Cultural Science in Literary Light

Lester Embree

1 Introduction

For those who have not heard it before, let me begin with the story of how I came over 10 years ago to produce the "construction" in *Alfred Schutz's Sociological Aspect of Literature.* I had been invited to contribute to the Festschrift for Maurice Natanson, who had a major interest in literature, and I remembered a one-page manuscript in the Schutz Nachlaß. My thought was then to transcribe that Manuscript, add some commentary, and thus produce a flower for the bouquet presented to that leader of American phenomenology. But when I began to skim Schutz's publications for passages referring to literature, not only did I astonishingly find some 70 pages of pertinent passages, but they marvelously fit the 3×9 grid below and thus the 27-cells in that one-page manuscript. So I decided to assemble the construction and to organize a conference and volume around it and submitted instead for Mauri's *Festschrift* an essay in ecological phenomenology, which then preoccupied me.

In my Editor's Introduction to my construction I wrote that,

> Given the fact that the main text here was not "constructed" previously, i.e., not written out by Schutz himself, the present effort is not a "re-construction." Rather, the present text is like a new building built by fitting together copies of clearly relevant pieces of an architect's other buildings into a design for which he left only a sketch.

Accordingly, my construction has the 27 parts in the grid reproduced below and they are filled with quotations from Schutz's publications plus some commentary. The quotations are often relevant to his theory of the cultural sciences, which I consider the core of his thought, but I abstracted from that use in order to reverse

L. Embree (✉)
College of Arts and Letters, Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, FL 33341, USA
e-mail: embree@fau.edu

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THE GRID

	Poetry	Drama	Novel
[1] language	[1-A]	[1-B]	[1-C]
[2] author-listener	[2-A]	[2-B]	[2-C]
[3] situation	[3-A]	[3-B]	[3-C]
[4] relevance	[4-A]	[4-B]	[4-C]
[5] reality	[5-A]	[5-B]	[5-C]
[6] motive	[6-A]	[6-B]	[6-C]
[7] time dimension	[7-A]	[7-B]	[7-C]
[8] relation poet to work	[8-A]	[8-B]	[8-C]
[9] relation poem to listener	[9-A]	[9-B]	[9-C]

Fig. 1 The Grid

the references from use of literature to clarify cultural science and then to fit his remarks about literature into the grid. Schutz refers to three types of literature, namely: poetry, drama, and the novel, and I proceeded in my construction to present the nine cross-cutting themes in those three respects, e.g., for language I presented pure expression, communication, and description in sequence, and then I proceeded this way level by level down the grid because three items are easier to compare together in some respect or other than nine are. (But it is not clear how Schutz proceeded).

In the present essay I shall instead proceed differently in two ways. In the first place, I will now respect Schutz's original intention and show some ways in which literature can help clarify aspects of the three sorts of cultural science arguably recognized by him. His references to literature thus contribute to his *Wissenschaftslehre* of the cultural sciences.

> I fear that in this country the terms methodology and epistemology are used in a more restricted sense than their equivalents in German and I accepted these terms only because I could not find any better translation for 'Wissenschaftslehre' which includes both logical problems of a scientific theory and methodology in the restricted sense. (Schutz and Parsons 1978, p. 101)

As I began to show long ago, such a theory of science or science theory, also called methodology in the broad signification, can be cultivated about their own disciplines by cultural scientists, e.g., Max Weber, or about species and genera of science by philosophers, e.g., the social and cultural sciences by Schutz, and interaction is possible within it concerning the basic concepts, distinctive methods, and disciplinary definitions of the kinds, sorts, and particulars of the sciences in question. (Embree 1980, pp. 367–373)

The scattered allusions to aspects of literature are concentrated in the construction and most useful for understanding the theories of the three species of science mentioned. In the second place then, my exposition will go down the columns rather than across the levels of the above grid and thus have three parts, one each devoted to psychology, social science, and history. Reference simply to the levels in each of my column-based parts should suffice for readers interested in more detail in the construction than I will render here. Finally, it deserves mention that I have worked from the published oeuvre of Schutz and that there may be more that is of relevance in the Nachlaß.

2 The Phenomenological Psychology of Poetry

While poetry can of course be sung before audiences, it originally and essentially is pure expression, which is to say that for Schutz it has no need of others hearing it and is thus fundamentally without communicative intent, difficult as this may be for many to comprehend, much less accept. Here I recall a film on television of Yevgeny Aleksandrovich Yevtushenko (Евге́ний Алекса́ндрович Евтуше́нко) striding about on a central stage like a fight ring – it might have been Madison Square Garden – surrounded by thousands of Americans, declaiming in Russian, unaffected by their acclaim during the process, and only afterwards seeming to notice them. If this was an act, it was a curious one which Schutz seems to describe the root of with his notion of pure expression.

