630  
 one might wonder if their wider impact on American society was not through 631  
 the persuading of those in power, e.g., magazine editors, to impose a dif- 632  
 ferent relevance system. This too would seem decidable through historical 633  
 research. 634

### **The Historical Sciences in Schutz's Theory of the Cultural Sciences** 635

Does Schutz's theory of the cultural sciences, which is usually comprehended 636  
 as specified for the social sciences in the strict signification, include the his- 637  
 torical sciences? The more the inclusion of the historical sciences becomes 638  
 clear, the more urgent becomes the question of how the historical sciences are 639  
 a different species, and this question becomes critical if the difference urged 640  
 by Schutz proves, on Schutzian grounds, no longer valid. The question of the 641  
 difference of the historical sciences will be addressed after a brief discussion 642  
 of (a) the theoretical attitude, (b) basic concepts, and (c) some methodological 643  
 postulates specifiable for the historical sciences. Attempts to particularize his- 644  
 torical science into history of art, history of law, archaeology, etc., are plainly 645  
 possible, but will not be ventured here. On occasion, the reader will be further 646  
 referred to the case sketched above in Part II in order to be the more persuaded 647  
 of the plausibility of some interpretive assertions. 648

#### *The Historian's Attitude* 649

The outlines of a cultural-scientific account of science can be discerned in 650  
 general statements referring to all science as well as in the history-specific 651  
 statements in Schutz's oeuvre. Thus, "scientific activity itself occurs within 652

653 the tradition of socially derived knowledge, is based upon co-operation  
654 with other scientists, requires mutual corroboration and criticism, and can  
655 only be communicated by social interaction" (Schutz, 1962: 37; cf. Schutz,  
656 1970: 154). There can be "we-groups and they-groups of scientists" (Schutz,  
657 1985: 142/79). And, "considered purely as a human activity, scientific  
658 work is distinguished from other human activities merely by the fact that  
659 it constitutes the archetype for rational interpretation and rational ac-  
660 tion" (Schutz, 1964: 69). Schutz's emphasis, however, is on a contemplative  
661 attitude:

662 The attitude of the social scientist is that of a mere disinterested observer  
663 of the social world. He is not involved in the observed situation, which is  
664 to him not of practical but merely of cognitive interest. It is not the theater  
665 of his activities but merely the object of his contemplation. He does not act  
666 within it, vitally interested in the outcome of his actions, hoping or fearing  
667 what their consequences might be, but looks at it with the same detached  
668 equanimity with which the natural scientist looks at the occurrences in his  
669 laboratory. (Schutz, 1962: 36).

670 Recognition of this attitude is essential to Schutz's theory of science. If  
671 the above passage is comprehended as referring to social science in the broad  
672 signification, i.e., the cultural sciences, then this description would subsume  
673 the attitude of the historical scientist. The work of Brownmiller illustrated  
674 above is then not strictly scientific. Although they may be less involved in the  
675 situation than most expressions in non-scientific life, memoirs and writings  
676 by journalists are hardly disinterested. For the historian, they are source ma-  
677 terials. Schutz recognizes everyday life as the opposite of scientific thinking,  
678 and within it recognizes the roles of the "eye witness," "insider," "analyst,"  
679 and "commentator" (Schutz, 1964: 132), "reporter," which must include the  
680 journalist Brownmiller, was added to the list later. (Schutz, 1999: 293) The  
681 historical work of Berkeley would, however, appear scientific because it is  
682 produced in a theoretical attitude.

683 But is it the case that the historian is a scientific observer? When a his-  
684 torian observes predecessors, they are observed in the same way in which  
685 absent contemporaries are often observed in the social sciences in the strict  
686 signification, i.e., on the basis of texts and artifacts. It is clear in §41 of the  
687 *Aufbau* that historical observation of predecessors includes the direct form  
688 when one remembers others who are now dead. Then again, predecessors  
689 can be known through intermediaries who are alive now but knew those now  
690 dead. Thus the line between predecessors and contemporaries is constantly  
691 changing. Beyond that, however, there are only signs, i.e., records and mon-  
692 uments, through which one can observe for the purposes of history (Schutz,  
693 1932/1974: 294/209).

