

The Problem of Relevance and Typification: The Example of Integral Theory

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Abstract

At the heart of all human action is the relationship between our direct experience and our constructions and abstractions of our experience. This is a fundamental issue that all scientific endeavors must grapple with. In this article, I examine the implications of this reality in Integral Theory, a comprehensive approach that is relevant to transpersonal studies. I frame this problem within the phenomenology of Alfred Schutz and his articulation of the problem of relevance and typification. Schutz described this problem as “the question of why these facts and precisely these are selected by thought from the totality of lived experience and regarded as relevant.” This article highlights the importance of Schutz’ theory of relevances for integral metatheory and transpersonal studies.

Keywords: relevance, typification, Schutz, phenomenology, integral theory, metatheory

The Problem of Relevance and Typification: The Example of Integral Theory

At the heart of all human action—everything that we do in our lives that is “based upon a preconceived project” (Schutz, 1970a, p. 67)—is the relationship between our direct experience of the life-world¹ (first-order) as it is lived moment-to-moment and our constructions and abstractions of our experience of the life-world (second-order), as typified by the construction of theoretical models (cf. Ho, 2008; Jung, 1999; Schutz, 1971b).

Our second-order constructs of first-order experience represent a paradoxical gap in the ways in which the world is known. To put it another way: “The problem in the study of human activity is that every attempt at a context-free definition of an action, that is, a definition based on abstract rules or laws, will not necessarily accord with the pragmatic way an action is defined by the actors in a concrete social situation” (Flyvbjerg, 2008, p. 42). Being aware within my experience of everyday life, with all of its activities, is an example of first-order direct experience. Stepping into my study and putting together concepts and theories (usually based on other concepts and theories) is an example of second-order reality making.

This admittedly simplified² process from first-order to second-order necessarily transforms lived experience into our concepts and models in order to accommodate a particular mental state or attitude. The concepts and models are only *in* first-order experience implicitly or not at all. Indeed, the map is not the territory:

The ‘knowing subject’, as the idealist tradition rightly calls him, inflicts on practice a much more fundamental and pernicious alteration which, being a constituent condition of the cognitive operation, is bound to pass unnoticed: in taking up a point of view on the action, withdrawing from it in order to

observe it from above and from a distance, he constitutes practical activity as an *object of observation and analysis, a representation* (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 2).

Both orders are only two of many orders of experience each with their own *sub-universes, finite provinces of meaning, and cognitive styles* (Embree, 1988; Schutz, 1964a, 1971a; Schutz & Luckmann, 1973). Recognizing this gap is one thing, finding an adequate way of representing first-order experience in second-order language that does so while minimizing the distortion to the greatest extent possible (but not eliminating it completely), is another.

Few methods and models, neither theoretical or empirical, actually address this problem where it starts—i.e., in direct lived experience—and builds a theory of knowledge from this foundational place (cf. Edwards, 2008). All theoretical and scientific endeavors—in this article, Integral Theory—must eventually account for the transformation of first-order reality to second-order reality. This problem is far from resolved (see Flyvbjerg, 2008; Fuller, 2002; Gendlin, 1997b, 2009a; Ho, 2008; Kim & Berard, 2009; Wilson, 2005).³

My main aim in this article is to (1) establish the problem of relevance as central to Integral Theory in general (as an example of metatheorizing) and Integral Methodological Pluralism (IMP) in particular (the “method” driving much of Integral Theory), (2) support the idea that any Integral epistemology (cf. Flyvbjerg, 2008) must be founded on an adequate phenomenology, (3) that an adequate phenomenology is the first philosophy for Integral Theory and any metatheory, and (4) the more radical proposition that by doing so Integral Theory faces a paradox that fundamentally threatens its validity.⁴

Integral Theory represents one of the most ambitious contemporary attempts to bring together the whole of human knowledge and practice in an integrative and systemic open embrace. However, Integral Theory has not established a solid epistemological foothold from which to advance its investigations (Saiter, 2007). A reliable starting point for

Integral methods and models can be established by understanding the way in which humans create second-order worlds (from the theoretical attitude) based on first-order worlds while in the *natural attitude* of everyday life (Husserl, 1993; Schutz, 1971b, 1971d). The problem of second-order constructs from within the theoretical attitude⁵ can be addressed by examining the ways in which our first-order and second-order experience is initially determined by what Alfred Schutz (1964a, 1966a, 1970b, 1971a, 1996; 1973) called the *systems of relevance*.⁶ Schutz identified at least three main types of relevance, with a few sub-types, which constitute a starting point for defining the systems of relevance. These include (1) *thematic relevance*, (2) *interpretational relevance*, and (3) *motivational relevance*.