While not an addressee, a beholding listener can thus nevertheless observe the poet's self-expression and even feel personally addressed and also provide an objective meaning context even if such is not required for the poem to be a poem. Like music, poetry is a solitary art. The poet is face to face only with language, although with respect to her own work she is also a listener/reader and hence, in a way, the audience for it as well as the speaker/writer. But how can music and poetry that are fundamentally without communicative intent be scientifically investigated?

The listener can witness the poem while it is being expressed. In doing so, she encounters the poet's body as a field of expression with tones, inflection, gesture, etc. as well as the conceptual contents they accompany. Even if the language is not understood, there is still rhythm and rhyme, and the mood of the poet is thereby appresented in the now, rather than in retrospect as Schutz believes is necessary when one grasps the meanings of one's own actions. There can also be objects that are fictive as well as serious and there can be semantic as well as syntactic systems in the poem even if they are stretched by the poet with such things as paradoxes.

When I pondered this description, I first thought of the egological reduction and Schutz's 30 year correspondence with Dorion Cairns about it that I had recently studied (Embree 2009). This reduction, which he thought Husserl combined with the transcendental reduction, involves how we initially recognize ourselves as subjects alongside, as it were, all other subjects in the world vs. an egoism, as one may call it, in which all others are only considered in relation to a subject, usually

oneself. Thus viewing of things as "for me" replaces "for us." This reduction is implicitly practiced on the poet and the listener as just described and indeed often in Schutz's reflections, and if one considers the investigation of individuals in relation to others to be social psychology in contrast with sociology, which investigates intersubjectivities or groups to begin with *à la* Talcott Parsons, then one might consider his perspective social-psychological insofar as it is about a beholding self in the audience and an expressive other, who is the poet.

But then I thought of Part II of the *Sinnhafte Aufbau*, which is curiously about the self taken isolatedly, i.e., without others besides herself considered, which Schutz says is made possible by the phenomenological reduction, which I believe he misunderstood because Husserl would call this more specifically the reduction to the primordial sphere and that is different from the result of the egological *epochē*, reduction, and purification.

If reference to others by the individual person specifies psychology as social psychological, suspension of that reference leaves psychology *tout court*. *Aufbau,* Part II, is then psychological, as is *Reflections on the Problem of Relevance*, and various shorter stretches in Schutz's expositions.

What we have is how the poet who is "listened" to is actually observed non-verbally as well as verbally even though she has no communicative intent. In music there can also be communicative intent or not for Schutz, but in a quite non-linguistic way, as we know from "Making Music Together," and thus the non-verbal accompaniments of poetic words do not need to be intended to communicate either. This can clearly occur when the poet is witnessed singing a finished poem or even struggling aloud to find the best wording.

Here I remember in comparison a film of Pablo Picasso painting a picture; in it one could see him add or change colors, add or change parts, etc., and thus I believe painting can also be done without communicative intent. I even think of Cézanne allegedly leaving his paintings in the fields after he finished them. (His wife, the story goes, collected and sold them.) Whether important non-verbal aspects can be grasped in reading handwritten drafts of a poem I am not so sure, although of course Schutz took graphology quite seriously.

In any case, the emphasis on language, ideal types, and constructs in Schutz's thought often peripheralizes such non-verbal phenomena, but where science theory is concerned, they deserve full recognition for their role in participant observation and the interviewing of informants to be understood. If psychology, about which actually Schutz says very little, is about individuals rather than groups, then what he says about poetry as well as music pertains to the approach of psychology, social psychology especially (Embree 2008, pp. 141–150; Embree 2009).

The next level down this column of the grid, i.e., Level 3, concerns the situation of the expression. Schutz's focus here is on what the beholder of literature observes. For poetry, the beholder is detached, somewhat like a theoretician, while the poet is engaged in her situation and what is emphasized is how the poet originally refers to singulars that can only become plurals through language, e.g., from this tree standing strong before me to trees in general and their strength.

Level 4 concerns relevance. We have Jamesian "knowledge about" and "knowledge of acquaintance" as well as blind belief and ignorance where things as interesting to a self are concerned. The perspective has all things with a meaningful relation to the inner life of the poet and symbols, but not so much symbols of things beyond the poem as symbols of other parts within it, something T.S. Eliot is quoted as referring to as "associations."