*Clarification of Basic Concepts for the Historical Sciences*

694

The fact that Schutz's concern with basic concepts is as much a part of his theory of science as his methodology strictly so-called is a fact that may not yet be widely recognized. If so, this may be because the expression "basic concepts" does not occur frequently in the American writings. It and a synonym do occur in the opening sentences of an essay written in 1945: "Choice and decision are fundamental categories of the theory of human action and therefore of the theory of the social sciences. Yet with very few exceptions social scientists have so far failed to clarify these basic concepts of their sciences" (Schutz, 1972: 565). The first page of the *Aufbau*, however, contains this list of "geisteswissenschaftlichen Grundbegriffe": "the interpretation of one's own and others' experiences, meaning-establishment and meaning-interpretation, symbol and symptom, motive and project, meaning-adequacy and causal adequacy, and, above all, the nature of ideal-typical concept formation, upon which is based the very attitude of the social sciences" (Schutz, 1932/1974: 9/xxxix). And then the penultimate section of Schutz's book begins, "having completed our analysis of the most important basic concepts [*Grundbegriffe*] of interpretive sociology. . . ." (Schutz, 1932/1974: 340/241; cf. Schutz, 1996: 121 ff.).

This list can be expanded. The very first sentence of the *Aufbau* reports that Schutz was long concerned with the science-theoretical (*wissenschaftstheoretischen*) writings of Max Weber (it will be recalled that, for Schutz, cultural scientists as well as philosophers can participate in the theory of science). The logical structure of Weber's sociology includes the concepts of social action, social relationship, communal relationship, associative relationship, etc. (Schutz, 1932/1974: 13/5). Schutz's objection, however, is that although Weber saw the need for secure foundations for the social sciences, he was interested in science-theoretical problems only insofar as they bore directly on his specialized research and thus, for example, Weber's concept of the meaningful act of the individual does not define a primitive, as he thinks it does (Schutz, 1932/1974: 15/7). Schutz's project in the *Aufbau* thus includes going deeper than Weber did in clarifying basic concepts.

Clarification of basic concepts can have negative outcomes, but nevertheless disclose fundamental insights:

In his specialized studies [Georg] Simmel made lasting and valuable contributions, although very few of his basic concepts [*Grundbegriffe*] have survived critical scrutiny, not even his key concept of reciprocal effect (*Wechselwirkung*). . . . However, Simmel's underlying idea has proven fruitful and is still utilized. This is the notion that all concrete social phenomena should be traced back to modes of individual behavior and that the particular social form of such modes should be understood through detailed description. (Schutz, 1932/1974: 12/4)

736 Finally, while there may be additional basic concepts for the specifically  
737 historical sciences, those mentioned above are clearly of use in the investi-  
738 gations done in the historical as well as in the social sciences in the strict  
739 signification and are, as Schutz was aware, cultural-scientific basic concepts.  
740 Sixteen basic concepts are expressed in the passages quoted in this subsec-  
741 tion. It is obvious that every one of them is relevant for the understanding the  
742 Women's Liberation Movement sketched above.

743 *Some Methodological Postulates for the Historical Sciences*

744 Mere consultation of the indices of volumes I and II of the *Collected Papers*  
745 shows that Schutz discusses at least six methodological postulates (there are  
746 at least that many more). Three will be presented here to show that they hold  
747 for the historical as well as other cultural sciences. The inclusion of history  
748 is clear: "the researcher who occupies himself scientifically with the objects  
749 of the world of nature is in no way in the same relationship to the objects  
750 of his interest as the sociologist, the economist, the theorist of law, or the  
751 historian. Any well-founded consideration of the methodological problems  
752 of the social sciences needs to begin with the clarification of this differ-  
753 ence" (Schutz, 1996: 121). Briefly, in order to have the observable nature  
754 their theories refer to, the naturalistic sciences require an abstraction from  
755 how the world in everyday life is originally sociocultural, while the various  
756 cultural sciences do not perform that abstraction but rather retain the con-  
757 crete sociocultural world as their subject matter (Schutz, 1962: 58; Schutz,  
758 1997: 133). Positively put, "the constructs used by the social scientist are,  
759 so to speak, constructs of the second degree, namely constructs of the con-  
760 structs made by the actors on the social scene, whose behavior the scientist  
761 observes and tries to explain in accordance with the procedural . . . rules of  
762 his science" (Schutz, 1962: 6). Naturalistic science abstracts from primary  
763 constructs.

