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Blinding the Medusa's Eye: Prolegomena to a Social Hermeneutics

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BLINDING THE MEDUSA'S EYE: PROLEGOMENA TO A SOCIAL HERMENEUTICS

by

David Boyer

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of The Graduate College in partial fulfillment of the Degree of Master of Arts

Western Michigan University
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The individuals to whom I am a friend deserve a special measure of gratitude for the wisdom and counsel extended to me during the period in which this thesis came into being. This is particularly so in that the pages following are, in a sense, autobiographical and mark my own change of inquiry-standpoints. I therefore wish to extend my deepest thanks to my mentors, Professors William Bennett, Jr. and Richard Pulaski; and to Robert Wait, with whom I was acquainted for too short a time. It is also a pleasure to acknowledge the encouragement, enthusiasm, and critical acumen shown to this thesis by my fellow graduate students, Paul Dorsey, Robert Mendelsohn, and William Schley. Lastly, there are no words to adequately express my feelings toward my family—my parents and especially my wife, Beverly, and my son, Scott—for having sustained me during the very painful times that characterize such an aforementioned change in inquiry-standpoints.

David Boyer
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Who borrows the Medusa's eye
Resigns to the empirical lie.
The knower petrifies the known:
The subtle dancer turns to stone.

Theodore Roszak

This thesis is about the fact that it is so, that adopting the Medusa's eye of positivism turns the subtle dancer to stone. The traditional epistemology, and corresponding ontology, of mainstream sociology is incapable of dealing with the complexity, subtlety, and ambiguity of social experience without thingifying, objectifying, or petrifying it. The traditional ontology/epistemology, based as it is on a passion for precision, on the ideal of verification—in short, on the notions of measurement and control—has led to a situation which can be characterized by what the Greeks called hubris. This attitude of arrogance

1 The poetic metaphor by Roszak (1969:290) is the perfect capsulation of our thesis as we hope to show in the following pages.

2 Scott Buchanan is quoted in Virginia Floyd (1972:7) as noting: "The fundamental notions in tragedy are called hubris and nemesis. The first is the attitude of arrogance or insolence that arises from blindness in human nature. The second is the eventual consequence of that blindness and arrogance, the vengeance that the ignored factor in a situation takes on man and his virtues." Our position is that a social hermeneutics (or hermeneutical sociology) will stave off nemesis.
toward the social experience results in our being taught a hubristic sociology. In order to see this we must examine the structure of the discipline. And after we have shared the thinking of others concerning that situation, we can introduce an alternative.

This thesis, then, is an attempt to join the dialogue concerning the foundational aspects of sociology. Accordingly, we shall join voices with an innovative thinker in sociology, Robert Friedrichs, and present a modification of his application of Thomas Kuhn's theory regarding the nature of scientific endeavour to the field of sociology. In so doing we hope to make it clear that a social hermeneutics is a possible alternative, and shed some light on the process by which such a discipline might be conducted. We underline the fact that this is a prolegomena—an introduction—and admit that this thesis (perhaps more than most) is characterized by what the German scholars call unabgesichert, that is, it is insufficiently protected from critical attack. We note this not to dodge or evade the criticism but rather to point up that our rendering of the connections between a variety of thinkers concerned with social phenomena is meant to illustrate that these are the important issues—regardless of whether our statements prove lasting.

3 We are indebted to the trio of Peter Berger, Brigette Berger and Hansfried Kellner (1973:viii) for this scholarly apology.
Hermeneutics is viewed by us as a necessary mode of thinking--
of consciousness, if you will--in order to combat the hubris of the
bulk of sociological activity. We characterize this activity as hubris-
tic because we find that we cannot "wish away" the movement of
sociological thought toward the arrogant and violent manipulation of
the social world. That is, as Friedrichs himself so beautifully points
out, it is intrinsic to our dominant theoretical bent, the extent toward
which we pursue typical scientific goals and assumptions, that we view
people as objects. People are de-personized in our efforts to emulate
the rage for order, prediction and control that we deem to character-
ize normal, natural science. Rather than capitulate to the view that
man can't be studied as human beings, we propose that a rapproche-
ment with philosophy--particularly Heideggerian phenomenology--will
lead to the development of a "new" discipline that we choose to call
social hermeneutics. This discipline is constitutive of a new para-
digm (or consciousness) and hence falls logically into the Kuhn-
Friedrichs mode of analysis. It is premised upon the delineation of
a "new body of data" (to use the old terminology) which demands, in
order to protect its integrity, a "new" mode of thinking about it.
The "new" is somewhat misleading, however, in that the "data" [the
pulsating profusion of world experience to use the expression of
Calvin Schrag (1969)] has always been there, as has the mode of
thought appropriate to it.
While we don't anticipate any serious objections to our contention that the "data" has always been there, we realize the provocative nature of our claim that a mode of thinking that could be called hermeneutical has also always been present (in varying strengths). Heidegger\(^4\) would go so far as to suggest that the pre-Socratic Greek epitomized this consciousness and that our history since then has been a fall away from that mode of thought into a contrasting mode of thinking--representational--which has been ever more dominant since Descartes. So we are suggesting that what is really needed to fully comprehend the sociological enterprise is the place occupied within it of what we might call representational or modern consciousness. Furthermore, we argue that many phenomenon (an increasing number) are anomalous data for this consciousness for it is in fact not constituted to adequately interpret those phenomena (e.g., the opposition movement of the last decade). By viewing man in an objective mode we strip his experience of its nature as event and as drama and leave it as objective and verifiable process. Our concern is less with understanding man in all his ambiguity than it is with overemphasizing those features amenable to quantification and measurement, hence to the presentation of information which can (supposedly) contribute to

\(^4\) The best treatment of Heidegger's analysis of truth is to be found in Macomber (1967).
theories which will explain him. As long as life appears to be stable and homogeneous the prevalent notions of system, order, etc. appear to adequately reflect the nature of our experience. But the opposition movement of the last decade in particular has hastened the accumulation of anomalous data. The importance of the research and study of another tradition (other than that of positivism) may now become apparent to us. That is, with Husserl we may proclaim "Back to the data!" and step into the inquiry standpoint that is contemporary phenomenology for a transformation of self that permits, rather than blocks, understanding of self and society, that permits the understanding that the two are coextensive.

To step into the inquiry standpoint of contemporary phenomenology is to ask, with the late Jewish theologian Abraham Heschel, if it is "... not possible that our entire civilization is built upon a misinterpretation of man?" (1965:5). The problematic for thinkers such as Heschel and Heidegger is one of false knowledge rather than lack of knowledge. That is, as Heschel says, "The paradox is that man is an obscure text to himself" (1965:6). It is at the very crux of social hermeneutics that the text (or text-analogue) demands interpretation, but not an interpretation underpinned by a positivist philosophy.

In order to see that the problematic mentioned above (i.e., false knowledge) pertains to sociology we shall follow the line of argument
that our understanding of the nature of sociology is based upon a misinterpretation. This line of argument has eventuated from work conducted in a "sub-discipline"—the sociology of science. As the activities of science became a legitimate focal point for research and the attendant theory construction, it became obvious that sociology itself should be studied also. Our concern is with the major theoretical efforts in this area.

Accompanying the increasingly frequent journal articles concerned with a sociology of sociology (principally in a house organ, the American Sociologist) has been the publication of two major treatises in the same area, Robert Friedrichs' *A Sociology of Sociology* and Alvin Gouldner's *The Coming Crisis in Western Sociology*, both published in 1970. Although the projects were conceived and completed independently of one another, the convergence, as one of the authors has noted, is "startling." Friedrichs summarizes

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5 The reviews of these two works (especially Gouldner's) make up an intriguing set of documents. Reactions are so diverse as to be polar and the acrimony extended toward Gouldner (some is returned) is astonishing. We suggest that an interpretation of these reviews might support Friedrichs' hypothesis that "... major shifts in empirical and/or theoretical models are grounded in what are essentially conversion experiences in which a new 'world view' competes almost ideologically with an older frame of reference. There is no simple, clean-cut movement from 'error' to 'truth.' What appears is a competing gestalt that redefines crucial problems, introduces new methods, and establishes uniquely new standards for solutions... Personal factors, aesthetic predilections, the age, role and private interests of individuals, and subspecializations are all involved. Persuasion
that convergence thusly:

He describes his project quite explicitly as a "sociology of sociology" and, in doing so makes clear, as I do myself, the conviction that there is room for more than one . . . . Each centers about the issue of "crisis," views that "crisis (my "revolution") without trepidation . . . . In the process we view Parsonian system analysis together with functional theory in general heavily implicated, note their congruence with the larger socio-economic setting in which they emerged, and suggest that orthodox sociologists in Marxist societies have found much in social system/functional analysis of late that coalesces with their own theoretical intent and societal aspiration . . . we both emphasize the implacable role played by the sociologists' assumptions regarding himself and the nature of his discipline . . . each concludes that positivist assumptions have transformed social man into an impersonal object, have obscured the intimate link between "knowing" and "changing" . . . both note the manner in which the traditional definition of the sociologist as "value free" has contributed to career self interest, yet reject it as simplistic and irresponsible. (1971:101)

No small part of that congruence is Gouldner's professed interest in the very ontology of mainstream American social science (its "domain assumptions" and "world hypotheses") and Friedrichs' corresponding emphasis on the epistemology emanating from what they both see, although for Friedrichs it is the central tenet of his work, as the paradigmatic base of modern American sociology.

While we agree that congruence and complementarity exist here, we suggest that Gouldner's analysis is best viewed within the ambit of rather than proof is king" (1970:2). The misunderstandings in the negative reviews may reflect just such a stance vis-a-vis the domain assumptions of the vituperative critics.
the Kuhnian critique utilized by Friedrichs. Especially is this so when confronting the latter author's discerning modification of the paradigm thesis to include two orders—one, the "fundamental image a discipline has of its subject matter," and, secondly, "the grounding image the social scientist has of himself as scientific agent" (Friedrichs 1970:55). Accordingly, we shall confine the bulk of our remarks to Friedrichs and only address Gouldner at those provocative points where we diverge (primarily in the suggested alternative to the dominant paradigm).

Our concern here is, first, the reiteration of the paradigm thesis as offered up by Friedrichs. In so doing, we shall also make some critical remarks as to its efficacy as well as suggest a different 'glossing,' a varied terminology, which might make his assertions even stronger. Our second task concerns the issue of "... a competing gestalt that redefines crucial problems, introduces new methods, and establishes uniquely new standards for solutions!" (Friedrichs 1970:2 emphasis added). Because we feel that neither Gouldner nor Friedrichs supplies such a gestalt in his alternative to mainstream social science, we shall attempt to introduce the elements of just such a gestalt: a prolegomena to a social hermeneutics.

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6. This 'glossing,' as intimated in the introduction and taken up below, deals with two modes of consciousness—representational and hermeneutical. We borrow this notion from the philosopher Calvin O. Schrag (1969:111-121).
CHAPTER II
SEEING THROUGH THE MEDUSA'S EYE: THE CASE FOR A SOCIOLOGICAL PARADIGM

Friedrichs wants to apply the Kuhnian thesis dealing with the structure of scientific revolutions to the discipline of sociology. In so doing he hopes to either lay to rest "a burgeoning range of speculative hypotheses" about the actual nature of our craft being scientific, or to reap the benefits of the "(enormous) self understanding" that might be achieved if the thesis is supported by the "pertinent, publicly documented experience" (Friedrichs 1970:3). In order for us to engage as active interlocutors in this dialogue we must understand the constituents of the paradigm thesis.