These systems of relevance inform and guide our *typifications*, which are also known as *ideal types*.⁷ Typifications should be understood as the process of constructing generalizations which are based on our *stock of knowledge at hand* and governed by our systems of relevance (Schutz, 1964a, 1966a, 1971a). I am proposing that an adequate Integral epistemology that accounts and controls for the gap between (at least) the two realities (first and second orders) must begin with the problem of relevance and typification.⁸

The theory of relevance presented here may also provide an alternative to the tendency in Integral Theory to “do it all, all the time.” This tendency can be experienced as an overwhelming pressure to be “integrated” (i.e., embody the highest levels, lines, stages, structures of development, etc.) without allowing for being wherever we are (i.e., in the AQAL matrix) at any given time or place in our daily lives.

Schutz and the Problem of Relevance and Typification

Schutz (1972) described the problem of relevance as “the question of why these facts and precisely these are selected by thought from the totality of lived experience and regarded as relevant” (p. 250). In his view the problem of relevance was at the heart of our

experience of the world and could be understood as determining “the form and content of our stream of thought” (1971d, p. 213).

Schutz (1966b) also maintained that “(a) theory of projected action and decision in the life-world requires an analysis of the underlying systems of relevancy. Without such a theory, no foundation of a science of human action is possible” (p. 131). The system of relevances is “the engine that drives the selective activity of consciousness” (Muzzetto, 2006, p. 16).

Typification for Schutz (1971c) is conditioned on the systems of relevance. It is important because it refers to the *way* in which one imposes “upon the perceptual field an organizational form which that field does not possess in its own right, an organizational form determined by the point of vantage the subject chooses to take” (p. 276) or the way experience is structured (Kim & Berard, 2009; Schutz, 1971c). Typifications are always based on the open systems of relevance, which are determined by our *biographical situation* in the world (cf. Schutz, 1966a, 1971a; Schutz & Luckmann, 1973): “. . . [A]ll typification consists in the equalization of traits relevant to the particular purpose at hand for the sake of which the type has been formed, and in disregarding those individual differences of the typified objects that are irrelevant to such purpose” (Schutz, 1964b, p. 234).

Theorizing is always an act of *ideal types* in a specialized environment, a particular type of reality-making with its own open *horizon of themes* based on specialized finite provinces of meaning. The thinking mind is but one example of several realities that humans have at their potential reach (cf. Gendlin, 2009a; Schutz, 1971d). Concept and theory formation reside in a very specialized reality that necessarily excludes other ways of knowing and thus other realities. That is, when one privileges one reality or province of meaning other realities

recede into the background, or beyond the horizon of awareness—out of reach for the time being but still available as a potential.

For example, being theoretically oriented and having considerations with universal significance rather than idiothetic or particular significance, relevance, typifications, stocks of knowledge at hand, etc., are largely based on Schutz' (1970b; 1973) ideal type of the average, well-functioning adult person with typical faculties of reason, sense, and reflection.

The exceptions to the rule and the necessary treatment of non-typical or other types of persons must be handled in a different context. That is, we must take into consideration that for children, the elderly, the sensorily impaired or different, people whose experience include a markedly different experience of reality from this typified norm (e.g., schizophrenics), reality is experienced and may be experienced in a way that is not being treated by Schutz' (1970b; 1973) ideal type of human being.

When theorists speak of people or the human experience in general, they are invoking an ideal typical person, a sort of average taken from one's stock of knowledge at hand which has been developed over time based upon the particular experiences of the theoritician (i.e., a generalization).

The recognition of the difference between concept and theory formation as being one among many multiple realities, however, has never been consistent or popular. A review of the history and philosophy of science is certainly beyond the scope of this article but it is crucial to understand that theory building, whether pure or applied, is always a particular way of being in the world:

The theoretical attitude, though it is again a vocational attitude, is totally unpractical. In the sphere of its own vocational life, then, it is based on a

voluntary epoche of all natural praxis, including the higher-level praxis that serves the natural sphere. (Husserl, 1954/1999, p. 282)

According to Husserlian phenomenology the theoretical attitude is a type of reality that invokes its own provinces of meaning quite distinct from other ways of knowing. Theorizing about the experience of war is not the same thing as living through war. This may seem obvious but when pursuing Integral (or meta-theoretical) knowledge claims it is essential to recognize the boundaries and horizons of each type of reality and to recognize when we cross them.

