

A Reflection on “the Stock of Knowledge at Hand” as a Transcendental Concept

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Abstract

本稿の主題は、「経験のストックとは何か」という問いとして呈示することができる。つまり、〈経験のストック〉をめぐり、生（Leben）への態度性という問題系が浮上してくるのである。結論を述べれば、〈経験のストック〉とは、〈機能する私〉に存在論的な先行性を有する〈体験の地平機能〉としてすでにつねにはたらいっている。いい換えると、それは、〈私〉の世界経験の可能性の条件として考えることができるのであり、これが本稿の論点の中心である。だが、ここで〈経験のストック〉が生活史的状況における諸経験の可能的条件としてすでにつねにはたらいであることだけを主張したいのではない。なぜなら、それは、生きられた「経験的作用の複定立的な総合のなかで構成されたもの」だからである。それゆえ、すでに構成されたものである〈経験のストック〉をその構成作用にまで遡及していく途が、いい換えると、〈経験のストック〉の発生論的な問いが問われているのである。

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. I am Harie Hironao. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to present my paper. The title is The Stock of Knowledge at Hand as a Transcendental Concept as introduced in the program.

The social theory of Alfred Schutz is known to be succeeded by “phenomenological sociology” of Thomas Luckmann and Peter Berger. At the same time it is regarded as the one of the primary resources of “ethnomethodology” initiated by Harold Garfinkel. If the academic efforts mentioned above should be thought of as the main current, the theme of my paper is, still based on the interpretation on Alfred Schutz, a bit differentiated from the main current. The theme is deeply related to the problem of “What is the stock of knowledge at hand?”. In other words, by inquiring the theme, we come to get involved with the problem of, let’s say, the attitude toward life.

The concept of “the stock of experience” (Erfahrungsvorrat) has a important role in Schutz ever since his early work as “The Phenomenology of The Social World.” But for the purpose of this paper, I would like to apply some technical limitation on the question which we raise about it. First of all, Schutz uses the concept of “stock of knowledge in hand” distinctly from that of “the stock of knowledge at hand.” The former implies “our taken-for-granted knowledge of our own being as physical being, the existence and the resistance of

the external world, and intersubjectivity of world-experience" (Nakamura: 130), which is supposedly, related to the our preprimordial belief immanent in our world-experience and the performance of "the epoche of the natural attitude" (CPI. 229). Naturally, the distinction between the two concepts is important in general concern of phenomenological inquiry, however, it is beyond the scope of this paper. Secondly, one can find still different concept such as "stock of experience at hand" (CPI: 228) or italicized "store of experience" (CPI: 136). But at this point of my study, it is not clear enough whether the differences between these concepts has theoretical significance beyond the problem concerning the context of the sedimentation of experience. For this reason, a further inquiry on these terms also has to wait.

I

The concept of "stock of knowledge" seems to be generally accepted and quoted. The reason is twofold. Firstly, it has some sort of necessity which any social theory has to take into consideration. For example, Thomas Luckmann and Peter Berger, it is only natural, when one consider their academic foundation, use this as a key concept throughout their work, "The Social Construction of Reality" (1966). There it appears with adjective "social" in the chapter 3 of the part 1, which is "philosophical prolegomena to the core argument, in terms of a phenomenological analysis of the reality of everyday life" (Berger=Luckmann: 7). And then, in the chapter 1 of part 2, "Society as a Objective Reality" which is based on "the experiential genetic concern" (8), especially, in the section of "sedimentation and tradition." Finally, in the section of "secondary socialization" of chapter 1, "internalization of reality" of part 3, "Society as Subjective Reality", which deals with "the dimensions of subjective consciousness" (8). "The Social Construction of Reality" raises the question "How is it possible that subjective meanings become objective facticities? as its "task" (30).

As apparently in the question, this book deals with the process in which subjective meanings are constituted as objective facticities in part 2. And in part 3, the process in which society as "thing (choses)" are internalized into subjectivity. In this line of theory, any theoretical explication on either side of the antithesis i. e., that of individual versus society, in fact, this antithesis is itself a problem in its modernity, cannot dispense with the concept of "the stock of experience".