Paradigm, as we use it here, is a prime "example" or basic orientation, a linguistic backdrop which "shapes a discipline's sense of where its problems lie, what its appropriate tools and methods are, and the kinds of solutions for which it might settle" (Friedrichs 1970:4). Once paradigmatic consolidation occurs (if it does), the assumptions and elements comprising the linguistic backdrop are rendered "invisible" until such time as serious anomalies confront the discipline and stymie what ought to be the progression toward completion of a giant "jig saw puzzle." To achieve paradigmatic status is to gain a taken-for-granted world. To gain a taken-for-granted world is, literally,
to stop questioning the assumptions. This is necessary, both scienti-

fically and anthropologically, to provide the observer (scientific and/or

naive) a structured world, so that he is not engaged in self-consiously

and continually bringing order to chaos. This latter task, of course,
is time consuming and stands in the way of accumulative advance, or

solving the jig saw puzzle. So a discipline which has not reached para-
digmatic status will be rent with controversies as one proponent and
then another is advanced for consideration. The achievement of a
paradigm frees the inquirers by delineating their problem areas and
providing their investigative tools and tests of evidence: in short, a
disciplinary paradigm is a gift to its adherents of an ontology and an
epistemology. That many, if not most, of those same adherents are
unaware of the underpinnings--the constituent elements--of their
corporate world-view makes it no less important to our study. Rather,
the opposite is the case: the pernicious nature of those assumptions
when they are utilized in ignorance is the danger to be discussed below.
In fact, we would hope to assist in making those elements visible as
well as outlining an alternative.

A paradigm may be "overthrown," according to Kuhn, when
anomalies--data irreconcilable with the theories--accumulate to such
a point as to "break into" the taken-for-granted world and "pull" the
beleagured scientist into philosophical reflection concerning the nature
of his discipline and the probable dim shape of another paradigm which
makes sense where there has been an increasing area of non-sense. In short, as we shall explicate more fully below, the scientist in this situation is faced with an hermeneutical dilemma of sorts: "major shifts in empirical and/or theoretical models are grounded in what are essentially conversion experiences in which a new 'world view' competes almost ideologically with an older frame of reference. There is no simple, clean-cut movement from 'error' to 'truth.' What appears is a competing gestalt that redefines crucial problems, introduces new methods, and establishes uniquely new standards for solutions" (Friedrichs 1970:2). The scientist, in the words of Catholic theologian Michael Novak (1971), is proceeding from one inquiry-standpoint to another. The phrasing is apt for one does stand within the paradigm in order to conduct his inquiry.

Theoretically, we acknowledge that such a 'metaphysical crisis' could strike anyone in an area where the anomalies are mounting. But the most likely choice is those who are the least entrenched in the discipline, those whose world is not quite yet taken-for-granted. This would include primarily graduate students and those teacher/researchers who were trained in another discipline before coming to the embattled one. The "embattlement" is important: there must be "shocks" within the taken-for-granted world before there is critical reflection. The origin of the shock may vary all the way from individual insight to a deliberate "attack" from a counter inquiry-standpoint. But
the shocks record the anomalies, the anomalies foster doubt, the doubt
parents reflection, and the reflection may lead to a creative resolution

to the problem in the developing of a new paradigm.

The persistence of the paradigm as the backdrop to the thinking
of the scientist is due, in large part, to the way in which it was acquired.
One does "not originally accept the paradigm on the basis of evidence
but rather on the authority of text and teacher" (Friedrichs 1970:8).

There is the initial conversion experience from the common sense
world of everyday experience to a second order way of thinking about
the world which restructures it and exposes it as something other than
it appears. This intellectual task is accomplished according to concept-
ual tools and interpretational rules embedded in, and part-and-parcel
of, the governing paradigm. We can illustrate the acquisition of this
way of thinking by bringing to mind our experience with introductory
students. The common situation here is to confront a classroom of
people whose common sense way of seeing things, "schooled" though
it may be by twelve years of education, is, in the main, a psychologis-
tic one. The conversion occurs if and when they become imbued with
our sociologistic construction of reality. Once the conversion has
occurred, moreover, evidence is not going to dissuade an adherent
for he is--in the very real sense--prejudiced. He shall most probably
respond to anomalous data as a challenge to his ingenuity to bring it
into line and, if the anomalies persist, resort to ad hoc explanations

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to order them about.

The second, and all subsequent, conversion experience will occur much like the first—if it ever does occur—by authority of text and teacher. And, just as is the case with our freshmen students, it will be the sustained attack of what (to the individual) amounts to anomalous data that may finally induce the social scientist to risk stepping into the new frame of reference to confront the world anew. It is ironic that, because of paradigmatic competition, the sociologist as teacher experiences pressures to step into a new inquiry standpoint: at the very time that he is urging his own students to acquire a sociological consciousness!

That is to say, that on both the individual and disciplinary levels we acquire an inquiry-standpoint with which to confront our "obdurate social world." We typically deepen our understanding of the inquiry-standpoint or paradigm once it is gained; we accommodate ourselves to it, become comfortable within it. So, though it is possible to move to other inquiry-standpoints with no necessary stopping point, it is improbable that too many major shifts will occur for either the individual or the discipline (more for the former than the latter?). The consequences for a shift by a discipline are more far-reaching than that for the individual in that literally thousands of people will be influenced by the teaching/researching carried out there.  

This situation indicates the 'disciplinary resistance' will be con-
The individual and corporate shifts are really 'gestalt switches' of which we have much to learn from psychological research (e.g., the work of the Hanover Institute). A gestalt switch in any discipline is obviously a momentous occurrence for it is responsible for the discipline conducting its inquiry in a different way. In sociology, for example, the paradigmatic stature of system insinuates itself into all, or nearly all, phases of our activity. At this juncture we should note that the argument is not being advanced that a paradigm is a smooth, perfectly worked out 'master plan' from which all else is derived, but rather that the tag paradigm can legitimately be applied to certain characteristics of an identifiable scientific community. Further, the 'arrival' of what we wish to term paradigm may have been a rough and uneven one. Convergence entails some losses as well as the gains of consolidation. And we do not wish to intimate that the single term 'system,' chronologically precedes all its (the paradigm's) elements. 'Role' is a concept, for example, that meshes quite nicely with the overarching notion of 'system,' but it needn't have and doesn't owe its conceptual existence to a prior development of the system idea. But this gets at what we mean by stating that the paradigm insinuates itself considerable--because of the consequences. The rather modest successes of sociology haven't appeared to weaken the faith as we seem to expect a methodological messiah in the form of advanced computer technology and the mathematization of our theory.
into nearly all phases of our activity. Role has been altered from an initial dramaturgical example to a full fledged element in good standing of our basic paradigm. How else ought we account for this if not by noting the dynamic involved in the acquisition of a gestalt, a way of looking at the world which, no matter where its gaze sweeps and comes to rest, will see things in its terms. And those terms increase the command they have over ordering the world as their numbers change and the attendant relationships are altered until such time as the internal logic brings the paradigm to data which for it is anomalous. In short, a paradigm is articulated, not corrected, and the articulation has its limits. 'Correction,' as it were, comes from revolution and the ascendancy of a new paradigm.

This is necessarily the case as every paradigm carries within its own seeds of destruction: an eventual and inevitable inability to handle anomalous data. There is no presuppositionless science and all such endeavours have in their future a crisis period. Until such a crisis is reached, however, the schema is 'articulated': after the revolution we may best talk of 'corrigibility' as the anomalous data is now taken care of. The elements brought together by elective

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8 For those readers who do not share our preference for 'insinuation' we recommend Weber's term 'elective affinity.' Both notions refer to the same phenomena although we feel that ours intimates less of some kind of independent, rational process (elective affinity?).

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affinity are, in short, historical.

Let us continue: the insinuation spoken of is a coloration, a pervasiveness that is not to be denied. Herbert Blumer is one of the sociologists who has also discerned this. We present the following lengthy statement of his because of its thoroughness and succinct quality:

We must say in all honesty that the research scholar in the social sciences who undertakes to study a given sphere of social life that he does not know at first hand will fashion a picture of that sphere in terms of pre-established images. There is no quarrel with this natural disposition and practice if the given research inquiry is guided by a conscientious and continuous effort to test and revise one's images, but this is not the prevailing motif in present-day social and psychological science. Theoretical positions are held tenaciously, the concepts and beliefs in one's field are gratuitously accepted as inherently sacrosanct. It is not surprising, consequently, that the images that stem from these sources control the inquiry and shape the picture of the sphere of life under study. In place of being tested and modified by firsthand acquaintance with the sphere of life they become a substitute for such acquaintance. Since this is a serious charge let me explain it.

To begin with, most research inquiry (certainly research inquiry modeled in terms of current methodology) is not designed to develop a close and reasonably full familiarity with the area of life under study. There is no demand on the research scholar to do a lot of free exploration in the area, getting close to the people involved in it, seeing it in a variety of situations they meet, noting their problems and observing how they handle them, being party to their conversations, and watching their life as it flows along. In place of such exploration and flexible pursuit of intimate contact with what is going on, reliance is put on starting with a theory or model, posing a problem in terms of the model, setting a hypothesis with regard to the problem, outlining a mode of inquiry to test that hypothesis, using standardized instruments to get precise data, and so forth. I merely wish to reassert here that current designs of "proper" research procedure do not encourage or provide for the development of firsthand acquaintance with the sphere of life.
under study. Moreover, the scholar who lacks that firsthand familiarity is highly unlikely to recognize that he is missing anything. Not being aware of the knowledge that would come from firsthand acquaintance, he does not know that he is missing that knowledge. Since the sanctioned scheme of scientific inquiry is taken for granted as the correct means of treatment and analysis, he feels no need to be concerned with firsthand familiarity with that sphere of life. In this way, the established protocol of scientific inquiry becomes the unwitting substitute for a direct examination of the empirical social world. The questions that are asked, the problems that are set, the leads that are followed, the kinds of data that are sought, the relations that are envisioned, and the kinds of interpretations that are striven toward—all these stem from the scheme of research inquiry instead of from familiarity with the empirical area under study (Blumer 1969:36-38).

*See how far one gets in submitting proposals for exploratory studies to fund-granting agencies with their professional boards of consultants, or as doctoral dissertations in our advance graduate departments of sociology and psychology. Witness the barrage of questions that arise: Where is your research design? What is your model? What is your guiding hypothesis? What are your independent and dependent variables? What standard instruments are you going to use to get the data for your variables? What is your sample? What is your control group? And so on. Such questions presume in advance that the student has the firsthand knowledge that the exploratory study seeks to secure. Since he doesn't have it the protocolized research procedure becomes the substitute for getting it!

There can be no question that this independent observation by Blumer supports point-by-point the allegations made above. All of these practices become 'paradigmatized' whether the individual user realizes it or not. Two examples which Friedrichs brought to our attention are the growing computer technology at the time (just after WW II) that Parsonian theory was 'ascending,' and the very socio-political climate in which the social scientists themselves lived and
worked. Whether it was fortuitous or not, the social theory, the burgeoning technology, and the quiescent 'Eisenhower years' insinuated themselves into a disciplinary paradigm.

We are asserting, then, that a part of the creation of a paradigm depends upon elements being brought together, altered somewhat, and emerging in a new whole that itself will affect still other elements which it contacts. In order for this to occur, however, those elements have to share something fundamental that allows (if not encourages) their being conjoined. There must be a shared metaphysics, if you will, which is evidenced in the compatibility between such things as the metaphor 'system' and computers. The necessity for this kind of metaphysical compatibility also suggests the obverse: metaphysically incompatible elements will not coalesce in the same paradigm. Any reader would be just as amazed as we to see a spate of work operationalizing phenomenological concepts such as being-in-the-world!