Schutz emphasized this state of affairs when he said: “Henceforth, he [the scientist] will participate in a universe of discourse embracing the results obtained by others, methods worked out by others. This theoretical universe of the special science is itself a finite province of meaning, having its peculiar cognitive style with peculiar implications of problems and horizons to be explicated” (Schutz, 1971d, p. 250).⁹

It is vital for any theory or science of human action to recognize the importance of the problem of relevance and typification. I recognize that this may not address all of Integral Theory in its entirety. However, since methods and epistemic knowledge claims are the cornerstone of any theoretical model, especially an injunctive or enactive model such as Integral Theory, the problem of relevance and typification addresses the core foundations (a type of micro-analysis of the building blocks) of Integral Theory and Practice.

The Systems of Relevance

Topical (Thematic) Relevance: Imposed and Intrinsic. Schutz (1970b; 1973) describes the nature of the systems of relevance and therefore of all our experience in the world as being founded upon what he calls *imposed relevance*. Based upon our biographical

situation and starting from the day we are born, imposed relevance is at the heart of everything we do, say, or think, and therefore should be fundamental to Integral Theory:

In a certain sense, we may say that the imposed relevance of our human condition—that we are born into a world and a situation not of our making, that we inescapably grow older together, that within the essentially undetermined fact of our future one simple certainty stands out, namely that we have to die, uncertain when and how—we may say that these imposed relevances are at the foundation of the counterpointal structure of our consciousness ... All our interest in life, our building up of plans, our attempts to understand the world and our condition in it, in brief, the whole system of our topical, interpretational, and motivational relevances, can be conceived of as being intrinsic to these imposed relevances. (1970b, pp. 180-181)

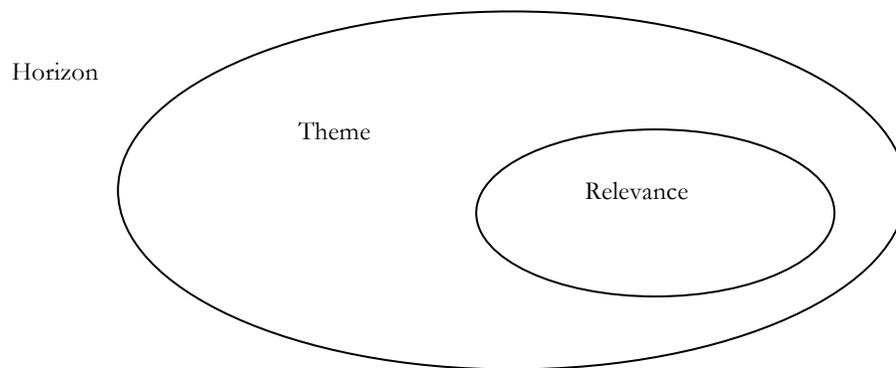


Figure 1. Basic Schematic of Thematic Relevance

Motivational Relevance.

If I read an article, it is highly likely that I will be reading it looking for something quite specific. Usually I am after something and this means that my attention is “tuned” to looking for and seeing whatever it is that I am interested in. This will necessarily mean that some of the words that I am reading will be either completely ignored or not necessarily relevant to my attention. There may be meanings or points within the article (or book, or whatever) that have the implicit potential to assist me with my problem or in understanding what I’m working on or fleshing-out my intent to read the article in the first place but is not relevant to me at the time. On the other hand, the words that I am attuned to, that I am actively trying to get a better grasp on, whether for a specific purpose such as writing a book chapter or not (reading simply because I am interested in this type of thing), will *jump out* at me. These words and their implicit and explicit meanings, which are typically taken as a whole in the actual act of reading, are what are important to me at the time. This is an example of motivational relevance.