Level 5 involves what Schutz analyzed under the heading of "multiple realities," which is highly familiar to Schutz scholars and hence needs little space devoted to it here. The poet suffers and acts in a reality, but this reality is less the reality of everyday life than that of dream or phantasy. Like the theoretical attitude, the poetic attitude is not the attitude in which influence on the course of events in the world is sought, even in the way of being deliberately left uninterfered with.

Level 6 concerns motives, which are of course in general of the "because" and the "in order to" sorts for Schutz, i.e., causes and purposes, and it happens that Schutz is willing in a broad intersubjective perspective to approach the literary style of an entire epoch or generation in such terms. Poetry, however, is said to be "motiveless." There is much variation, including shifts from positive to negative feelings, within the poet who is observed expressing herself, but they seem at least difficult for her to relate to her motives; rather, the changes just appear to occur for her. This contrasts with those parts of our lives in which we plan and perform and then retrospectively judge not only into how well we have served our purposes, but also why we did as we did in the first place.

Time is the focus of the seventh level, and in Schutz this includes past and future as well as present and inner as well as outer time and successors and predecessors as well as contemporaries in the broad signification. And time involves the body as well as society and space. "Literary time," as it might be called, is not tied to the structure of outer time and its contents are unlike so-called real things with respect to identity, but irreversibility still holds. In specification of time for poetry, Schutz merely wrote "inner duration" in his architectural sketch.

For the everyday and psychological observer of poetizing, the general thesis of the alter ego's existence is followed and the inner life of the poet thereby taken to have the same structure as one's own life and thus only to be observable from without in its vivid present, while the beholder can reflectively-retrospectively observe only her own remembered past and expected future, which phases are inaccessible for the poet. Perhaps, however, while the poet has no access to her own motives, the listener/reader can speculate about what these are in her. Such speculating about the motives in the past and future of others in factual if not essential ignorance is not uncommon in everyday life.

[8-A] Next is the relation of the poetic author to her artwork and chiefly concerns the pertinent rules of craftsmanship covering the original positing of meaning by the author and the interpretation of it by the beholder. For poetry Schutz says that it and the inner life of the poetical activity form not an identity but a unity each part of which is explorable by the other. Related to this is how a symbol must be as meaningful as that which it symbolizes. "[T]he laws of unity in poetry mean nothing

else than the postulate of identity of the poetic object with the original experience of our inner world which, in turn, becomes the foundation of poetic creation." (Embree 1998, p. 64)

The last level in this column is about the relation of the expression to the beholder, who tunes in on it, and where, as mentioned, there are the poet's facial expressions, gait, posture, rhyme, rhythm, etc., even without communicative intent. The emphasis on this level is on the art form, i.e., poetry, rather than the art work, i.e., a poem, for Schutz. The listener to poetry, addressed or not, reproduces in herself what transpires in the poet's *durée.* This involves changes in feeling according to John Keats, whom Schutz quotes, and the meaning of a poem is to be grasped not in a summary but through reading or reciting it from beginning to end, possibly in memory.

As for the overall significance of these descriptive remarks about poetry for the cultural science of psychology, it seems chiefly contrastive with respect to what is usual in Schutz. Yes, there is poetry, but most of life is very different from poetry. Nevertheless, the pure expression and the beholding of it is open to investigation in phenomenological psychology, even if Schutz's science theory is more focused on the historical as well as chiefly on the social sciences.

3 Drama and Social Science

While "expression" is the key concept for poetry, "communication" is the key for drama. Here, there does seem concern with influencing the course of events in the world and doing so non-verbally as well as through language, although the latter is emphasized in the theory of literature. The players not only seek to communicate with each other on stage but also with the audience. Although it is different, this is already closer than poetry to what happens in everyday life.

Where the author-listener relationship is concerned, i.e., the second level in the grid, many passages occur in Schutz's publications. The communications among the players – monologues excepted – are designed by the author not only to be interpreted by them but especially by the beholding audience in the theater, who know so much more about what is happening than the characters that Schutz attributes to the audience "omniscience." His account of everyday reliance on the vernacular and schemes of interpretation applies here. The words (and gestures) determined by the dramatist depend for their meaning on how the audience as well as the players other than a speaker interpret them, while novels often tell us what to make of what happened. As in social science, not only objective meaning, i.e., outsider interpretation, but its ultimate focus on subjective meaning or insider interpretation is involved: What is Hamlet really trying to do?