Our discussion thus far leads us to two important questions regarding the significance of a gestalt-switch or paradigm shift: how does it occur and do the two paradigms look upon the same world?

We have already discussed the paradigm shift as conversion experience that cannot be forced. We now want to deal with the question of how conversion is enhanced or stifled. There are several sorts of 'argument' which may prove effective or at least contribute
to the 'moment' when conversion occurs. Kuhn delineates the following as the most noteworthy: a legitimate claim by the adherents of the new paradigm that they can solve the problems that have led the old one to crisis. This involves quite a bit, of course, and even must proceed from consensus regarding the existence of a crisis as well as the nature of the crisis. Given this, however, the claim to handle the anomalies can be examined by all interested parties. If this claim can be advanced along with a new level of quantitative precision so much the better. Let's look at these two points vis-a-vis sociology.

The original crisis in our situation was the absence of a first paradigm and the internecine struggle (usually labeled 'immature') among competing 'schools.' The several pens (we can't lay all of this at Parsons' door) devoted to drawing up the case for a social system comprised of functionally related parts which, as a unit, tends toward a (dynamic) equilibrium, garnered their raw material from that

---

9 The efficacy of such arguments depends upon the similarity of modes of thinking characterizing any two discussants. If both conceive of knowledge as something a subject has about a controlled and manipulated object, there will be fewer problems than if one thinks that way and the other views the subject/object dichotomy as limited, that knowledge must be experiential, is transformative of its possessor and that control and manipulation are alien. We think that two such modes can be delineated and that these are a paradigmatic level, also. These are the already referred to modes of consciousness of representational and hermeneutical thinking.
competition and began to show that their map brought that much sought after order with it. The methodological concomitant—computers—promised to vastly increase the ability to compile, store, and analyze (in a proper scientific fashion) a more precise batch of data perfectly suited to the demands of the theory itself.

In so doing, the claim was extended that the obdurate social world could be wrestled into submission, that order could be brought to chaos. Further, we could dispel the mists of doubt by tightening up our epistemological machinery—the term passing from metaphor to reality as we appropriated the computer for its truly amazing capacities to store and 'handle' data. That the data [or 'capta,' as Hampden-Turner (1970:5) puts it] has to be made for the computer and the advantages, therefore, of placing most of our weight here might be overshadowed by the disadvantages has not appeared to have bothered us much.  

The current paradigm has given us both greater ordering capacity and precision over that to be found in the first several decades of this century. Another index of this is the way we think about and conduct our own research. Don't we in fact see our—

---

10 I assess how much we are bothered by looking at what we do and don't do. We do offer a sequence of some half dozen statistics and 'model-building' courses. We do spend thousands on computer terminals, card punch machines, counter-sorters, etc. and the 'software' (this includes—honest-to-God—the people involved in operating these machines) necessary to it. We don't offer a course in participant observation or social phenomenology. We don't establish research.
selves as extending the ontology/epistemology to ever increasing areas? How much new theory and methods (or theory/methods) are we really engaged in creating? In fact, most of our work involves disputes about who (among sociologists) has it right, who understands the paradigm and its implications best. The disputes for the most part consist of criticizing the incorrectness, or incompleteness of that other fellow's research.

Another concession we have to grant the paradigm argument is that unevenness in practice does not negate the idea of a gestalt. The discipline consists of thousands of practitioners; for each and every one of them to see/act the same way would be miraculous. For instance, there are those people clustered around such seminal thinkers as Blumer (1969) and Garfinkel (1967). But this can be viewed one of two ways and still remain within the ambit of the paradigm thesis. First, symbolic interactionists and ethnomethodologists might be seen as those consigned to the fringe because they refuse to accept the dominant thinking/practice or, secondly, they may be viewed as legitimate challenger to the present mode of work. The first view implicitly assumes that their 'school' is not threatening and the second perspective grants it more verve, takes it more

internships to allow people to practice participant observation. While none of these options are impossible to obtain they are not encouraged by the system or its members.

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seriously. That is, both of these views toward Blumer and Garfinkel and their respective entourage place them as somehow against the dominant paradigm and simply do not agree that those two and any others' presence indicate preparadigmatic competition.

There are two other arguments which may prepare the ground for conversion besides the two just discussed. These are necessary, for rarely is the claim of greater ordering capacity sufficient to bring about acceptance of the new candidate. Often, in fact, "... the looser practice that characterizes extraordinary research will produce a candidate for paradigm that initially helps not at all with the problems that have evoked crisis" (Kuhn 1970:154). One of the arguments is the subsequent demonstration that a paradigm can handle what a critic posits as an impossible (if not absurd) position. If this occurs it can prove to be a surprising victory for the new paradigm. Perhaps in our own area we have such a case in the assertion by many critics that structural functionalism, and more particularly Parsonian system theory, is incapable of acknowledging conflict a more than transitory place within the overall theory. We are concerned, therefore, with the possibility that this criticism can be invalidated. Friedrichs comments: "This is not to say that conflict becomes an illegitimate concept. But even it must be approached in fundamentally 'system' terms if one wishes to remain within the frame of reference that has undergirded the development of natural
science. Conflict, if not patterned, is abandoned to the idiographic sensitivities of the historian; only by redefining sociology as history might it be reclaimed. Thus, conflict is presumed—must be presumed—to be 'functional' in the most general sense of the term" (Friedrichs 1970:294).

"Functional" indeed! For we have in Parsonian theory an example—at a still higher level of abstraction—of the possibility for another paradigmatic application. Societies may be seen to coalesce around fundamental paradigms—an organizing ethos\(^{11}\)—which themselves are confronted with increasing anomalies and become fragmented in their ability to maintain an interpretive framework. New paradigms may be actively sought as the society experiences, increasingly, crises of meaning. We can see this basic tact toward

\(^{11}\) We take the term ethos from Max Stackhouse's *Ethics and the Urban Ethos*. The notion of ethos as 'opposed' to paradigm allows a more explicit rendering of the necessity of interpretation in a sociology which maintains as its central category—the social. Stackhouse notes that "An ethos is as difficult to understand as the structure that supports it. It is the subtle web of values, meanings, purposes, expectations, and legitimations that constitute the operating norms of a culture in relationship to a social entity . . . . (Our task) is a special variety of political sociology: (we) must seek, as it were, the logos in the socius of the polis." (1972:5) In seeking the logos of the socius we contend that a hermeneutics is required. The nature of both logos and socius both provide for and demand interpretation.

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the analysis of the social in the works of Roszak (1969), Reich (1971), and Slater (1971). In all three cases they are characterizing the dominant ethos or paradigm of the society or culture, noting its inability to deal with a variety of contemporary developments—in short, they are describing a crisis—and outlining the elements of the emerging paradigm.¹³

We can't carry the parallel between a Parsons and a Roszak too far, however, for there are other concerns (primarily epistemological) that prevent such a union. But we would like to suggest quite openly that Parsons has a point in implying a strain toward equilibrium and disagree with Friedrichs' critique that such "... a notion has no presumptive place in the fundamental grammar of science, behavioral or otherwise" (1970:295). Our reading of Parsons that prompts us to admit this is based upon Kuhn's discussion of articulation and corrigibility vis-a-vis a paradigm. Kuhn notes that normal science can only articulate or make explicit what is already

¹²We want to make it plain that analysis of the social is our goal. That is, the inquiry of social hermeneutics is to become a discipline of another kind, but a discipline, nevertheless. Indeed, we feel that writers such as Roszak, Reich, and Slater would greatly strengthen their cases if they were explicitly rather than only implicitly working within a social hermeneutics. We have tentative plans to make a project of this notion by performing a hermeneutic on one or more of these works.

¹³This in itself illustrates a characteristic of social hermeneutics: it is ex post analysis with only some prescience of the future possible. The transformed meaning world has to come into being before we can obtain anything like adequate readings of it.
inherent in the fundamental gestalt, and that 'corrigibility' must come from the revolution, the new gestalt laying claim to a better interpretation of the world than its predecessor. Is it not possible (and fruitful) to see the strain toward equilibrium as the analogue to the 'strain' toward articulation? In both cases the dynamic is for minor anomalies and trouble spots to be brought under control as the paradigm manifests itself in the culture. But the revolution will undoubtedly come to both the sociological process and the social experience as those ever threatening anomalies amass to confront the interpretive schema. At this juncture an awareness of crisis dawns on the members of the group in question and "extraordinary research" (Kuhn's term) commences to feel about for a new paradigmatic mooring. We contend that the full implications of such a reading demands

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14 It is good to note that process underlies most paradigms but we want to argue the importance of underpinning our inquiry with the notion of experience. As Abraham Heschel put it: "As a process man may be described biologically (and within the system paradigm); as an event he can only be understood creatively, dramatically" (1965: 42). That such an understanding of event/experience requires a hermeneutic should go without saying.

15 The full implications of our position rest upon the proposed project of a hermeneutics of experience, from the interpretation of psychoanalysis to the interpretation of cultural symbols. Our mentor here should probably be Paul Ricoeur who commences both tasks in his essay, *Freud and Philosophy: an Essay on Interpretation*. The language shift eventually makes inquiry easier although initially it is an act of faith to so assert. That is, as Kuhn understands, the step into a new inquiry-standpoint (paradigm or "language") is a shift that initially may have less coherence than the old paradigm (cf. Kuhn 1970: 154).
a different vocabulary for its best exposition than the one that Parsons uses, however. We also suggest that this may answer the critics who deny that system theory allows for change.

Another argument that prepares the way to conversion, and one that interestingly enough sometimes carries more weight than the hard reasoning delineated above, is that appealing to aesthetics. The more elegant the theory, the neater the construction, the more likely it is to attract some individuals. Kuhn suggests the whys and wherefores of such a situation: the real debate "... is which paradigm should in the future guide research on problems many of which neither competitor can yet claim to resolve completely" (Kuhn 1970:157). But the individual is making this choice from a rather precarious position. "He must, that is, have faith that the new paradigm will succeed with the many large problems that confront it, knowing only that the older paradigm has failed with a few. A decision of this kind can only be made on faith" (Kuhn 1970:158). The role of crisis may be to 'shock' those who experience it into reflecting on their craft but this is not enough. "There must also be a basis, though it need be neither rational nor ultimately correct, for faith in the particular candidate chosen. Something must make a few scientists feel that the new proposal is on the right track, and sometimes it is only personal and inarticulate aesthetic considerations that can do that" (Kuhn 1970:158). People so affected will be the
pioneers of the new paradigm, acquiring a new way of looking at the world. Whether the world they look upon is the same as that seen by their conceptual competitors is the problem which now deserves our attention.

We concur with Kuhn that most people would insist that what changes with a paradigm is one's interpretations of a fixed natural world as sensed by a fixed perceptual apparatus. Oxygen, for instance, has always existed, and Priestley and Lavoisier merely interpreted their observations of the natural world, based on identical sensory organs, in a different way. It is instructive to follow Kuhn as he grapples with this problem.