However, most of us are quite familiar with the phenomenon of reading something more than once. If so inclined, for one reason or another, I may find myself reading the article again, at a different time or place. When this occurs, because I am in a slightly different place in regard to what I regard as relevant (attuned) I will most likely pick-up on meanings that were there all along but which I did not see the first time through. This is why articles and books that we sit with, read more than once, and generally, *get into* can take time and patience. Usually, this process can be motivated by a *felt sense* that there is something important in this article but that I am just not *seeing* in its entirety. The process of this implicit versus explicit knowing is explored in great detail by Gendlin (1997a, 2009a) but the process and structure of how and why something is relevant (our attention being attuned to

certain things at any given time) is the unique specialty that Schutz (1970b; 1973, 1989) sought to uncover.

Universal Knowledge, Multiple Realities, and Primordial Perspectives

How does Integral Theory account for the paradox of recognizing multiple truths, realities, and perspectives (the AQAL model) but is itself always already situated (context-dependent) in a particular reality based upon a grand overarching, systemic holarchical vision? That is, if each reality has its own rules, conventions, standards, and so on, then how can a theory or model possibly account for (i.e., transcend and include) those rules and conventions? For example, since Integral Theory has been founded upon orienting generalizations (OG) (Wilber, 2000) how can we possibly say that we know how these realities fit into each other based upon OG *which is itself a method based on the theoretical attitude* and thus subject to the rules and conventions of that particular finite province of meaning which is in turn based on an individual's particular systems of relevance?

Furthermore, to start with OG, as it is common practice to do in Integral Theory (REF), is to submit to the need for logical and linguistic precision in meaning. Although, Wilber (2006a, 2006f) seems to imply that OG has been surpassed by IMP in Wilber V (Wilber, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2006d, 2006e, 2006f), the AQAL model is still based on OG even though OG is now apparently no longer a methodological option (see Meyerhoff, 2010). That is, any comprehensive and sophisticated theory of reality must work toward precision in meaning if it is to be relevant to any scientific or logical standards but to do so from OG as the point of departure is like trying to build a house on a foundation of sand simply because the method itself is a product of a particular finite province of meaning (i.e.,

the theoretical attitude) which is always context-dependent (biographical situation) and subject to particular (idiothetic) systems of relevance.

OG is an example of the classic approach to truth building (rationalism) (REF) that Husserl (1950/1982, 1954/1999, 1975a, 1975b, 1993) and other 20th century philosophers critiqued and sought to transcend (see Gadamer, 1997; 2004; Heidegger, 2008; Merleau-Ponty, 2002; Ricoeur, 1981/1998). OG is an assumption about the way the world works based upon the Kantian predilection to account for as much as possible, that is, to be integral, (which, I maintain, is an honorable place to start) but is always based upon what is taken to be relevant at any given time by either an individual or a collective.

The question remains: how do we account for multiple realities, multiple ways of knowing, and multiple perspectives when the standard-bearer is an intellect-infused (rational) philosophy that maintains it is transcending and including all previous views? This edifice in itself is a product of a particular mode of consciousness particular to theory-building pursuits that are, by their very practice, a bracketing or suspension of the natural attitude of everyday life. That is, I am saying that even though Wilber appears to be a rationalist, *any* form of theory building—rationalist or otherwise—will be subject to some form of this type of particular reality where the bracketing or suspension of the life-world takes place. Integral Theory is no exception.

Thus, this leads to the paradox that Integral Theory claims to be integral of all phenomena but simply cannot and never will be integral, *in the strict sense*, by the simple virtue of the nature of all theoretical pursuits even when it explicitly adopts an “escape hatch” by recognizing this unavoidable limitation which Wilber does make an attempt at (Wilber, 2006a, 2006b). However, this recognition ultimately fails because to recognize that in starting from a very specific point (which he does), and building his edifice from there, he

cannot decide to suddenly transcend that starting place without, starting over, which he has not done. There is no transcending one's previous methods when the previous method grounds the means (rationale) by which one decided to change the method in the first place.

For example this is exactly what Schutz (1971d) is trying to uncover when he talks about the differences between what the theoretical social scientist does that is essentially different from being and doing in the paramount reality of everyday life:

This artificial device – called the method of the social sciences – overcomes the outlined dialectical difficulty by substituting for the intersubjective life-world a model of this life-world. This model, however, is not peopled with human beings in their full humanity, but with puppets, with *types*; they are constructed as though they could perform working actions and reactions (p. 255).

Integral Theory's possibility exceeds its actuality. This would be easier to work with if the Integral model stayed in the realm of pure theory. However, because it has an enactive injunction,¹⁰ this gap has to be addressed in increasingly precise ways.