The actors acting are symbols of the heros, e.g., Richard Burton of the Danish prince. Monologue has the figure speaking to herself rather than to others in the situation, which is like poetry, but of course the intent of the dramatist is that the audience thereby advances its understanding of the action. Speaking is a type of

influencing (*Wirken*), but all who are involved are actually in a world of imagination different from the world of working. The goal of the playwright, which it seems for Schutz that only Mozart attained and did so in opera, is to show the different meanings that the same situation has to each of the characters involved in it. The playwright makes us understand that to each of them the presence and behavior of the others are elements of her own situation; and he reveals to us the specific springs of action by which each character acts within and reacts to the situation (Embree 1998, p. 32).

[3-B] The situation in drama is the face-to-face situation not only for the players on the stage but *also* with the audience, so that there is at least a triple definition of the situation. Time and place are shared and all are directly aware of one another simultaneously, so that all are consociates; I have ventured a small terminological advance for Schutzian investigations by suggesting that there are "consocial situations" (Embree 2004a, pp. 119–133) and this is one. But for the characters portrayed, this situation does not include the audience, but for the audience it includes the actors.

Next relevance [4-B] is determined by the playwright. Here the image of the puppeteer and her puppets and script that is used by Schutz to clarify model building in cultural science has direct reference, and the element of spontaneity is emphasized in relation to what is scripted as relevant for an actor. And "actor" and "action" can refer of course to theatrical as well as everyday matters. Was it Shakespeare who wrote that "all the world's a stage . . . "?

As for the reality [5-B] of the play, the setting, the characters, and what is represented in words and gesture, these are real only insofar as the players and audience imagine and believe what and that they are. Scenery is symbolic and only taken for real. This contrasts with our everyday life, where curtains do not rise and fall, events are all explainable, and time is different. Unlike observers in everyday life, audience members are not free to become participants in the action, yet in discussing the play amongst themselves, they refer to a world beyond the world of working. Sociologists speaking of social roles borrow terminology from the theatre.

Motivation [6-B] in drama is chiefly of the in-order-to variety. The actor chooses among projects of action before our eyes, and she is seen as responsible for her actions before herself if not also before the others in the play. Certainly, however, there must also be some because motives sometimes referred to in some plays.

Time in theatre is presence, which does not refer to what actually happens on the stage, but refers to what is represented as now happening in the world of the play. And there is an artificial continuity between meaningful phases jumped to without intermediaries in this imaginary time. The curtain can go down at the end of one day and rise on another day years later.

As for the relation of the author to the work, the playwright is invisible, which contrasts with the poet, for whom it is the work of art that disappears behind the personality. But it may be added that only the playwright can know the future and grasp the whole play as a unity from beginning to end, which the players as players and the typical audience cannot, unless of course the play has been seen before or the script read beforehand.

Finally where drama is concerned, the play relates to the beholder in the audience such that its imaginary present is coordinated with the present in her inner time. The same story could be the plot of a novel or poem, but they would lack this feature.

As for the significance of drama for science, it seems clear enough that it not only draws on basic patterns of action, roles, relationships, and interactions in everyday life but also attempts to refer to them with carefully selected words and gestures by the players and this not only parallels in method and terminology what social scientists do in their building of models populated with puppets, but also in most of everyday common-sense thinking where idealized constructs are operated with in usually less conscious ways. Because of the emphasis on what is contemporary, even if in part imaginary, drama would seem the type of art from which specifically social scientists have the most to learn and this contrasts with poetry and psychology. The actors on the stage are consociates, but the heroes, heroines, relationships, interactions, influences, and motivations that they symbolize would seem very like the world of contemporaries thematized in the models constructed in economics, linguistics, political science, sociology, and so on.[1]

4 Historical Science and the Novel

If poetry correlates with psychology as investigation of the separate self and drama with social science in the strict signification (but emphasizing consociates rather than contemporaries), the novel correlates with the historical sciences, at least as referring to already occurred events even though not necessarily from predecessors, but usually more like so-called "contemporary history."

It is better to speak of "cultural science" rather than "social science" insofar as it includes the historical sciences rather than merely the social sciences strictly speaking. In addition to the crucial §41 of the *Sinnhafte Aufbau,* which addresses the transition from the world of contemporaries to that of predecessors as well as their similarities and differences, Schutz actually says quite a bit about the historical sciences, mentioning at least as many of such disciplines as he mentions social sciences. Even though he does not dwell on them, unfortunately he did not recognize what is now called contemporary history (Embree 2004b, pp. 281–306).