Let me say at once that this very usual view of what occurs when scientists change their minds about fundamental matters can neither be all wrong nor a mere mistake. Rather it is an essential part of a philosophical paradigm initiated by Descartes and developed at the same time as Newtonian dynamics. That paradigm has served both science and philosophy well. Its exploitation, like that of dynamics itself, has been fruitful of a fundamental understanding that could perhaps not have been achieved in another way. But as the example of Newtonian dynamics also indicates, even the most striking past success provides no guarantee that crisis can be indefinitely postponed. Today research in parts of philosophy, psychology, linguistics, and even art history, all converge to suggest that the traditional paradigm is somewhat askew. That failure to fit is also made increasingly apparent by the historical study of science to which most of our attention is necessarily directed here . . . None of these crisis-promoting subjects has yet produced a viable alternative to the traditional epistemological paradigm, but they do begin to suggest what some of that paradigm's characteristics will be (Kuhn 1970:121, emphasis added).

This is to insist that our "usual view," the commonsensical notion of
what is the case, is an "essential part of a philosophical paradigm." Or, in other words, fundamental philosophical claims pervade the thinking in the everyday world and do not remain merely lodged in academia. Now, if that epistemological paradigm is wavering we may expect some repercussions in the everyday world. As Heidegger would insist: "being and thinking must be held together: to be in a certain way is to think in a certain way, and conversely" (Macomber 1967:89).

Besides driving home the point that the larger society may be dramatically affected by the trials and tribulations, as well as the successes, of philosophy and science (and vice versa), we are admitting some difficulty in being able to insist that the world is the same no matter who looks upon it. That is, there is a sense in which we want to say that any two persons as different as Lavoisier and Priestley do look upon a different world. The reigning paradigm insists that oxygen (or whatever) was there all the time, as indeed it must, but can we give complete allegiance to such a statement? The problem that vexes Kuhn, however, is even more acute for

16We should be able to see that what we are trying to describe by 'paradigm' or 'ethos' applies to all 'forms of life.' This latter phrase provides the bridge to a (later) Wittgensteinian analysis which would lead us to the same conclusions. (e.g., Pitkin, 1972; Apel, 1967) All forms of life demand an interpretation because of their ambiguity: that interpretation, susceptible to challenge, is based on the social practices and institutions incorporated in the form of life.
sociology. Our world can't meet the stringent demands of 'sameness' placed upon the physical world (those demands not being completely met, either). We can imagine, for instance, a neutral description of what we perceive as a pendulum that both Aristotle and Galileo could ascribe to, but only Galileo saw a pendulum. But what do sociologists do with an object such as the 1936 movie, Reefer Madness? This film presented a menace to its initial audiences and the film's impact, its public dimension, led to legislation that further changed the world. Viewed today, whether by 20 year olds or people who had seen it in 1936, it is a comedy. Physically, the same images strike the retinae of the eyes of the viewers in 1973 as in 1936: what is different? The world is different, the social world has changed. And it is important to realize that not just the individuals have changed but that the social world, the practices and institutions which are the ambit for the film have changed. There is a sense in which the film isn't the same, either, because it is a social product and demands interpretation always and always.

As in the case with a film, an artifact whose meaning changes in three decades, so does the social change, with different paradigms not only looking upon the world in a variant way but looking upon a variant social world. This expression hints at the dialectical relationship between man and society. It also upholds Taylor's suggestion below that we must wait for the transformed meaning world.
before we can acquire the language to interpret our experiences.

That transformed meaning world is inextricably related to the
hermeneutic which offers it to the present. The social world, the
'text' which demands interpretation, also calls forth to the inquirer.
CHAPTER III
THE WAY IN WHICH WE WITNESS: PRIESTS OR PROPHETS

Our last paragraphs may appear puzzling. Let us try to bring more clarity to the issue by re-examining some questions introduced above and then adding on a question to the 'one or more worlds' problem. The issue to be looked at anew is that raised by Friedrichs as a necessary addition to the Kuhnian thesis when it is applied to sociology: there are two grounding images for us to consider; the mode--priestly or prophetic--in which we act, and the fundamental frame for our discipline. It is evident why this further consideration should be made. The natural scientist studies a world of objects and considers himself as subject, that dichotomy controlling all that he does. Because of his relationship with the world, he can take this stance and emerge with the considerable successes that he has. The sociologist, on the other hand, is a part of that which he studies and cannot, in fact, make the subject/object dichotomy work for him in the same way as his brethren in the laboratory. There is a fundamental choice involved for the sociologist: how shall he conduct himself as sociologist, as scientific agent?

Friedrichs views the two basic options as being to operate either in the priestly or the prophetic mode (and he then suggests a linkage with 'system' and 'conflict,' respectively). The priestly mode is
oriented toward mediating between the social reality and the public, "... to bring man into touch with an image of the 'real' through the mediation of the community's tradition in symbol and ritual" (Friedrichs 1970:67). Our tradition is scientistic, our symbols and rituals are those which must be explained to the public. Friedrichs says it nicely:

The scientist as priest would address his professional and communal life to confronting, ever more intimately, the reliably ordered core of nature and natural man and would seek to mediate between it and the flux that is the evident world of the layman. His is not the priesthood of all believers, the initiation rites are much too exacting, the preparatory rituals too demanding, the language of communion too specialized. Ordination, furthermore, demands renunciation. Anything that would threaten reliability in the precipitation of order—the unique, the private, the absolute—must be relinquished as heresy. Indeed, from this point of view the 'prophetic' mode is the focal threat, for it is dedicated to change, not order; risk, not reliability; 'subjective' standards, not 'objective' perception. The prophet would destroy the priestly edifice that is the Church. The prediction to which the scientific priesthood is dedicated is the antithesis of prophecy; the priest would project order of the past into the future, honoring both as revelation of the continuity that is nature's core; the prophet would use short-term projections of order as a weapon to destroy the actual fulfillment of that projected future 17(1970:107-108).

The sociologist as priest sets himself apart from the layman—the

17This brings to mind a confusion existing about the passivity of understanding. Marx wrote that philosophers have understood the world, the task is to change it. George Lichtheim (1971) in From Marx to Hegel, writes that "the central problem before us is not so much to change the world (that is being done independently), but to understand it." Understanding, however, is transformative, that transformation eventuating in changed social relations. This is one task of critical theory (see Horkheimer, 1972) and, indeed, one reason
objects of his study--and claims the control of the rites which reveal to the public its condition as human being. Trust in us and accept our findings!  

The sociologist as prophet contends, in the words of Shils, "that the main and inescapable function of sociology is to be the critic of its society" (quoted in Friedrichs, 1970:67). It is not idle to look toward the religious wellspring that provides us with our image: "'Prophecy' in the Hebraic tradition was paired with iconoclasm--the breaking of icons. The stance it represented then and in its sociological garb more recently, thus, would seem to grant priority to the destruction of false images. A paradigm may well lie behind the action of the prophet, but the emphasis is upon breaking false images rather than putting forth more adequate ones. Simply put, it means only that those enamored of the prophetic posture find their special forte to be criticism rather than construction!" (Friedrichs 1970:75, emphasis added). It is at this point that we should like to amend the idea of a primordial paradigm and suggest that there is, why people fear theory: it demands change. The knowledge of hermeneutics shall change its possessors and transform the world.

18 The priestly mode dominates education and teaches that institutions, not persons, must offer the solutions to problems. The works of Illich (1971) and Friere (1970) are very illuminating here.

19 Friedrichs implies too much of a negative function for critical theory. Its nature is better revealed in Horkheimer (1972:188-244).
indeed, a paradigm behind the action of the prophet.

The underlying paradigm is one of thinking, a mode of being-in-the-world which precedes the deliberate choice of the 'role set.'

Friedrichs, it seems to us, is somewhat misleading in his delineation of the two modes of being a scientific agent. His distinction makes sense but seems incomplete. We think that this can be furthered by discussing modes of thinking which may eventuate in the roles of priest or prophet and modes of thinking which, if dealt with adequately, can provide us with the sharpest phrasing of an alternative to the dominant sociological paradigm. We suggest this elaboration upon Friedrichs because it does seem to clarify as well as fulfill the sense in which Kuhn writes of the matter.

Our elaboration proceeds from the phenomenological writings of Calvin O. Schrag. He delineates two modalities of thinking, two general directions of thought arising from the "pulsating profusion of world experience": representational thinking and hermeneutical thinking. We shall describe these two ways of being-in-the-world and note their importance for the paradigm theory of Friedrichs.

Representational thinking is objectifying, it isolates its figures as objects which exist for a subject (in this case the sociologist) and which can be controlled by the subject. This type of thinking selects features of the world experience which are objectifiable, which lend
themselves to quantification and measurement. This assumption of the subject/object relationship is a necessity for much of mathematics and empirical scholarship. It is also necessarily the case that the intentionality of representational thinking is to furnish informative meaning. The criterion of meaning is coextensive with the validation of information. This informative meaning is delivered through a speaking about, through correlations and tests of significance.

It is this direction of thinking which dominates sociological work and which is itself evidence that the discipline reaches out to the world from a paradigmatic base. The "operationalization" that we so strongly adhere to is our way of selecting those features of world experience which are amenable to quantification and measurement. And the correlations of these "brute data" are presented as evidence that our information is indeed valid and logically related to our theoretical statements.

20 We are agreeing here, and throughout our paper, with the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research: "A sociology which allows itself to be diverted and which sacrifices the central category, that of society itself, for the sake of the idol of controllable data--thus the concept through which all these so-called facts of the data are first mediated, if not altogether constituted--would regress from its own conception and would thus join ranks with that spiritual regression which must be counted among the most threatening symptoms of total sociation" (1972: 33).

21 The question of validity is a source of controversy within hermeneutics, also. See Hirsch (1967), Validity in Interpretation, for the strongest statement of its possibility.
Hermeneutical thinking is non-objectifying, it attempts to suspend the subject/object structure of thought.\textsuperscript{22} The intended figures here are situational possibilities through which existence can move. The intentionality of hermeneutical thinking furnishes interpretive meaning through an interpretive grasping whereby the experiencer is placed "between the data" and insinuated into the world. The expression of this modality of thinking is through a speaking of... lived experiences and life styles.\textsuperscript{23} The primary philosophical/sociological relevance of hermeneutical thinking can be seen only by focusing on its relevance for issues concerning human existence and the life-world (lebenswelt).\textsuperscript{24} One's analysis and interpretation projects a way of dwelling in the world that opens up paths to self understanding.

The thrust of this type of thinking is to transform the knower.

\textsuperscript{22} Attempting to suspend the subject/object dichotomy is no easy matter. The reason for this is the extent to which Cartesian dualism pervades all modes of thought. Indeed, this is another reason for acknowledging that sociology must be paradigmatic.

\textsuperscript{23} The differences in styles of presentation of the two modes would seem to have a definite bearing upon one's pedagogy. That is, teaching in a "representational style" would be dramatically different than teaching in a "hermeneutical style." This suggests to us one of the more important possibilities for study—a hermeneutics of teaching.

\textsuperscript{24} It is interesting to note that one can pass through a major in economics, sociology, political science, etc. without ever realizing that matters of life and death, pain and pleasure can be legitimate areas of concern for our reflection and interpretation. Questions of ultimate meaning, because not amenable to representational thinking and not answerable by science, end up not mattering at all.
The social hermeneutist becomes a different person through the interpretive experience. Now this happens to all of us, more or less, but the point here is that rather than denigrate this type of thinking and the notion of truth with which it is associated, we can attempt to fully develop the elements of a social hermeneutics so that we can embrace it for its virtues. 25

Before we link these two modes of thinking to the priestly and prophetic stances let us note something about the relationship between the two. Hermeneutical thinking may be accompanied by denotable objects and representational concepts may obliquely emerge but the question is one of immersion within one modality of thinking or the other. Nobody straddles the fence for long; technological/representational thinking seems to be the side of the fence most heavily populated. Another way of saying this has already been stated above: we exist within, and pass between, inquiry-standpoints, ways of thinking which relate us to the world. At this time in our history representational thinking has become dominant, seeping into the everyday world from its locus in the philosophic/scientific world. 26 Although the majority

25 The monopolization of truth by one epistemology is well documented by John Wild (1963), in Existence and the World of Freedom and Richard Zaner's The Way of Phenomenology (1970). It is just this monopolization which leads to the crises described by the Roszaks, et al., and to the search for alternative paradigms and epistemologies.