Garfinkel defines ethnomethodology as follows. "Ethnomethodological studies analyze everyday activities as members' methods for making those same activities visibly-rational-and-reportable-for-all-practical-purposes, i. e., "accountable", as organizations of commonplace everyday activities." (vii) To paraphrase it, ethnomethodology could be defined as a sys-

tematic study about the knowledge of members of society, which is consist of the happenings of everydaylife and member's organizational effort dealing with them. Based on this identification, K. Lighter defines ethnomethodology as "chiefly the study of how the typifications of the stock of knowledge are brought into play through the use of the practices of commonsense reasoning to create and preserve a sense of social reality, " in his "A Primer on Ethnomethodology" (Leiter : vi). Notice here also, "the stock of experience" takes the role of a conceptual device which relates individual and society to each other and grasps them in a relational whole. This theoretical role is one reason why "the stock of experience" is accepted and quoted generally. The other reason is already implied in the two examples shown above. As mentioned already, for the either of two examples, "the stock of experience" is theoretically indispensable. Still, the way the concept is quoted and used itself is unquestioned. In the two examples, the concept is presupposed as self-evident. Why is it ?

Perhaps it is caused by the obviousness of the concept of stock of experience. By obviousness here, I mean, the concept tends and is able to be grasped or understood within an attitude typical of everydaylife. Let's consider this matter a little further. We, in our attitude of everydaylife, believe that experience can be stocked. Of course, it is possilbe to grasp the concept of stock of experience based on or in, say, the "feel" of the business of life which is earned in everydaylife. It is because in the commonsensical use of the term, experience is understood as something to be stocked. For example, there is a Japanese proverb which says, "If you love your children, let them travel." Proverbs are, if you like, the stockhouse of ordinary peoples' genius. And you may translate this proverb ; If you love your children, of course you love them, let them travel, i. e., let them experience. Not to mention, there it is implied that experiences of one's own is invaluable, in other words, unique and the one who experiences a lot becomes worthy of respect. According to this proverb, how and what is stocked of your experience determines your dealing with various situations which come up in the rest of your life. In addition, in this proverb, "the stock of experience" is not simply a memory. Because, to stock experience is not to become simple knowledge or memory but to become flesh and bones.

If our argument above is right, it could be said that the understanding of "experience" based on the commonsensical use of the term typically expressed in the proverb is not essentially different from the theoretical understanding of "the stock of experience" mentioned above. What has to be asked is whether the theoretical understanding of "the stock of experience" (Ehfahrungsvorrat) which shares the commonsensical understanding of the term is to be justified or not. My answer to the problem is nay. Let me explicate why in the following.

II

First, simple check of facts. How has Schutz presented the concept of “the stock of experience”? As you already know, it appears in “The Phenomenology of the Social World”, more precisely in the chapter 2, “The Constitution of Meaningful Lived Experience in The Constitutor’s Own Stream of Consciousness”. The character of this chapter. Schutz writes in an appended note prepared for this chapter as follows. “Our studies of the constituting process in internal time-consciousness will be carried out within the ‘phenomenological reduction.’” (SA. 55 E. T. 43) In this note, Schutz identifies his research as “the constitutive phenomenology of the natural standpoint”. As the ground text for this note Schutz refers to the “Nachwort zu meinen ‘Ideen’” by Husserl, and in the “Nachwort”, Husserl explicitly describes the twofold reduction. It is after 1920’s that this idea of twofold reduction is developed, yet, it is consistently maintained till the last years of Husserl. It is not the aim of this paper to discuss the details of this idea, however, let me explicate some of the areas of phenomenological reduction related to issues to be dealt with later in this paper. Phenomenological reduction is a form of self reflection and change of attitude. The most decisive word, I would say, which express it is “Rueckfrage” (Hua. V. 139), i. e., question by turning back. In our typical attitude of everydaylife, we are familiar with the things surrounding us. And we are conscious of and relate our selves to them as being self-evidently there. In our everyday life experience, things are already and always well known and familiar (Vertrautes). And we have a conviction that they are there self-evidently, in the reach of our hand (Vorhanden) (Hua. III, 59) in a real relatedness. As you know, Husserl calls this typical attitude of everydaylife “natural attitude”. And it is also well known that Schutz follows Husserl literally in this matter. “To live the natural attitude is to make things thematic and to locate consciousness itself outside the theme.” (Nitta, 58) Here “experience” is something to be stocked as we already have seen. In this attitude, the constitutional aspect of consciousness is not “known” and simply “the real surrounding world is regarded as reality which is there at the present.” (Hua. III: 65) ‘My consciousness’ is anonymous in its straightforward being, and ‘ignorant of itself’ we have to say. Therefore, to reach a full understanding of oneself, it is required to change this attitude and “to return to one’s own subjectivity and attempt a reflection” (Hua. V, 147) Living in “natural attitude”, consciousness is in its performance while, you might say, ‘oblivious of its own performance’. The way to change this attitude, and to reveal the constitutional functioning of consciousness to consciousness itself is phenomenological reduction.