[1]My late colleague and friend, Stanford Lyman, saw Schutz as anticipating Kenneth Burke and Erving Goffman's revival of dramatism in social science: "The dramatistic perspective . . . begins with asserting the literal truth of Shakespeare's passage in *As You Like It* that 'All the world's a stage . . . ' It goes on to point out that each culture provides a 'treatment' for the 'script' of life, the 'scenes' and 'acts' of which are 'written' and/or 'performed' by individual or collective social 'actors,' who are also 'direct' or 'directed' in their performances, 'criticized' by themselves and by their 'audiences,' and choose or are commanded either to replay their 'part' again and again, to perform their 'role' only occasionally, or to 'close' the drama and begin a new one." (Lyman 1998, p. 209)

Schutz characterizes drama as "description," but also mentions "representation." The novelist and often her characters have communicative intent. The beholder is the reader and only has access to the reported events through the intermediary of the writer. Like the audience in theatre, the novelist is omniscient, but it is as though she has already attended the play and reports afterwards what transpired, including what the witnesses saw. Of all art forms, the novel leaves the least to the imagination of the beholder. As with history, the narration is entirely under the author's control, she dictates an objective meaning context to the reader, and thus her writing is unlike communication in everyday life where both sides continually interpret one another.

What the novel depicts is as if it is part of the real world of everyday life, even if it is sometimes a Kafkaesque "enclave" within it. The reader's stock of knowledge about this world is relied on. The subuniverses of madness and common-sense of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza refer to one another within a set of multiple realities (and here one can also think of science fiction).

[4-C] Relevance is defined by the novelist and it is that of the reported events. [5-C] These events are parts of the past reality seen through the reporter's eyes, which are inalterable, but nevertheless reinterpretable. What did cause the French Revolution? The reported events can also be taken as symbols, e.g., *Moby Dick*, for the human condition. And a reader can leave off following the narrator's guidance, do something else, and then pick up again where she left off, which regularly happens in the reading (and the writing) of history books, but hardly ever in reference to poems or plays.

While poetry is motiveless and while the in-order-to motive predominates in theatre, it is the because motive that predominates in the novel and in historiography. In other words, the concern is not with what the characters are trying to do so much as with why they did what they did. And as intimated, the time dimension is the past tense. Of course, the book in the reader's hands is in the now and can be set aside, but the events represented through it are in a past and uninfluenceable, and this even if the verbs in the narration are in the present tense and events can seem to occur as one reads about them, but in this respect it is as if the reader is taken back to the time of the past events.

While what is reported in the novel is over and done with, which can be made definite with expressions such as "he said" and "she replied," the novelist can digress and add comments just as the historian can. Interestingly, the readers addressed by the novelist, who is usually invisible behind the narration, are not specific according to Schutz, although so-called "Chick Lit" is directly chiefly to women readers and there are other subgenres directed to specific readerships. Even so, the writer decides the theme and contents of the story told.

As for the relation of the novelist to the reader, strict chronology does not need to be respected, so that out-of-sequence representations of episodes that occurred at different times are admissible, the reader being expected to understand what came before what and with or without what influence on what. And this too can be done in history writing.

As for the relevance of the novel to the historical sciences, Schutz is explicit about the conceptual as well as verbal relation of the expressions "story" and "history,"

how the one fictively and the other seriously refer, as seen above, to past events and their causes that have already happened and cannot be influenced but can be interpreted and reinterpreted. And while the addressees of history as well as the novel are Schutzian contemporaries, there is reference to the life-worldly consocial situation in this passage about historical research, to which one can readily also add a comparison with reading a novel.

> The procedure of historical research is the same as interpreting the words of someone who is speaking to me. In the latter case I gain through communication an indirect experience of what the speaker has experienced directly. In the same way, when I am reading a historical document, I can imagine myself face to face with its author and learning from him about his contemporaries. (Embree 1998, p. 62)

5 Conclusion

In summary, the three types of literature analyzed by Schutz in his talk before the Alumni Association of the Graduate Faculty of the New School in 1955 can be reinterpreted to shed light on the three types of cultural science addressed implicitly and explicitly in his *Wissenschaftslehre.* There is more to this in my construction than I have space here to render and there may be more to this effect in the Schutz Nachlaß, but the deeper lesson is that there is no doubt more to be leaned for science theory beyond his letter but in his spirit from further reflection on those types of literature themselves.

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