A theory of anything, to be a working theory, must be structured to the extent that it systematically answers for the fact that we must take a stance, that is, a localized (but socially dependent) perspective based on our biographical situation (Schutz, 1970b, 1971a) (our epistemic Kosmic address), at whatever stage or type of inquiry. That is, there is always a starting from somewhere even if this "somewhere" may be arbitrary (ultimately relative) from a larger or different perspective (depending on the context and the particular stage one is operating from). However, wherever one begins their formal analysis, the basic conditions of this analysis are always already grounded in the biographical situation. It is for

this reason, that phenomenology holds a privileged place as the rigorous science of the conditions of any model or truth claim.

If there is a fundamental imperative toward pragmatics (or instrumental injunction) being called upon in Integral Theory (i.e., practical action in the world) then, like all science, any starting point must be *good enough* (i.e., adequate) *for the purposes at hand* keeping in mind that “good enough” may change as our perspective changes (which is, admittedly, a slippery-slope into relativism).

Here we are not concerned with ultimate truths (ontological concerns) but with a very grounded realization that to be in the world, to understand the world, and especially to act in the world one must operate from a middle ground (cf. Edwards, 2010) where one brackets the extremes to which one cannot attend to or answer in the moment (e.g., life after death, ontological concerns, teleology, etc.) and proceed in good faith (cf. Kierkegaard’s “leap of faith”, contrast with Sartre’s “bad faith”). To do this, this discussion presumes what Schutz (1971c, 1971d, 1971e) calls our common paramount reality, the world of everyday life that we go to work in, meet each other in, love in, travel in, act in, and begin all of our inquiries in: the life-world; all of which is determined by our individual and collective generative systems of relevance at any given time or place.

At any level or place within the AQAL matrix we are confronted with the problem of relevance and typification because although the AQAL model may represent actual Kosmic (partial) truths (if not in detail than in general), the model itself is always based on the biographical situation subject to socially distributed knowledge and founded on systems of relevance. Again, there is always a view from somewhere even when adopting a “view from nowhere” (i.e., third-person objectivity). All roads lead to a participatory embeddedness in a context-dependent reality. There is no neutral ground to be had (Flyvbjerg, 2008).¹¹

Finite Provinces of Meaning

The lifeworld is filled with “sub-universes” of meaning:

. . . [I]t is the meaning of our experiences and not the ontological structure of the objects which constitutes reality. Hence we call a certain set of our experiences a finite province of meaning if all of them show a specific cognitive style and are—*with respect to this style*—not only consistent with themselves but also compatible with one another. (Schutz, 1971d, p. 230, emphasis in original)

Provinces of meaning are, in my estimation, akin to Husserl’s (1950/1982, 1975a, 1989) notion of the horizon of consciousness. Here we have Schutz (1970b, 1971c, 1971d, 1971e; 1973) referring to a fundamental phenomenon of our experience of the lifeworld: there exist “bubbles” of reality in which people or societies exist in and base their standards on. They are by no means universal but more like floating cities of meaning that are ever-shifting on the sea of the lifeworld.

The Persistent Need for a Reliable Epistemology

Integral Theory suffers from a bona fide grounding in an epistemological framework that can answer to the needs and demands of science (in the sense of being a means to obtain reliable, verifiable, and relatively stable truths). It is my contention that this grounding is found in phenomenology. However, since Integral Theory is a type of meta-theory that begins with universal concepts (through OE), revolutionizing Integral Theory to start from phenomenology as its basic method of inquiry (first philosophy) may put into

jeopardy the entire Integral enterprise. If taken seriously, Integral Theory faces the paradoxical prospect of swallowing its own tail.

It would be unclear as to what would happen to the AQAL model and how to get from phenomenology to AQAL while retaining any of the injunctions *already assumed* by the model. This is because phenomenology is based on a philosophy of science quite different from Integral Theory, the latter of which can loosely be described as a form of *a priori convergent inductivism* based on idiothetic systems of relevance.