764 Schutz uses the word "postulate" most of the time, but he also uses "rules,"  
765 which seems short for "the rules of procedure" or "the procedural rules"  
766 as used by his friend Felix Kaufmann: "a body of accepted rules of proce-  
767 dure of thinking is called the method of science" (Schutz, 1962: 5). It will  
768 be remembered that it is the task of philosophical but also scientific sci-  
769 ence theorists to make such rules explicit for the consideration ultimately by  
770 scientists.

771 1. *The postulate of subjective interpretation.* The principle whereby "any  
772 phenomenon of the social world . . . has a different aspect for the sociologist  
773 and for the man who acts and thinks within it" is "the most important con-  
774 tribution of Max Weber's methodological writings to the problems of social  
775 science" (Schutz, 1964: 92). Here Schutz uses "aspect" to translate Weber's  
776 *subjektiver Sinn*, which he usually renders literally as "subjective meaning"

but also increasingly in the later writings renders as “subjective interpretation” 777  
 even though he considers it an “unfortunate term” (Schutz, 1962: 24). He is 778  
 especially hesitant about “objective meaning (*objektiver Sinn*)”: 779

It was Max Weber who made this distinction the cornerstone of his method- 780  
 ology. Subjective meaning, in this sense, is the meaning which an action 781  
 has for the actor or which a relation or situation has for the person or per- 782  
 sons involved therein; objective meaning is the meaning the same action, 783  
 relation, or situation has for anybody else, be it a partner or observer in 784  
 everyday life, the social scientist, or the philosopher. The terminology is 785  
 unfortunate because the term ‘objective meaning’ is obviously a misnomer, 786  
 in so far as the so-called ‘objective’ interpretations are, in turn, relative to 787  
 the particular attitudes of the interpreters and, therefore, in a certain sense, 788  
 ‘subjective.’ (Schutz, 1964: 275) 789

One might go beyond Schutz’s letter and experiment with the expressions 790  
 “insider interpretation” and “outsider interpretation.” Thus, one can say that 791  
 the fundamental insider interpretation is that of the actor of her own action, 792  
 relation, or situation and that in contrast there are the common-sense outsider 793  
 interpretations produced by her partners and observers in everyday life. (In- 794  
 sider interpretations are what Brownmiller’s book chiefly contains.) In further 795  
 contrast, there are then the outsider interpretations of the scientist and the 796  
 philosopher. These are not in the practical but in the theoretical attitude and 797  
 would be (a) scientific theory of sociocultural things, e.g., Berkeley’s book, 798  
 or (b) scientific theory of science, as found in to some extent in Weber but not 799  
 in Parsons, while (c) the science theory of Schutz is a matter of philosophical 800  
 outsider interpretations. And as seen above in Part I, it is through reflecting 801  
 on the practices of scientists that the science theorist is able to formulate rules 802  
 that the scientists may or may not accept and attempt consciously to follow in 803  
 order to do their science better. 804

The rule or postulate of subjective interpretation is formulated repeatedly 805  
 by Schutz; perhaps the following two formulations together show, among other 806  
 things, how gentle is his prescriptivism: 807

What is really meant by the postulate of subjective interpretation is that the 808  
 actor understands what he is doing and that, in daily life as well as in science, 809  
 the observer who wants to grasp the meaning of an action observed has to 810  
 investigate the subjective self-understanding of the actor. Strictly speaking, 811  
 it is only the actor who knows where his action starts and where it ends. The 812  
 observer sees merely the segments of the ongoing course of action which 813  
 becomes manifest to him . . . (Schutz, 1997: 138) 814

The social scientist must . . . ask, or he must, at least, always be in a 815  
 position to ask, what happens in the mind of an individual actor whose act 816  
 has led to the phenomenon in question. We can formulate this *postulate* 817  
*of the subjective interpretation* more correctly as follows: The scientist 818  
 has to ask what type of individual mind can be constructed and what typ- 819