26 Jack Douglas (1970) discusses one phase of this as 'absolutizing sociology' in Understanding Everyday Life. Herbert Marcuse (1964)
of the Western world operates within the context of the subject-object
dichotomy and exercises at least a rudimentary grasp of scientific
method the other tendency of thought, the tendency that is foundational,
continues to exist and is, indeed, on the ascendency. 27

We are suggesting here that one finds himself within one or the
other mode of thinking, representational or hermeneutic, and that this
propels one along toward the two paradigmatic levels. The majority
will realize their placement within the representational mode if for
no other reason than its pervasiveness in the everyday world and that
great mediator of the common culture—the schooling process. 28 For
the individual entering sociology this will most probably mean grav­
tation toward the priestly and system paradigms with a minimum of
conversion necessary. Those who do not find themselves comfortable
with that way of thinking face the necessity of conversion if they are to

denotes the 'triumph' of positive thinking as 'one dimensional thought'
in his One Dimensional Man. These are but two of the writers con­
cerned with this problem.

27 This interpretation, we believe, underpins the works of Charles
Reich, Theodore Roszak, and Phillip Slater. That is, each character­
izes the ethos of our society as fragmented and in crisis, and each sees
the emergence of a direction of thinking along the lines of what we call
hermeneutical.

28 The commentary of Illich and Friere is most cogent here. If
the vast majority of 'educators' participate within representational
thinking what is the dynamic of their relationship to their students liable
to be?
successfully participate in the dominant paradigm; or, they may leave
the field altogether. The other option is to exist, as Kuhn noted, on
the fringe (whether or not one is also a 'revolutionary').

It is helpful to consider occupants of the fringe in sociology--the
ethnomethodologists--in order to see both the notion of fringe
illustrated and the limitations of a simple linkage between the modes
of "priests" or "prophets" and the paradigms of system and conflict,
respectively. The ethnomethodologist position (Garfinkel, 1967;
Weider, 1970; Wilson, 1970; Zimmerman and Pollner, 1970) is only
now emerging from the status of "invisible college" for full considera-
tion as an alternative to the dominant mode of inquiry. There can be
no doubt that it is to be seen as an alternative:

(I)n contrast to certain versions of Durkheim that teach that
the objective reality of social facts is sociology's fundamental
principle, the lesson is taken instead, and used as a study
policy, that the objective reality of social facts as an ongoing
accomplishment of the concerted activities of daily life, with
the ordinary, artful ways of that accomplishment being by
members known, used, and taken for granted, is, for members
doing sociology, a fundamental phenomenon (Garfinkel, 1967:vii).

The point here is that the everyday world is to be seen as an ongoing
accomplishment and as a topic in its own right, and not as simply
furnishing topics of inquiry (i.e., schools, families, elections, etc.)
for sociologists to study as facts.

The ethnomethodologists are asserting that the world appears
objective to us because of the ongoing interpretive processes engaged
in by all parties to a given situation. This viewpoint constitutes a

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dramatically different paradigm.

The social world, when considered under the reduction imposed by the occasioned corpus (reducing the 'objective' features of that world to the interpretive procedures by which the world is 'constructed' in concrete situations) is a radical modification of the one known to contemporary sociological investigation. Topics constituted by virtue of the reduction are not simple transformations of current sociological interests. The reduction does not generate research that may be regarded as an extension, refinement, or correction of extant sociological inquiry. The concerns of studies carried out under the auspices of the occasioned corpus are not and cannot be the concerns of members whose disciplines do not view any and every feature of ordinary activities as the temporally situated accomplishment of the work through and by which those features are made observable. The reduction constitutes as its phenomenon an order of affairs that has no identifiable counterpart in contemporary social science. (Zimmerman and Pollner 1970:99).

This should suffice to illustrate that Garfinkel and his students depart from the dominant paradigm and, therefore, are an example that Kuhn's thesis can be extended to include the discipline of sociology.

But what of Friedrichs' modification: are the ethnomethodologists to be considered as prophets in the conflict lineage, also? No. Clearly they do not set out that their main and inescapable function is to be a critic of society. Nor do they posit conflict as basic to their theoretical approach. They seem to insist, rather, that all such macrosociological considerations be suspended until we understand the everyday world as a phenomenon in its own right. Accordingly, they fit our notion of a fringe group but do not qualify for our classification as proponents of either prophecy or conflict. Their particular interests suggest also that they may be closer to the hermeneutical mode of
thinking than they are to the representational mode of thinking. A precise analysis would have to be undertaken, however, before we could confidently make that interpretation.

But we have digressed. We want to stress that hermeneutical thinking exists within sociology already—to a degree—if for no other reason than that it is a mode of thinking that arises from that "pulsating profusion of world experience" and so is a possibility for us all. The obvious case to make here is that the explicit taking up of this direction of thought, and only the explicit embrace, shall eventuate in a new paradigm which supplies a "... competing gestalt that redefines crucial problems, introduces new methods, and establishes uniquely new standards for solutions" (Friedrichs 1970:2). Because they remain at least partially within the old paradigm both Friedrichs and Gouldner cannot give us the outline of that new gestalt. We shall discuss later what we see as the major limitations, respectively, of their "dialogical" and "reflexive" sociologies. Now, we should like to present what we hope is a true alternative.
CHAPTER IV
BLINDING THE MEDUSA'S EYE: SOCIAL HERMENEUTICS

Although hermeneutics has been largely the concern of theologians, philosophers, and literary critics\(^\text{29}\) (cf. Hirsch, 1967; Palmer, 1969), there are those in our field, such as Dilthey (cf. "Dilthey: Hermeneutics as Foundation of the Geisteswissenschaften," pp. 98-123 in Palmer, 1969) who claim that there is a necessity for this component of interpretation in the sciences of man. We are most familiar with a variant of this claim from Max Weber in his development of a **verstehende** sociology: "The term 'sociology' is open to many different interpretations. In the context used here it shall mean that science which aims at the interpretative understanding of social behaviour in order to obtain an explanation of its causes, its course, and its effects" (quoted in Freund 1969:93). But Weber did not agree with Dilthey on

\(^{29}\) Palmer's study (1960) "arose out of a more specific project concerning the significance of Bultmannian theory of biblical interpretation for literary theory, during which the need for some fundamental clarification of the development, meaning, and scope of hermeneutics itself became evident. Such clarification, in fact, became a prerequisite for the original project" (Palmer 1969:XIII). Palmer's philosophical study is the prelude to an interpretation of Rudolf Bultmann's theology in order that he (Palmer) can probe the significance of Bultmann for Palmer's own field, comparative literature. S/he who would contribute to the development of a social hermeneutics should prepare to follow Palmer's example. We have barely begun.
many particulars and we shall see that Weber (and Friedrichs) demands a dual epistemology which subverts the intention of hermeneutics. It is our aim to determine what that intention is.

In order to do so we shall, of necessity, present a brief and oversimplified synopsis of the hermeneutical position. This is so for two reasons: first, a full treatment is obviously beyond the scope of this thesis; secondly, we advisedly avoided trying to condense the writings of the continental thinkers (e.g., Heidegger, Gadamer, Ricoeur, Merleau-Ponty) whose very vocabulary requires extended study and have instead relied upon a North American scholar (Taylor 1971) for a nearly jargon-free statement of what hermeneutics entails. Even so we have to make recourse to the European phenomenologists on some matters and must stress that a full apprehension of this discipline will require entering this hermeneutical circle. Taylor shall prove to be a suitable guide for our immediate purposes.

Taylor offers the following description which, at one and the same time, maintains the connection with its origins in Biblical study and sets the stage for consideration of hermeneutics by the social sciences:

Interpretation, in the sense relevant to hermeneutics, is an attempt to make clear, to make sense of an object of study. This object must therefore, be a text, or a text-analogue, which in some way is confused, incomplete, cloudy, seemingly contradictory—in one way or another unclear. The interpretation aims to bring to light an underlying coherence or sense. (Taylor 1971:3)

A hermeneutical sociology must, of necessity, deal with one or another
confusing, interrelated forms of meaning and concurrently satisfy three essential conditions.

1) There must be an object or field of objects that can be thought about in terms of confusion or clarity, of making sense or nonsense. The ambiguity of personal and social experience is an obvious example.

2) This, in turn, demands that a distinction be possible between the meaning and the expression, between the sense or coherence made by the sociologist and its "embodiment in a particular field of carriers or signifiers" (Taylor 1971:3). That is, we have to be able to claim that we are making clear what is confusingly present in the text-analogue (which for us is a society, community, or social group). This requirement obviously poses a problem in that exact synonymy, equivalence of meaning, is unobtainable for we are, after all, devising an interpretation. A further implication of this issue will be dealt with below.

3) This meaning must be for a subject. Since our efforts are aimed at making explicit the meaning expressed in a text-analogue, this means the meaning expressed by and/or for a subject or subjects. Although the appeal to a subject is a necessary condition of our study, the identification of that subject may not be an easy matter. That is, Taylor asserts, as do his fellow critics, that our "... prevailing epistemological prejudices may blind us to the nature of our object of study" (Taylor 1971:5). Our later discussion of categorical principles
should illustrate this.

These conditions and the effort they support point to an extremely important consideration: the criteria of judgment for our 'new' sociology. Our very success depends upon the correctness of our interpretation—-but how do we know this to be the case? Well, we are accounting for something that was heretofore strange, puzzling, and contradictory which is no longer seen as such. Taylor claims that:

The interpretation appeals throughout to our understanding of the "language" of expression, which understanding allows us to see that this expression is puzzling, that is in contradiction to that other, etc. and that these difficulties are cleared up when the meaning is expressed in a new way (Taylor 1971:5).

But this seems to admit to a crucial weakness, for the reader of our work may not see the adequacy of our interpretation. Our only recourse is to urge him to "read the meanings" in the same way that we do, to see these expressions as confusing in a certain way and to recognize that our problem is cleared up by our interpretation. As with the other disciplines utilizing this sense of interpretation we have to acknowledge that there is a hermeneutical circle which will not allow us to "... escape an ultimate appeal to a common understanding of the expressions, of the 'language' involved" (Taylor 1971:6).

The reasons for this are that:

What we are trying to establish is a certain reading of a text or expressions, and what we appeal to as our grounds for this reading can only be other readings. The circle can also be put in terms of part-whole relations: we are trying to establish a reading for the whole text, and for this we appeal to readings...
of its partial expressions, and yet because we are dealing with meaning, with making sense, where expressions only make sense or not in relation to others, the readings of partial expressions depend on those of others, and ultimately of the whole (Taylor 1971:6).

We have to get our audience to share our understanding, for mere hypothetico-deductive argument will not break us out of the circle. Our audience has to share our intuitions in order for our interpretation to be accepted.

The notion of a hermeneutical circle is crucial to the development of a social hermeneutics and is expressed, albeit in a different terminology, in Kuhn's own writing.