I propose this with the caveat that phenomenology in the Husserlian tradition is prohibitively too complex, impractical, and incomplete on its own. Phenomenology as a rigorous science of consciousness is ideally accessible (open) to everyone but only a few properly trained specialists will be able to work from this particular method, which is exactly the same situation in which scientists live in today (see Hartelius, 2007; Tart, 2000; Varela, 1996). In this sense, Husserlian phenomenology as the science of consciousness based on lived experience occupies a necessary and privileged position as first philosophy but it is not sufficient without taking into consideration the critiques that it has sustained (and adapted to) over the course of the 20th century.¹²

Lest I am accused of quadrant absolutism, despite my insistence that phenomenology is not enough on its own (without modifications) let me emphasize that the essence, the heart of phenomenology is and always will be the first philosophy of which all other philosophies and sciences are based (whether or not they accept or recognize it as such). Indeed, phenomenology has never sought to attend to or deal with all domains. It has never sought to overthrow the natural sciences or other persistent epistemologies. It has only sought to get at the foundations, the essence of experience, and because of this, its place is assured.

“Kosmic Positioning” and the Biographical Situation

Human beings begin and end their inquiries from a local perspective of what is known at any given time. The theme (content) of our awareness is not isolated but it is always limited (with perceivable boundaries) and dynamic (enactive: not static) in its scope. Our *stock of knowledge at hand* develops over time (e.g., developmental theory) and is dependent on our social and cultural contexts (Lower Right quadrant and Lower Left quadrant in Wilber’s Four Quadrants model).

We simply cannot maintain an open awareness of all of the diverse phenomena of the world even if it were theoretically possible to know all there is to know (bracketing for the time being states of consciousness in which the *perception* of all boundaries of time and space are dissolved or temporarily obscured), which it is not: “The word ‘consciousness’ has long been considered merely as the content of attention. But attention is very narrow. *Consciousness is vastly wider than attention.* We could never attend to each thing of which we are implicitly conscious” (Gendlin, 2009b, p. 340, italics in original).

Each individual may have varying capacities (e.g., within Integral Theory, as states, stages, or lines) that are further determined by personality types (e.g., the Enneagram, etc.), cognitive style, and biographical situation. Yet, at every point in one’s investigations—either as active participants in the world or as conscientiously reflecting philosopher-practitioners—one consciously and unconsciously decides what is important (relevant) at any given time.

Is Integral Theory going to pioneer a new “integrated” way of inquiry that combines quantitative, qualitative, human science, and natural science approaches? I do not think this

line of action is entirely wise, as it seems as if we would be trying to do too much. It is for this reason that we must be attentive to what is relevant for a given situation, phenomenon, inquiry, or investigation. Is it relevant to focus on specific domains or to attempt to integrate as many domains as humanly possible within the confines of Integral Theory? What makes Integral Theory “integral” in the first place? Whatever the answer, we must be clear about what it is that we are trying to accomplish and how it is to be accomplished.

It is also important to recognize that relevances and typifications are ideal types themselves. That is, there are at least two orders of meaning being presented in this chapter: (1) relevances and typifications as meaning content, and (2) the content itself being an expression of relevance and typification with myself as the medium or facilitator of that expression (the author). Though, in Schutz’ (1971a, 1972) case¹³, these ideal types are based on phenomenological investigations, that is, the systematic use of a type of method in the investigation of our experience of being-in-the-world. Phenomenology seeks to transcend the limitations of the hermeneutic circle, i.e., to transcend the limitations of the endless cycle of preconceived notions, which are based on other preconceived notions *ad infinitum* (yet still grounded in not positivism but in consciousness and experience).

The Social Distribution of Knowledge

However, at no time, can we make the assumption that the theorist is solely responsible for the theories they formulate. In fact, Schutz (1970b) makes it very clear that the majority of what we know and take for granted is socially derived knowledge: “Our knowledge is socially derived and distributed. Only a very small part of my stock of knowledge at hand originates in my own personal experience of things. By far the greater

part is socially derived . . .” (p. 84). This is contradictory to the standard assumption of ownership attributed to most theorists.

Given these considerations, as a part of the typification process, I am “bracketing” the exceptions to the rule. That is, I am setting aside the fact that there have always been and will always be individuals in this world who experience reality in a different-typical way and that one cannot assume they experience reality in the ways that Schutz and Husserl discuss in their phenomenological inquiries. However, I know enough about how the world works to say that these inquiries, phenomenological or otherwise, are always based on the experience of an individual’s systems of relevance.