820 ical thoughts must be attributed to it to explain the fact in question as  
821 the result of its activity within an understandable relation. (Schutz, 1964:  
822 85)

823 If one thinks about what a historian does and considers, e.g., how Berkeley  
824 could use work like that of Brownmiller, it is plausible that the historian's work  
825 includes asking about the insider interpretations of the actions of historical  
826 actors, which may or may be expressed by those actors. But does Schutz's ac-  
827 count explicitly extend that far or, in other words, is he using "social scientist"  
828 in the above passages to express the broad signification best expressed as "cul-  
829 tural scientist" that subsumes the historical scientist? Although he does not  
830 mention "subjective interpretation" in the following passage, there is clearly  
831 a place for it:

832 Now historical research does not take as its primary object the subjective  
833 experiences of the authors of source materials. Yet these sources refer  
834 throughout to the direct and indirect social experience of their authors. As  
835 a result, the objective content communicated by the sign has a greater or  
836 lesser concreteness. The procedure of historical research is at this point the  
837 same as that used in interpreting the words of someone who is speaking to  
838 me. In the latter case I gain through communication an indirect experience  
839 of what the speaker has experienced directly. In the same way, when I  
840 am reading a historical document, I can imagine myself face to face with  
841 its author and learning from him about his contemporaries; one by one his  
842 contemporaries take their places within my world of predecessors. (Schutz,  
843 1932/1974: 294/209)

844 2. *The postulate of adequacy.* The following passage expresses not only  
845 what this postulate consists in, but also its significance, although it also de-  
846 serves to be noted that what is called "scientific system" in this passage is  
847 called "scientific model" in a later statement:

848 Each term used in a scientific system referring to human action must be  
849 so constructed that a human act performed within the life-world by an  
850 individual actor in the way indicated by the typical construction would  
851 be reasonable and understandable for the actor himself, as well as for his  
852 fellow men. This postulate is of extreme importance for the methodology  
853 of social science. What makes it possible for a social science to refer at all  
854 to events in the life-world is the fact that the interpretation of any human  
855 act by the social scientist might be the same as that by the actor or by his  
856 partner. (Schutz, 1964: 85–86)

857 For example, this would signify that Brownmiller, like any other contem-  
858 porary participant, could find Berkeley's historical account intelligible and  
859 reasonable, which does not imply that it is found to be in all respects true.  
860 When it is a question of predecessors, the historian asks whether, if the actor

were alive, she would or would not find the historian's account understandable 861  
and reasonable. 862

### 3. *The postulate of logical consistency* 863

The system of typical constructs designed by the scientist has to be estab- 864  
lished with the highest degree of clarity and distinctness of the conceptual 865  
framework implied and must be fully compatible with the principles of 866  
formal logic. Fulfillment of this postulate warrants the objective validity 867  
of the thought objects constructed by the social scientist, and their strictly 868  
logical character is one of the most important features by which scientific 869  
thought objects are distinguished from the thought objects constructed by 870  
common-sense thinking in daily life which they have to supersede. (Schutz, 871  
1962: 43) 872

Since Brownmiller's memoir is well written and has no obvious obscurities 873  
and confusions, a contrast with Berkeley's also lucid history is not conspicu- 874  
ous. But if one thinks about the information that Brownmiller gathered from 875  
others through interviewing and reading as well as from her own memory, 876  
then the contrast between their accounts might become greater. 877

As mentioned, there are more postulates to Schutz's theory of science, but 878  
enough has been done to show that some of his postulates for the social sci- 879  
ences in the strict signification hold also for the historical sciences and hence 880  
are postulates of method for the social sciences in the broad signification, i.e., 881  
for the cultural sciences. It has also been shown above that the basic concepts 882  
as well as the attitude of the social scientist in the strict signification are shared 883  
by historical sciences. 884