The resulting circularity does not, of course, make the arguments wrong or even ineffectual. The man who premises a paradigm when arguing in its defense can nonetheless provide a clear exhibit of what scientific practice will be like for those who adopt the new view of nature. That exhibit can be immensely persuasive, often compellingly so. Yet, whatever its force the status of the circular argument is only that of persuasion. It cannot be made logically or even probabilistically compelling for those who refuse to step into the circle. The premises and values shared by the two parties to a debate over paradigms are not sufficiently extensive for that. As in political revolutions, so in paradigm choice--there is no standard higher than the assent of the relevant community (Kuhn 1970:94).

Note the basic congruence with our own statements! The 'circularity' which cannot be broken out of by a logical or probabilistic argument; the need for the interlocutor to change himself, to step into the circle. This is but one indication of the fact that Kuhn is doing a hermeneutics of scientific change.

But since there seems to be no certainty available to us, why
continue this line of investigation of the social, especially as we are wanting to talk of a discipline. At this juncture we might best pause for some stock-taking. The question of validity is crucial and one that separates proponents of hermeneutics into two camps (disputing over an issue that we do not have the ability to mediate). People such as Weber (cf. Freund 1969) and Hirsch (1967) want to argue that we can and must break out of the interpretative circle while writers such as Taylor (1971) and Winch (1958) see a definite sense in which this is impossible if not damaging to the very goal of interpretative inquiry.

Those who hold that we can make a genuine break out of the hermeneutical circle, can get beyond our own interpretations, generally stress the necessity for "... a basic building block of knowledge ... (a sense datum), a unit of information which is not the deliverance of a judgment, which has by definition no element in it of reading or interpretation, which is a brute datum" (Taylor 1971:7). A "brute datum" is one that cannot be undermined by further reasoning or another interpretation and which, when it co-occurs with other such elements, provides the building blocks for a model of science striving after an ideal of verification.

The formulation is perhaps susceptible to the charge of being a 'straw man.' We persist in its use, however, and ask that the reader consider the following comment on Bible study in order to grasp the legitimacy of this characterization of the verificationist epistemology...
and the place in it for the brute datum: "The Bible's language operates in a totally different medium from a direction manual for building something or an information sheet. 'Information' is a significant word; it points to a use of language different from that found in the Bible. It (information) appeals to the rational faculty and not to the whole personality; we do not have to call upon our personal experience or risk ourselves in order to understand information" (Palmer 1969:19). This is the distinction to which we have referred above as representational thinking versus hermeneutical thinking. Striving for the brute datum is an example of representational (scientific) thinking: its aim is the attainment of verifiable information. Hermeneutical thought involves more than this, however, it involves the whole person in a risk-taking encounter. It is for this reason that we speak of the latter mode of thought as transformative of its possessor for it involves a great deal more than the mere incremental increase of cognitive knowledge. If the reader will grasp this s/he will better understand the ontological/epistemological dispute between two kinds of basic data—readings of meanings vs. brute data.

Taylor wants to show that to talk about hermeneutical science vs. mainstream social science is to engage in an epistemological and ontological dispute. The most primitive data for hermeneutics is a reading of meanings, rather than a non-interpretable brute datum, and this "reading" depends upon two categories not found in the
traditional epistemology: intersubjective meanings and common meanings. The definition of these terms follow from the notion of a constitutive rule, a notion that asserts that language is constitutive of reality, is essential to its being the kind of reality it is.\textsuperscript{30}

We can gain an idea of what is meant here by thinking of the game of chess: the rules make possible the range of behavior and without the rules that behavior wouldn't exist. That is, any movements of wooden pieces around a board would not be chess any longer and would be meaningless. These kinds of rules are constitutive rules. Carrying this idea further, Taylor claims that:

\ldots just as there are constitutive rules, i.e., rules such that the behavior they govern could not exist without them and which are in this sense inseparable from that behavior, so I am suggesting that there are constitutive distinctions, constitutive ranges of language which are similarly inseparable, in that certain practices are not without them. We can reverse this relationship and say that all the institutions and practices by which we live are constituted by certain distinctions and hence a certain language which is thus essential to them (Taylor 1971:25).

The ranges of languages are, it seems to Taylor, intersubjective

\textsuperscript{30}Palmer notes that Gadamer, addressing the same point, argues: "Language discloses our world--not our environmental scientific world or universe, but our life world" (Palmer 1969:205). World is social, it is "between" persons and not the property of individual consciousnesses. The argument continues: "It is an error to think of this 'world' as basically a possession or property of subjectivity: this is a mistake typical of modern subjectivity-orientated thinking. Rather, world and language both are transpersonal matters, and language is made to fit the world, and therefore it is ordered to the world rather than to our subjectivity. In this sense (but not in a scientific sense) language is objective" (1969:205). A participant's understanding of language is therefore necessary in order to interpret the concrete socio-historical situation in which one finds himself.
meanings in that these languages are constitutive of practices and, therefore, inseparable from those practices.\textsuperscript{31}

This notion of intersubjective meaning differs from that utilized by mainstream social science which, properly speaking, doesn't speak of intersubjective meaning at all but, rather, of an intersubjective social reality. This latter is "... made up of brute data, identifiable acts and structures, certain institutions, procedures, actions" (Taylor 1971:21). It is important that all of these be so construed (as non-interpretable) for the basis of objectivity is the denial that a strictly private (non-shareable) "input" from the observer is necessary or admissible in order to validate them. Stated positively: objectivity depends upon observations that any competent person can make and is, in this sense, intersubjectively real.

The second order of reality consists of the meanings involved in actions conceived of as facts about the subject(s). This subjective

\textsuperscript{31}The inseparability is expressed in a different way by Macomber (following Hiedegger): "Words arise out of experience as plants grow out of the soil from which they draw their nourishment. This is the difference between the word and the term, which is devised with specific reference to its function within a conceptual network. The Romans take over Greek words without the Greek experience out of which they grew; they are not their own, and their roots are either lost or grafted onto an altogether different experience." (1967:153) This is the relationship of language and socio-historical experience: they are inseparable. This seems to us, at one and the same time, an affirmation of both the possibility of and the necessity for a participant's understanding (interpretation). It also implicitly indicts mainstream sociological research for its hubristic attitude.
reality is also considered a form of brute data in that it can be tapped by certain techniques (such as opinion survey) which are based on the idea of objectivity defined above. Such things as beliefs, attitudes, values, the meanings of actions for actors are seen as another form of brute data in that any competent observer can see that the actor has expressed a certain value, etc., as measured. Correlations can then be sought between (or within) these two orders of reality in a verifiable manner and we can thus construct our science entirely upon brute data.

But this isn't satisfactory to Taylor. He wants to maintain that this categorical grid will not "catch" intersubjective meanings: "the meanings and norms implicit in . . . practices are not just in the minds of the actors but are out there in the practices themselves, practices which cannot be conceived as a set of individual actions, but are essentially modes of social relation, of mutual action" (Taylor 1971:27). He contends, therefore, that this is one source of meaning that requires a reading, an interpretation which is not brute data identifiable. "Social practices and institutions which are partly constituted by certain ways of talking about them are not (brute data) identifiable. We have to understand the language, the underlying meanings, which constitute them" (Taylor 1971:29).

A second category that he proposes is that of common meanings: "by these I mean notions of what is significant which are not just shared in the sense that everyone has them, but also common in the
sense of being in the common reference world" (Taylor 1971:30). The importance of these meanings is not to be underestimated, for

Common meanings are the basis of community. Intersubjective meaning gives a people a common language to talk about social reality (which is partly constituted by the language) and a common understanding of certain norms, but only with common meanings does this common reference world contain significant common actions, celebrations, and feelings. These are objects in the world that everybody shares. This is what makes community (Taylor 1971:30).

His phrasing here is bothersome to be sure but what he wants us to see is that there are meanings "out there" which by their very nature cannot be known as brute data and must in fact be interpreted. This amounts to saying that certain kinds of knowing are appropriate for certain kinds of objects and that all objects are not reducible to a brute data formulation. He further suggests that this is not a trivial matter, that these meanings-practices are of central importance to a society and must themselves be read in order to arrive at an understanding of that society.

It is these two categorical principles that he proposes as the basis of an alternative epistemology, an epistemology that is radically different than its traditional counterpart. The development of this epistemology is the only way that we have of getting at what is truly social and coming to an understanding of it. And it is the lack of this kind of knowing-understanding that prevents us from coming to grips with phenomena such as the opposition movement of the last decade. It is in fact impossible to deal with such a phenomenon within mainstream
social science because our epistemology requires that we look at the wrong things.

Let us consider the turmoil of the last decade for a moment. If we were to approach this problem from a hermeneutical standpoint we would have to interpret meaning-practices in order to discover an underlying coherence to what is now puzzling and confused. In order to do this we might consider competition, uninvolvement, and independence as three meaning-practices to read. Our interpretations of these might center around their interrelationships as a group and their relationship or intertwining with certain dominant trends in our society. These latter might include the likes of technological innovation and proliferation, the knowledge explosion, the extant liberal social theory and its faith in unlimited progress, etc. Our interpretation, based on the readings of all of these, might conclude alternative meaning-practices such as cooperation, engagement, and dependence are emerging because we have reached a stage in our development wherein once dominant meaning-practices no longer hold our allegiance.  

The reader may take issue with our use of the word 'because' in this context. We may justify this by again appealing to Macomber on Heidegger. The following passages can be seen to apply to the decade of the 1960's. "History is the product of conflict in man's being out of which unhiddenness (truth) emerges; the conflict of the earth and the world, of mystery and illusion, of authentic and inauthentic modes of 'being there.' The conflict becomes progressively more acute with the evolution of the impersonal one, manifesting itself in crises in human thinking and the organization of human life of more and more serious
essentially what Slater (1970) has done and while our offering of this
as a paradigm doesn't do justice to either Slater or Taylor, it indicates,
we think, the necessary approach.

Let us see if we can go further with it in order to illustrate some
other issues in our critique of mainstream sociology. Implicit in
Taylor's argument is the assertion that hermeneutics of this sort requires
a participant's understanding, that is, a reading of "languages." We
can see this in his bald rejoinder to one who does not understand the
proffered interpretation: "Develop your intuitions (and) change your­
self" (Taylor 1971:48). He responds this way because he sees an "in­
tuition gap" as the other side, as it were, of the hermeneutical circle.
One cannot understand a society in which he is in fact a stranger: no
readings are possible without a participant's knowledge of the languages
involved. Or at least we have to say that the interpretations are more

proportions... Reality first reveals itself to the knowing mind in
contradictions; the task of the knowing mind is to resolve each contra­
diction as it arises and thereby to take its direction from reality itself.
The direction of such thinking is not arbitrary, and it is not laid down
by thinking. Reality 'leads' through the medium of contradiction, and
thinking 'responds.'" (1967:133-134 emphasis added) Our interpretation
then is that contradictions in the American social fabric have led to
certain kinds of responses of thought and praxis. We might add that
'contradiction' and 'anomalous data' are synonymous here and that the
dominant paradigm no longer commands allegiance in such a situation
as people engage in "extraordinary research" (counter-cultural activi­
ties) as a preliminary to a new paradigm(or ethos).
likely to be deficient. This negates the idea of value-neutrality to the extent to which one becomes a participant and not just an observer. It is this sense of participant observation that was spoken of above although this is not the way in which we usually think of it.