Phenomenology and the sciences, in the broadest sense, are ways of accounting for the variations in experiences of the world that are attempts at transcending any one person’s experience over another’s. The fact that we can transcend individual experience and say that something is true at all (e.g., through intersubjective validation) is testament to the socially derived basis of our knowledge of the world. This line of inquiry, of course, leads us back to considerations of philosophy of science, which is an important line in Integral Theory that I believe needs to be critically investigated but will not be covered in any significant detail in this chapter. That is, it would seem to be an appropriate form of inquiry to decide whether we want to be as inclusive as possible of all domains, as Integral Theory is wont to do, or to be inclusive of as many domains as possible while focusing on something specific such as a topic or task or domain.

However, I question the value of continuing to take this approach. I think one of the core assumptions of Integral Theory is that there is inherent usefulness in trying to *take into account* as many truths (as partial as they may be) as possible in *all* of our endeavors. Furthermore, this assumption includes doing so not only on an intellectual level but as many

levels of our being as possible at any given time. This *taking-into-account* of multiple truths must be done from a location, a starting point, but could also be done from any several other starting points.

Taking-into-account in my own differently-located perspective other people's accounts of the truth is not the same thing as *accounting for* other people's truths which implies that I no longer have to attend to the other's truth and thus untethered to the means by which the accounting is done in the first place. In other words, by taking-into-account other truths I am attending to the participatory and dynamic nature of multiple realities beyond my own idiothetic situation but if I merely account for the same I am no longer bound to stay in the immediate space of lived experience and instead face the tendency toward static theorizing. One is generative and intersubjective and the other is static and one-sided (i.e., exclusionary). Again, the danger is that once I have *accounted for* there is no longer any need to dialogue with others. This is a persistent problem for all concept and theory formation but it is especially true for meta-theories such as Integral Theory.

The Integral vision is certainly ideal but by the very nature of our humanness, it will never be complete, at least in those terms. The only way it can be complete is to incorporate into the model, into the heart of Integral Theory, a realization and acceptance that our stock of knowledge about the world—all of our fundamental ways of inquiring and gearing into the world (of working, etc.)—are based on open systems of relevance, an insight which is founded on the phenomenological method.

A model that does take stock of the systems of relevance in the context of phenomenology is generative (enactive). It must be dynamic and open-ended, always sensitive to the ways in which one cannot hold or retain everything all at once. This is a more realistic model firmly grounded in the life-world.

However, this is not what Integral Theory has been born out of. Integral Theory has its roots in transpersonal psychology, Buddhist philosophy and practice,¹⁴ Indian philosophy, and other various visions of transcendence (i.e., the perennial philosophy). There is a curious lack of truly grounded theory of the everyday, on our *paramount reality*, that is sometimes called (by Schutz) the *mundane* world of our everyday lives (see 1971a). Integral Theory is curiously lacking the investigation and coupling of this type of inquiry into its visions of an idealized human being.

The way to essential structures of knowing (e.g., the eight primordial perspectives) must be based upon a more sophisticated theory of knowledge *other than OG* and I believe this requires a more fundamental understanding of the role and usefulness of phenomenology in integral theory than has been appreciated to date (cf. Kupers, 2009). Indeed, this is the purpose of phenomenology—despite the inherent limitations it possesses: to attempt a way to get at the essential structures of our experience in genetic, static, and generative ways (Steinbock, 1995). Again, to adopt this injunction means a reformulation of IMP to prioritize phenomenology as the first philosophy for Integral Theory, which very well may threaten to topple the entire edifice (cf. Kupers, 2009; Wilber, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2006d, 2006f).

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¹ Edmund Husserl (1954) introduced this term in his later works, which has since become a part of common philosophical language. He also referred to it at times as *Lebenswelt*. Alfred Schutz (1971, 1973) prefers the term life-world but also called it the *world of working* and the *paramount reality*.

² It is a simplification of a lived process. Like all theoretical constructs, even the discussion of this gap between orders of experience is itself an example of the transformation that it represents, otherwise known as the hermeneutic circle. Furthermore, space does not permit a detailed discussion of the polarizing (e.g. first-order vs. second-order) tendencies of human beings in their formation of concepts and theories.