### **How Are the Historical Sciences Different?** 885

From his scattered remarks, it is clear that Schutz offered a considerable 886  
beginning for a theory of the historical sciences. At the same time, he never 887  
abandoned his position that the social sciences in the strict signification are 888  
about the world of contemporaries and the historical sciences are about the 889  
world of predecessors, a position first expressed in the *Aufbau* of 1932 (Schutz, 890  
1932/1974: 23/14) and also expressed in his last essay, "Some Structures of 891  
the Life-World" (Schutz, 1966: 119). Yet the example presented in Part II is 892  
clearly incompatible with that position. Those whom Berkeley writes about 893  
were mostly alive when she wrote about them. Either Schutz has no place 894  
for contemporary history or contemporary history is a social science in the 895  
strict signification. Few would doubt that Berkeley's book is a work in history. 896  
Accordingly, there is need for a new *differentia specifica* for the historical 897  
sciences. 898

Schutz became implicitly prepared for this situation. Originally he seems 899  
unprepared to recognize how historians can redefine their scientific field 900

901 (Schutz, 1932/1974: §41). Later on, however, he said: “Of course, the the-  
902 oretical thinker may choose at his discretion – a choosing solely determined  
903 by inclinations rooted in his intimate personality – the science in which he  
904 wants to carry out his investigations. But as soon as he has made up his  
905 mind in this respect, the scientist enters a pre-constituted world of scien-  
906 tific contemplation handed down to him by the historical tradition of his  
907 science” (Schutz, 1996: 47). “There are,” in other words, “the historical  
908 boundaries of the realm of his science which each scientist has inherited  
909 from his ancestors as a stock of approved propositions” (Schutz, 1964: 87-  
910 88). The interesting question of how the structure of a preconstituted world of  
911 scientific contemplation can change can be set aside here. But if the sci-  
912 ence of history came to have a species called “contemporary history” in  
913 which living others are thematized, which Berkeley’s work shows that it  
914 does, then it seems that Schutz would have accepted it. How he would then  
915 have differentiated the historical from the other cultural sciences is not so  
916 clear.

917 Are there any other clues about differences of the historical sciences in  
918 Schutz’s oeuvre? Three have been noticed. Given the then recent *Methoden-*  
919 *streit* in German speaking philosophy, it is curious that Schutz has so little to  
920 say about the ideographic/nomothetic contrast <sup>4</sup>:

921 The dogmatization of the purported contrast between the two types of  
922 sciences has frequently originated from an unjustified identification of the  
923 problems and methods common to all the social sciences with those of one  
924 particular social science. Because history has to deal with unique and non-  
925 recurrent events, it was contended that all social sciences are ideographic  
926 and thus seek singular assertory propositions, whereas natural sciences are  
927 looking for laws. (Schutz, 1997: 127).

928 Schutz does not accept the ideographic/nomothetic difference as holding  
929 between the naturalistic and cultural sciences, but does he consider the histor-  
930 ical species of cultural science ideographic? It does appear that he recognized  
931 unique and non-recurrent events:

932 In order to grasp the subjective meaning an action has for an actor, the social  
933 scientist has, however, only rarely if at all to turn to a concrete individual  
934 actor and his acts. To be sure, to any individual actor the meaning of his  
935 action has to be necessarily unique and individual because it originates in the  
936 unique and individual biographical situation of the actor. We have learned  
937 from Whitehead that all sciences have to construct thought objects of their  
938 own which supersede the thought objects of common-sense thinking. The  
939 thought objects constructed by the social sciences do not refer to unique  
940 acts of unique individuals, occurring within a unique situation. By his  
941 particular methodological devices, the social scientist replaces the thought  
942 object of common-sense thought relating to unique events and occurrences  
943 by constructing a model of a sector of the social world within which merely

those typified events occur that are relevant to the scientist's particular 944  
 problem under scrutiny. (Schutz, 1997: 145). 945

By this passage it would seem that the social sciences in at least the strict 946  
 signification can indirectly refer to unique and presumably non-recurrent 947  
 events, at least insofar as they are referred to in the common-sense inter- 948  
 pretations or constructs that scientific constructs are about. But would the 949  
 situation not be the same for the historical sort of cultural sciences? 950