Another way of stating this: the only alternative to a poor interpretation is a better one, and the only way to gain a better understanding is to deepen one's insights and intuition. This "deepening process" is dependent upon some kind of participation which allows one to change his orientation or at least live one's own in such a way as to allow for the fullest possible comprehension of the orientations of others. In terms of our problem this means that one has to experience in some way competition, uninvolvement, and independence, etc., before one can even hope to offer an adequate interpretation of the phenomenon under discussion.

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33 This issue is taken up in detail in the excursus following. This is a crucial point for the distinction between a social hermeneutics and a verstehende (or dialogical) sociology.

34 A traditional concern here is that the participant may "go native" and become totally a participant/member. This would not be a social hermeneutics, however, as a governing principle here is . . . application, the function of interpretation in relating the meaning of the text to the present" (Palmer 1969:186). We do well to pay attention to biblical and juridical hermeneutics here, "... for in neither case is it sufficient to understand and explain the text in a general way; it has to be made explicit in what way the text speaks to the present condition" (Palmer 1969:186-187). It is necessary in social hermeneutics, also, and this means dialogue (written or oral) with others; there can be no private interpretations.
There are several implications to this line of argument that need to be mentioned. First, a hermeneutical sociology is largely to be concerned with **ex post** understanding because the language (as constitutive of practices and institutions) doesn't exist until "after the event." That is to say, a "new" language, a transformed meaning world, must be available before it is possible for us to understand the situation.

Once again, it is possible to illustrate this by referring to Kuhn's own remarks. In his chapter on "The Nature and Necessity of Scientific Revolutions" he has this to say about the relationship of the old paradigm to the new. "Though an out-of-date theory can always be viewed as a special case of its up-to-date successor, it must be transformed for the purpose. And the transformation is one that can be undertaken only with the advantages of hindsight, the explicit guidance of the more recent theory (1970:103). A part of the reason for this is that 'gestalt switches' account for more than just a different way of viewing a specific phenomena (e.g., a condenser instead of a Leyden jar).

"Paradigms determine large areas of experience at the same time. It is however, only after experience has been thus determined that the search for an operational definition or a pure observation--language can begin" (1970:129 emphasis added). But this, of course, is not 'pure' as Kuhn himself realizes, for all interpretations of experience presuppose a paradigm and the "interpretive enterprise . . . can only articulate a paradigm, not correct it" (1970:122).
Secondly, prediction is out of the question for three basic reasons; it is impossible to delineate a closed system; our "measurement" is one of nuance and not exactitude (this last requiring brute data); and our nature is one of being self-defining, changes in which produce changes in what we are, such that we have to be understood in different terms. Another way of saying this comes from a tenet of the theoretical stance that we reject: "... only if past and future are brought under the same conceptual net can one understand the states of the latter as some function of the states of the former, and hence predict" (Taylor 1971:49). Since conceptual innovation alters human reality this cannot be achieved in hermeneutics.

Hopefully, the ontological/epistemological dispute just engaged in has drawn the lines clearly. There is a marked difference in paradigms

35Most of sociological research is an attempt to be exact and it is proper to utilize mathematics for this end. "The essence of mathematics is its exactness in the sense of making it possible to 'exact' knowledge from nature, and numbers are supremely 'exact' in this sense... It is no defect of the humane discipline that is not exact, and this is not because it is based on words instead of numbers -- it is really the other way around" (Macomber 1967:200). The binding character of hermeneutics, therefore, is that it does not exact knowledge from the social experience but allows interpretation of these ambiguous events.

36We can do no better here than to refer the reader to Friedrichs comment (p.7 above) "That positivist assumptions... have obscured the intimate link between 'knowledge' and 'changing'." We are in complete accord with Friedrichs and Gouldner on this point and have tried to present an epistemology which honors (and demands) that link. In fact, this relationship between 'knowing' and 'changing' is at the heart of Heidegger's philosophy (cf. Schmitt 1969: 149-218).
and one's acceptance of hermeneutics dramatically affects the way s/he is in the world. Social hermeneutics is a "... moral science in a more radical sense than the eighteenth century understood. (Its) successful prosecution requires a high degree of self-knowledge, a freedom from illusion, in the sense of error which is rooted and expressed in one's way of life; for our incapacity to understand is rooted in our own self-definitions, hence in what we are." (Taylor: 1971:51). Knowing is changing, is transformative of the interpreter. As this understanding also changes the social relationship in which one is involved we must see that understanding changes the world.
CHAPTER V

EXCURSUS: THE WRONG-HEADED APPEAL TO PHYSICS

Sociologists have kept an envious eye on the natural sciences and their astounding progress. The temptation has been great to construct (or reconstruct) the discipline of sociology along the same lines in the hopes of getting us out of our "infancy" and into the ranks of the mature sciences.

There is, however, a flaw here. The science which we are suppose to imitate does not exist, and if it ever did it was most certainly nineteenth century physics. It is instructive both for our future consideration of the nature of interpretation and as a means to distinguish our paradigm from Friedrichs, to examine certain principles of twentieth century physics-quantum physics. In looking at Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, Bohr's notions of complementarity, and de Broglie's view of operationalization, we should eventually be able to gain an appreciation for the necessity of hermeneutics.

The principle of uncertainty was first mathematically expressed in 1927 by Werner Heisenberg. This dictum stated that the simultaneous knowledge of position and velocity--information assumed to be the prerequisite to exact prediction in the classical physics--was impossible to attain by microphysics. "The relationship of the two variables is such that the more accurately we measure the one the less
accurately are we able to define the other; and this degree of uncer-
tainty is governed by an irreducible minimum" (Matson, 1966:125).
The dilemma posed by this principle is that because the state of the
particle is defined as its position and velocity together and we cannot
know both of these at the same time, we cannot establish rigorous
causal connections nor test laws. This works two ways: because we
are unsure of the present state we cannot accurately trace backwards
to an antecedent state; and because of our uncertainty of the present,
we cannot be certain of the future. This obviously eliminates the
chance for exact predictions.

There are, however, a few other implications stemming from
this mathematical expression. For one thing, because we must focus
on the position or velocity or wave length we cannot accurately weave
the elements together. "We may choose which segment of the whole
we wish to comprehend; but the whole itself eludes the grasp of the
measurer" (Matson, 1966:125). This inability to grasp the whole
makes each intervention to measure a unique situation and leads us
to statements of probability as our maximum achievement.

Secondly, the reasoning behind Heisenberg's principle is "... the
fact that we cannot observe the course of nature without disturbing
it" (quoted in Matson 1966:126). This makes, ironically enough, the
physicist a "participant observer." As Andrade said, "observation
means interference with what we are observing... Observation
disturbs reality" (quoted in Matson, 1966:127). We can see the beginnings here of what Oppenheimer has called Neils Bohr's "immense evocative analogy"--the pertinence of this and other principles to the study of man. Before we consider that, however, we should summarize what the foregoing means for the science of physics.

Where once it could be assumed as an article of faith that perfect precision and infallible prediction were in principle within the power of science--and, accordingly, that any inexactness in our findings was only a temporary and technical impediment--today it is all but universally acknowledged that the data of classical physics are at best approximations ("limiting cases" of the quantum theory) doomed forever to an irreducible imprecision not merely in practice but in principle as well (Matson 1966:130 emphasis added).

Even if Bain (1947:10) were correct (and I do not think that he is) in his contention that "the problems of sociology . . . are essentially no different and no more difficult that those of the physical and biological sciences," Heisenberg is informing us that perfectability of measurement is out of the question--in practice as well as principle. But this situation, as will be explained and admitted later, is not that damaging for sociology: to get the full import of why appeals to the physics model are in error we must proceed to Bohr and de Broglie.

Heisenberg's uncertainty relations placed the physicists on the horns of a dilemma with regard to the ultimate nature of matter. On the one horn, the particle theory explained a wide range of phenomena but broke down when confronted with further tests. On the other horn,
the wave theory, which failed to make sense of some of the data explained by the older corpuscular model, accounted for facts which could not be included under the particle umbrella. It was Niels Bohr who wrestled the bull to the ground with his principle of complementarity, "which made it possible to accept both theories as valid—not simultaneously but in alternation" (Matson 1966:132). That is, a complete explanation is only obtainable if the two theories are taken one at a time for if they are viewed at the same time they are seen to be mutually exclusive. Bohr likened this situation to looking at a coin: "They are like the two faces of an object that can never be seen at the same time but which must be visualized in turn, however, in order to describe the object completely" (quoted in Matson 1966:132).

Specifically, then, the point is that either one of the alternatives is partial and inadequate by itself and, until it is complemented and supplemented by the other concept, it gives us an "idealization" that is artificial. De Broglie has explained this by referring to an individual physical unit (an electron) and its relationship to the system in which it exists. If we attempt to exactly describe the individual unit we "sever it from its world" for "The particle cannot be observed so long as it forms part of the system, and the system is impaired once the particle has been identified" (quoted in Matson 1966:133). We are left, therefore, with this dilemma: we cannot peer too closely at reality or the idealizations of unit and system vanish; that is, "if we
insist on perfectly exact definitions and, at the same moment, on a completely detailed study of the phenomena, we find that these two notions are idealizations, the probability of whose physical realization is nil" (quoted in Matson 1966:133).

We are drawing very near, now, to Bohr's "immense evocative analogy," the implications of the aforementioned principles for sociology. It is interesting to note at this juncture that the quantum theorists themselves make the broad intimations to follow. Max Born, a co-worker of Bohr, suggests that "the fact that in an exact science like physics there are mutually exclusive and complementary situations which cannot be described by the same concepts, but need two kinds of expression, must have an influence, and I think a welcome influence, on other fields of human activity and thought" (quoted in Matson 1966:134). What we find here is that the physicists are noting the inadvisability of wholesale adoption of their techniques and methods. And "... are instead to be found insisting upon the high degree of inappropriateness, not to say irrelevance, of these methods--and hence the essential limitations of physical analysis when carried beyond the borders of its original and proper domain" (Matson 1966:134). So now we have it, the "immense evocative analogy" for the study of man is "... that of the mutually antagonistic but peculiarly cognate relationship between the traditional scientific method of 'causes and mechanisms' and the traditional humanistic method of purposes.
and reasons--the method known to social science as verstehen" (Matson 1966:134). Thus we have the traditional scientific stress on manipulation, prediction, control as one alternative and the traditional humanistic emphasis on understanding as the other alternative.

The implication of this line of argument for sociology may be stated succinctly:

The inference . . . is not, of course, that the systematic search for natural causes and coefficient correlations must be abandoned forthwith in human affairs, nor that explanation in the qualitative terms of reason and free will is alone sufficient to account for all behavior. The point is rather that the two alternative perspectives or frames of reference are complementary: i.e., mutually exclusive if applied simultaneously but mutually "tolerant" if considered as opposite sides of the same coin--differing faces of the same reality (Matson 1966:136).

If the reader has accepted the analogy as legitimate he must, perforce, realize that development of the verstehen side of the coin should receive fully as much attention as the alternate perspective. It has been stated that one frame of reference, by itself, is partial and inadequate, and if we are to understand the reality that is "ours" (and not the chemist's, physicist's, etc.) we have to complement and supplement the one alternative with the other.