³ An example of the importance of this problem resides in the writings of Pierre Bourdieu, who has dedicated much of his work to just this issue through his introduction of what he calls “the objectifying stance.” Curiously, Bourdieu seems to have overlooked the fact that Schutz had already pioneered the resolution of this problem decades earlier through his social phenomenology (see Bourdieu, 1990; Ho, 2008). In anthropology this problem has come to be known as the *crisis of representation*: “A critical mass of anthropologists has considered the break so disturbing as to warrant what is called the ‘crisis of representation’ in ethnography such that the observer is doomed to misrepresent the Other in the name of upholding the unitary outlook of scientific inquiry” (Ho, 2008, p. 384)

⁴ Although this chapter is written with Husserlian phenomenology in mind, I want to be clear that when I say Integral Theory’s first philosophy should be phenomenology I mean to include not only ancient examples of phenomenological practice most notably those found in Buddhism but also post-Husserlian phenomenology that has accounted for the lasting limitations found in Husserl’s work, i.e., hermeneutic, structuralist, post-structuralist, and critical accounts. The problem is that there has never been agreement on the best way to go about practicing phenomenology in both philosophical and applied ways. However, I maintain that this is a strength rather than a limitation in that phenomenology can be many things at once without sacrificing its essence.

⁵ The theoretical attitude Schutz (1971c) also terms the *abstract attitude*, the *categorical attitude*, or the *conceptual attitude* and defines it as “choosing a point of view from which we ascertain the situation, taking initiative, making a choice, keeping in mind simultaneously various aspects of a situation, grasping the essential, thinking the merely possible, thinking symbolically, and, in general, detaching the Ego from the outer world” (p. 262).

⁶ Schutz’s work in this area was only a very tentative beginning, having passed away at the relatively early age of 60 (1899-1959) before he could complete his thoughts on the matter (see Barber, 2004).

⁷ Typifications are “in relation to, and as overlapping with, what Schutz refers to as schemes of experience and interpretive schemes, thought constructs, abstraction, generalization, formalization, idealization, anonymization, and objectivication, among other terms” (Kim & Berard, 2009, p. 266).

⁸ Relevance and typification as being foundationally related to concept and theory formation has indirect correspondence with Gendlin’s philosophy of the implicit (Gendlin, 1997a, 2009a).

⁹ When Schutz refers to the activities of scientists, he generally means *social scientist*. Yet, his analysis easily extends to all concept and theory formation which in no way betrays his work (Embree, 1988). However, even though we can be confident in our decision to extend social science to include all science (i.e., natural science) Schutz did go as far as to say that the methodological devices used by the social sciences are “better suited than those of the natural sciences to lead to the discovery of the general principles which govern *all human knowledge*” (1971b, p. 66, my emphasis).

¹⁰ Integral Theory, as a comprehensive meta-theory of anything, attempts to not limit itself to the realm of theoretical and abstract constructs through practice and application.

¹¹ Furthermore, there is no such thing as aperspectivalism either.

¹² For excellent discussions of Husserl’s continued relevance and how he has survived and triumphed in the face of epic critique, see *The New Husserl* (Welton, 2003), *The Other Husserl* (Welton, 2002), *Husserl and Transcendental Intersubjectivity* (Zahavi, 2001), and *Home and Beyond* (Steinbock, 1995).

¹³ Schutz is directly linked to sociology of knowledge as first articulated by Max Scheler (late 1800s) and Berger and Luckmann’s (1966) seminal introduction of social constructionism in the 1960s. Schutz was also the key inspiration for *ethnomethodology* (Garfinkel, 2008), (Harold Garfinkel based his ideas on Schutz’ work), *conversation analysis [REF]*, *symbolic interactionism* (Kim & Berard, 2009), and *social constructionism* (1966), which is also directly based on Schutz’ thought and strongly contributed to postmodern philosophy, especially in sociology. In hindsight, Schutz (1970b) was what could be called an integral thinker:

(H)e constantly insisted on the necessity of serious study of the works of thinkers of every persuasion and discipline. Tolerant and open in the finest philosophical tradition, he had little patience with narrow professionalism, whether educational or philosophical, but at no time did his impatience turn his wonderful sense of humor and irony into ill-tempered sarcasm. He constantly sought out what was common to the divergent currents of thought rather than what separated them. (p. xxii)

Schutz’ (see Embree, 1988; Natanson, 1998) inquiries were, for the most part, limited to the investigation of the social world. This means that his phenomenology was mostly concerned with the social sciences and their investigation of the world of human action. For this reason, his thought was most influential in the domains of sociology and social psychology. Because he was concerned with interpretive social science and because this approach, as pioneered by Max Weber, is a minority approach in contemporary social theory, much of what Schutz had to say on the matter of the social world went unheard by the majority of social scientists.

¹⁴ Buddhism is an exception in that it tends to embrace a very human-centered way based on everyday life in the world.