Considering the example given above in Part II, it seems difficult and 951  
 perhaps impossible for the historian not to think in terms of types where 952  
 phenomena such as Women's Liberation are concerned. The recourse to 953  
 consciousness-raising meetings, for example, was not a unique but a recurrent 954  
 event. Was there not a type of activist, a type of problem, and a type of direct 955  
 action? Then, while the movement as a whole is a unique episode, is it not 956  
 compared by the historian with the Civil Rights Movement and the Environ- 957  
 mental Movement, on which there are books in the same series with Berkeley's 958  
 book, and which can also be called typical social movements in the United 959  
 States of the 1960s? Indeed, can one even use language in everyday life or in 960  
 science without using types? Then again, are there not unique phenomena that 961  
 social scientists in the strict signification seek to understand, e.g., a particular 962  
 election investigated by a political scientist? In sum, both species of cultural 963  
 science have ultimate reference to unique and non-recurrent events but both 964  
 also resort to types in attempting to establish knowledge about them. 965

Secondly, the following passage may seem to differentiate the two species 966  
 of cultural science (It can also be taken to confirm that the methodological 967  
 postulates hold for the historical sciences): 968

The principle of relevance, the postulate of the subjective interpretation, and 969  
 that of adequacy, are applicable at each level of social study. For instance, 970  
 all the historical sciences are governed by them. The next step would be to 971  
 circumscribe within the social sciences the category of those we call the 972  
 theoretical ones. The outstanding feature of these theoretical sciences is 973  
 the interpretation of the social world in terms of a system of determinate 974  
 logical structure . . . . (Schutz, 1964: 86; cf. Schutz, 1996: 23).<sup>5</sup> 975

If "social study" here is synonymous with "cultural science," this passage 976  
 might be taken to signify that the specifically social sciences are theoretical 977  
 while the historical sciences are not. This is not "theoretical" in the significa- 978  
 tion of the theoretical attitude, which all sciences share. It would also seem 979  
 not to refer to the contrast of theory and fact (Schutz, 1996: 150). In one place, 980  
 Schutz does list "all the theoretical sciences of human affairs – economics, 981  
 sociology, the sciences of law, linguistics, cultural anthropology, etc." (Schutz, 982  
 1962: 58), which are all social sciences in the strict signification. But if a dif- 983  
 ference of the historical and the social species within "social study" is alluded 984

985 to, it is difficult to comprehend on the basis of Schutz's oeuvre what it might  
986 be. Historical accounts certainly have at least implicit logical structure, so that  
987 the postulate of logical consistency applies to them, and what "determinate"  
988 might signify in this connection is also not clear.

989 Thirdly and finally, Schutz once interestingly characterizes the seer by  
990 saying that "he would proceed like a historiographer, except that the latter  
991 explains the present situation by events looked at in terms of the past tense or  
992 the present perfect tense, or a past situation by events looked at in terms of  
993 the pluperfect tense" (Schutz, 1964: 279; cf. Schutz, 1996: 65). One problem  
994 with this position is that that the events by which something is explained are  
995 always in the past of the explanandum, and thus historical explanation is not,  
996 or at least not yet, distinct from explanation used in the social sciences in the  
997 strict signification. Perhaps, however, it is a matter of how far one goes back  
998 in searching for an explanation.

999 Schutz does recognize not only teleological explanation in terms of in-  
1000 order-to motives, but also aitiological explanation, as it may be called, in  
1001 terms of what he calls "because motives." This model can be extended from  
1002 individual members to groups such as Women's Liberation. Yet aitiological  
1003 explanations in contemporary history and sociology, for example, are not  
1004 different if they explain events by earlier events within the region of con-  
1005 temporaries. But contemporary history is different from the social sciences  
1006 in the strict signification if its explanations reach back beyond the realm  
1007 of contemporaries into the realm of predecessors. Schutz does not say or  
1008 imply this, but it is a difference in essence rather than merely in empha-  
1009 sis. Differently put, contemporary history follows the influence of prede-  
1010 cessors into the realm of contemporaries, which the social sciences in the  
1011 narrow signification do not need to do. In addition, this is something that is  
1012 done, for example, in Berkeley's history of women's liberation, i.e., in the  
1013 concrete practice of science that Schutz's science theory fundamentally re-  
1014 spects. Other types of historical science would begin as well as end their  
1015 explanations in the realm of predecessors. This solution to the problem of  
1016 the difference of the historical sciences is not Schutz's, but it does seem  
1017 Schutzian.