As one of the scientists who was willing to take the analogy explicated above a good deal farther, de Broglie expounded a proposition regarding specificity of conceptualization which is the last point we shall make in this context. He reasoned, referring both to the
principle of indeterminancy and to the principle of complementarity, that our concepts are capable of a "rough validity" as long as they are somewhat vague, but when our goal is extreme precision they become "as idealizations, the probability of whose physical realization is nil." That is (and he is referring to us) "... in the region of the inexact sciences of human conduct, the strictness of the definitions varies inversely as their applicability to the world of reality" (quoted in Matson 1966:138). Again, it should be stressed that de Broglie is not condemning the efforts of social scientists to make their understanding correspond to the facts. What he is saying is that it is very doubtful "... whether such a correspondence can be maintained to the end, if we insist on eliminating the margins of indeterminateness and on effecting extreme precision in our concepts" (quoted in Matson 1966:138).

The ramifications of these ideas for sociology have not, to my knowledge, been fully explored (Matson deals primarily with psychology) but there would seem to be indicated at least the following:

(1) The method of verstehen has to be more fully understood and developed.

(2) Participant observation is the appropriate research approach for the perspective that is alternate to the traditional techniques emphasizing prediction, control, manipulation, etc.

(3) This method must of necessity include a built in vagueness...
(sensitizing concepts) in order to avoid merely becoming another quantitative measure.

(4) If its complementariness and supplementariness are not protected and it regresses to but another quantitative technique then we have but one side of the coin and an incomplete view of reality.

This excursus should demonstrate two things. First, there is a greatly modified basis for the kind of appeals made by a "hard-nosed empiricist" such as Bain that we conduct ourselves as natural scientists, for the physicists themselves admonish us to maintain at least a complementariness of approach. Two, the complementarity principle developed above is almost an exact statement of a Weberian stance—establishing meaning adequacy and causal adequacy for the total explanation. But it is not what a social hermeneutics would demand. The hermeneutical paradigm would insist that if an interpretation is deficient what is needed is not an appeal to a supplementary test of adequacy. If an interpretation is inadequate, what is needed is a better interpretation.

We can see this most clearly argued by Peter Winch. He notes that Weber's idea of a verstehende sociology depended upon some kind of verification of the plausible hypothesis provided by the interpretation of meaning adequacy. This verification demands the establishment of statistical laws based upon the observation of what happens. Winch
... want(s) to question Weber's implied suggestion that verstehen is something which is logically incomplete and needs supplementing by a different method altogether, namely the collection of statistics. Against this, I want to insist that if a proffered interpretation is wrong, statistics, though they may suggest that that is so, are not the decisive and ultimate court of appeal for the validity of sociological interpretations in the way Weber suggests. What is then needed is a better interpretation, not something different in kind. The compatibility of an interpretation with the statistics does not prove its validity. Someone who interprets a tribe's magical rites as a form of misplaced scientific activity will not be corrected by statistics about what members of that tribe are likely to do on various kinds of occasion (though this might form part of an argument) what is ultimately required is a philosophical argument... For a mistaken interpretation of a form of social activity is closely akin to the type of mistake dealt with in philosophy (1958:113-114).

We can see the direct applicability of this line of reasoning to our case for hermeneutics by recalling our earlier point that hermeneutical thinking may be accompanied by denotable objects and representational concepts may obliquely emerge, but the real question is one of immersion within one modality of thinking.

A specific example in sociological theory may prove helpful. Peter Berger and Hansfried Kellner have, in their "Marriage and the Construction of Reality: An Exercise in the Microsociology of Knowledge, provided a brilliant interpretation of marriage as a "nomos building instrumentality; that is, of marriage as a social arrangement that creates for the individual the sort of order in which he can experience his life as making sense" (1970:50). This interpretation is built up from an amalgam of "the Weberian perspective on society
as a network of meanings, the Meadian perspective on identity as a social phenomenon, and the phenomenological analysis of the social structuring of reality especially as given in the works of Schutz and Merleau-Ponty" (1970:51). From this combination of theoretical perspectives they construct the thesis that marriage is "a crucial nomic instrumentality in our society," a thesis premised on nomic processes as being the very opposite of anomie states. If this interpretation--which we can only refer to, not fully explicate--is insufficient, it will not be shown through statistical analysis as a necessary supplementary mode of analysis and "ultimate court of appeals."

What would be required would be a better interpretation. Now, it obviously is the case that interpretations of marriage have a rich source of empirical data to draw upon but no statistical analysis is going to confirm or fail to confirm the notion of marriage as a nomic building instrumentality. Divorce statistics might immediately spring to mind as disconfirming the briefly alluded to interpretation. But as Berger and Kellner are themselves aware of this possible contradiction we can again refer to their paper.

Typically, individuals in our society do not divorce because marriage has become unimportant to them, but because it has become as important that they have no tolerance for the less than completely successful marital arrangement they have contracted with the particular individual in question. This is more fully understood when one has grasped the crucial need for the sort of world that only marriage can produce in our society, a world without which the individual is powerfully threatened with anomie in the fullest sense of the word. Also,
the frequency of divorce simply reflects the difficulty and
demanding character of the whole undertaking. The empirical
fact that the great majority of divorced individuals plan to
remarry and a good majority of them actually do, at least in
America, fully bears out this contention" (1970:69).

The statistical analyses, the accounts different in kind than our proffered interpretation, have themselves to be viewed within the context of one's paradigm. There can be no question of complementarity and supplementarity as delineated in the excursus above. We are, instead, inextricably involved in the experience noted by Merleau-Ponty: "The sociologist philosophizes every time he is required to not only record but comprehend the facts. At the moment of interpretation, he is himself already a philosopher" (1968:68). Berger and Kellner comprehend the facts and make sense of them in their interpretation; but these same facts (or any others) can only form part of an alternate interpretation. It is the interpretation itself which must be sufficient.
CHAPTER VI

SUBTLE DANCERS: THE DATA OF HERMENEUTICS

Who borrows the Medusa's eye
Resigns to the empirical lie.
The knower petrifies the known:
The subtle dancer turns to stone.

It is fitting in a thesis emphasizing the notion of a hermeneutical circle that our last chapter should be prefaced, as was our first, by Roszak's poem. Hopefully, the reader has seen that the poem has provided us with more than a few chapter titles, for Roszak's quatrain carries within it both critique and alternative vision. Our thesis has been written along the lines of this two step problematic--critical of the particular paradigm that dominates sociology and probing of a different way of viewing the social world.

Our criticism has revolved around the interpretation that sociology has borrowed the Medusa's eye of positivist methodology by self-consciously borrowing the conceptual/paradigmatic tool-box of the natural sciences (cf. Hampden-Turner (1970) for another formulation of the borrowed tool-box metaphor). That is, we have maintained, following Friedrichs, that sociology is characterized by a dominant paradigm albeit one that is currently undergoing challenge. In addition to Friedrichs we have noted the presence of what we designated a pervasive mode of thinking: representational thinking.

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We should like to make explicit something of the inevitable consequence of those disciplinary characteristics: the transformation of social man into an impersonal object. This transformation results from the following epistemological tenets. First, and foremost, the grammar of science stresses efficiency in prediction. From this commitment flow three presumptive conditions; the criteria of the intersubjective (or empirical), the recurrent (or nomothetic), and the relational (or systematic). (cf. Friedrichs 1970:197-222). The derivative and inevitable image of man in such a schema is that of impersonal object. All three tenets hang together to place man in a system where everything (by definition) is related; where man, through the postulate of recurrence, is determined; and where he is, accordingly, depersonalized as empirical object. In so far as we utilize the rhetoric of science we shall participate in just this transformation, the result of our hubris. "Being and thinking must be held together: to be in a certain way is to think in a certain way, and conversely." (Macomber 1967:89). To think representationally is to insolently transform social man (including, of course, one's self) into an object; the knower does petrify the known and turn the subtle dancer to stone.

Roszak's quatrain also implies an alternative vision, one that would keep the subtle dancer (personal and social experience) as subtle dancer. We have attempted to introduce such a mode of thinking
in social hermeneutics which honors the intimate link between knowing and changing. Indeed, we hold the possibility and necessity for understanding/interpreting at the center of hermeneutical thinking. We have suggested that only such an approach will yield a "... competing gestalt that redefines crucial problems, introduces new methods, and establishes uniquely new standards for solutions" (Friedrichs 1970:2). We hope that the reader can see such a possibility in our all too brief prolegomena.

But it is just on this point that we have indicated that we disagree with both Friedrichs and Gouldner: where in fact is the divergence? In keeping with the proper scope of this thesis we shall make brief notation of what deserves a study entire of itself.

Following his brilliant analysis of the sociological discipline Friedrichs suggests his own alternative paradigm--dialogical sociology. He feels that "...when one extends the domain of man's accountability he enlarges his responsibility. And this is exactly what the epistemology of sociology as social science is uniquely equipped to do... (N)o other human endeavour--preaching, example, the formal or informal study of ethics--may claim such an advantage" (Friedrichs 1970:316). The epistemological position of sociology is unique in this respect insofar as we engage two quite distinct epistemologies in a framework of dialogue. That is, "$...the two pre-dispositions--the one suitable to the concern for reliability evidenced..."
by natural science and the other appropriate to the risk demanded by a sensitivity to the ground that is personal existence—must inform each other if either is to bear fruit for man" (Friedrichs 1970:323). But we have made the case that such a duality would subvert the intention of a social hermeneutics, because we must seek to think (and be) in such a way as to transcend the subjectivity-oriented thinking of science. We can no more allow Friedrichs to make representational thinking a co-equal partner in our inquiry than we can allow Weber to make it a necessary supplementary mode of analysis and ultimate court of appeal. We must disagree with Friedrichs on this matter.

Gouldner, too, is seeking to establish something of a corrective to the positivist sociology that he criticizes. His alternative is termed reflexive sociology and, like Friedrichs' dialogical sociology, contains much that is laudable and also convergent with our own thinking. For instance, Gouldner desires that "... the core of Reflexive Sociology (sic) is the attitude it fosters toward those parts of the social world closest to the sociologist... A Reflexive Sociology is not a bundle of technical skills; it is a conception of how to live and a total praxis" (Gouldner 1970:504). Here is most certainly an acknowledgement of the connection between thinking and being! How is one relating to his own family, friends, students, and colleagues? That is the question to be answered by every practitioner of social hermeneutics (indeed,
it's a query for every human being).

Gouldner's thinking evidences a contradiction, however, that we cannot accept. In spite of our agreement with the aim of reflexive sociology being to transform the sociologist's self and hence his praxis in the world we cannot agree with the following. "A Reflexive Sociology is not characterized by what it studies. It is distinguished neither by the persons and the problems studied nor even by the techniques and instruments used in studying them" (Gouldner 1970:495). For us this is at the heart of the matter. We cannot utilize methods and theory embedded within representational thinking and expect the aforementioned transformation of self and relationships to occur. What and how one studies is part and parcel of that transformation, and one has to seek the hermeneutical mode if one is to realize an authentic change. Thinking and being are reciprocally joined.

Indeed it is this last point that prompts us to suggest that Friedrichs' notion of the prophetic mode of being a sociological agent could only be realized within the mode of hermeneutical thinking. To be truly prophetic is to make our witness one based upon the realization that "... our being and thinking are poised between authenticity and inauthenticity as though between magnetic poles" (Macomber 1967:89). That is, our being and thinking vis-a-vis both persons and the social world is between hermeneutical thinking (authenticity) and representational thinking (inauthenticity). To be truly prophetic one must call
one's fellows toward the momentary event of authenticity and away from the almost permanent condition of inauthenticity. This cannot be properly done within the representational mode.

We have noted many times the introductory nature of this thesis. We shall conclude by stating that perhaps neither we nor Friedrichs nor Gouldner knows the solution which we seek, but we probably all realize that it is the solution to the problem of the subtle dancer.
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