## 1018 Notes

- 1019 1. See the appended list of Schutz's writings in the References section for the abbreviations  
1020 used for his publications.
- 1021 2. I thank Michael Barber for this information from the Nachlass on the exchange with Strauss.
- 1022 3. I am grateful to my colleague Stanford Lyman for reminding me of this part of Schutz's  
1023 position.
- 1024 4. I think David Carr for reminding me of the *Methodenstreit* in Schutz's recent past.
- 1025 5. I am grateful to NASU Hisashi for reminding me of this distinction mentioned by Schutz.

## References

1026

- Berkeley, K. (1999). *The Women's Liberation Movement in America*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press. 1027  
1028
- Brownmiller, S. (1999). *In Our Time: Memoir of a Revolution*. New York: Dell Publishing. 1029
- Embree, L. (1980). Methodology is where human scientists and philosophers can meet: Reflections on the Schutz-Parsons exchange. *Human Studies* 3: 367–373. 1030  
1031
- Embree, L. (Ed.) (1998). *Alfred Schutz's "Sociological Aspects of Literature:" Construction and Complementary Essays*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers. 1032  
1033
- Embree, L. (1999). The Ethical-Political Side of Schutz: His Contributions at the 1956 Institute on Ethics Concerned with Barriers to Equality of Opportunity. In L. Embree (Ed.), *Schutzian Social Science*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers. 1034  
1035  
1036
- Embree, L. (2000). Schutz on Reducing Social Tensions. In K. Thompson and L. Embree (Eds.), *Phenomenology of the Political*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers. 1037  
1038
- Husserl, E. (1989). *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy, Second Book*. trans. R. Rojcewicz and A. Schuwer. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers. 1039  
1040  
1041
- Schutz, A. (1985). *Alfred Schutz Aron Gurwitsch Briefwechsel 1939–1959*. Ed. R. Grathoff. München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag. English translation: *Philosophers in Exile: The Correspondence of Alfred Schutz and Aron Gurwitsch, 1939–1959*. Trans. J. C. Evans. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989. 1042  
1043  
1044  
1045
- Schutz, A. (1972). Choice and the Social Sciences. In L. Embree (Ed.), *Life-World and Consciousness: Essays for Aron Gurwitsch*, pp. 565–590. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press. 1046  
1047  
1048
- Schutz, A. (1977). Husserl and His Influence on Me. In L. Embree (Ed.), *The Annals of Phenomenological Sociology*, 2: 40–44. 1049  
1050
- Schutz, A. (1962). *Collected Papers, Vol. I, The Problem of Social Reality*. In M. Natanson (Ed.), The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff. 1051  
1052
- Schutz, A. (1964). *Collected Papers, Vol. II, Studies in Social Theory*, A. Brodersen (Ed.), The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff. 1053  
1054
- Schutz, A. (1966). *Collected Papers, Vol. III, Studies in Phenomenological Philosophy*, I. Schutz (Ed.), The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff. 1055  
1056
- Schutz, A. (1996). *Collected Papers, Vol. IV*, H. Wagner, G. Psathas, and F. Kersten (Eds.), Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers. 1057  
1058
- Schutz, A. (1999). Memorandum to Harold Lasswell of June 7, 1956. In L. Embree (Ed.), *Schutzian Social Science*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers. 1059  
1060
- Schutz, A. (1997). Positivistic Philosophy and the Actual Approach of Interpretative Social Science: An Ineditum of Alfred Schutz from Spring 1953. In L. Embree (Ed.), *Husserl Studies*. 14: 123–49. 1061  
1062  
1063
- Schutz, A. (1970). *Reflections on the Problem of Relevance*. R.M. Zaner (Ed.), New Haven: Yale University Press. 1064  
1065
- Schutz, A. (1932/1974). *Der sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch. English translation: (1967) *Phenomenology of the Social World*. Trans. G. Walsh and F. Lehnert. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press. The English pagination will be offered after the German original. 1066  
1067  
1068  
1069
- Schutz, A. (1978). *The Theory of Social Action*, R. Grathoff (Ed.), Bloomington: Indiana University Press. 1070  
1071
- Wagner, H.R. (1983). *Alfred Schutz: An Intellectual Biography*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1072  
1073