III

Let's make sure. It is in the field which is opened by phenomenological reduction that Schutz reveals the concept of "the stock of experience". How does this fact affect the concept? Let's look into the matter. Above all, chapter 2 of "The Phenomenology of the Social World" may be characterized simply as a theory of constitution of meaning. In the following I will explicate it while considering the nature of 'stock of experience' especially its ontological nature. Simply speaking, the theorization of Schutz starts with differentiating Erlebnis from Erfahrung. Erlebnis is *duree* in Bergsonian term. There the world appears as "becoming and passing away-or better emerging" (*ent-werdende Welt*) and we "simply live immersed in the flow of duration, we encounter only undifferentiated experiences that melt into one another in a flowing continuum." (SA. 68, E. T. 51)

"Only the already experienced is meaningful, not that which is being experienced." (SA. 69. E. T. 52)

When one lives in his *duree*, there is no distinction between the one who thinks and the object which is thought of. The point is that when Self lives in its *duree*, it "doesn't know" what happens there. According to Schutz in his theory of meaning constitution, to make the *duree* meaningful it is necessary that ". by my act of reflection, I turn my attention to my living experience, I am no longer taking up my position within the stream of pure duration, I am no longer simply living within that flow." (SA. 68. E. T. 51) And, "meaning. only becomes visible to the reflective glance" (SA. 69. E. T. 52).

In other words, "lived experience" is circumscribed in a contour and "thrown into relief" by reflective act of attention, and then there is meaning. Schutz calls this "primary concept of meaning" and extends it further. It is related, first, to "the modification of attention", i. e., this answers the problem why the very same Erlebnis comes to have different meanings. Second, to the problem of 'stock of knowledge' which is the theme of this paper.

"The specific meaning of a lived experience,, consists in ordering of this lived experience within the total context of experience that is present-at-hand." (SA. 104, E. T. 78)

"This ordering is accomplished in a synthesis of recognition. The synthesis of recognition takes the lived experience that is to be classified, refers it back to the schemes on hand. The lived experience is thus brought back to an objectification already on hand within the store of experience." (SA. 111, E. T. 83)

Hence, Schutz's theory of meaning constitution can be summarized as thematically dealing with "first, the choice of 'meaningful experience' from *duree*. Secondly, the choice of 'meaningful experience' and relevant typical knowledge from the stock of experience" (Nakamura, 120) Still, the concept of "the total context of experience" or "the stock of experience" is not simple to understand. Above all, what does the expression "present-at-hand" or "already on hand" mean in the quotation above? Schutz answers to this problem by conceptual scheme of "polythetic" vs. "monothetic".

"The total context of my experience" according to Schutz "grows larger with every new lived experience. At every moment there is thus a growing core of accumulated experience. This growing core consists of both real and ideal objects of experience, Which of course had once been produced in polysynthetic intentional Acts. But the objects in this reserve supply are always taken for granted." (SA. 103, E. T. 77)

Here, Schutz's argument is very clear. For the functioning subjectivity, 'the stock of experience' must be always and already pre-established as something pre-given. If not, this line of thought of Schutz contradicts itself. In other words, in the theory of meaning constitution, it is theoretical necessity that "the stock of experience" should be the basis of meaning constitution. Since "the stock of experience" itself is said to be the product of "previous conscious activity through a complex process of constitution", its foundation in the lived experience seems to be secured. Furthermore, according to Schutz "We pay no attention to the fact that they are products of previous conscious activity, that they have gone through a complex process of constitution." (SA. 103, E. T. 77). Hence, the origin of "the stock of experience" is something beyond question in a typical attitude of everydaylife. Schutz also says, "The reserve stock of knowledge is preserved in the form of mere passive content." (SA. 103, E. T. 77) However, what would be the ground of the argument that "the stock of experience" is "once been produced in polysynthetic intentional Acts", in other words, it is the product of "previous conscious activity through a complex process of constitution." It is regrettable, to my knowledge, that this question is not answered. Nevertheless, in this context, Schutz is very persuasive. But where does this persuasiveness come from? It is because, I suppose, Schutz provides us with intuitive evidence. How? It is simple. We have in our pre-reflective attitude, a conviction or belief that "the stock of experience" is the product of "previous conscious activity through a complex process of constitution." One may call it experiential "feel" of it. I of yesterday, I of five years ago they are same and consistent I. This is a conviction. "I as being there now like so" consists of "the stock of past experiences". This also is a conviction. We "know" that these are nothing

more or nothing less than convictions. But still, such knowledge “plays low” in our everydaylife. After all, the point to ponder is the meaning of “present-at-hand” or “already on hand” in other words “always taken for granted” or “preserved in the form of mere passive content”.

IV

“Already on hand” should be regarded as pre-determined condition of possibility of the life of subjectivity which is already and always functioning. Exactly because of this, “the stock of experience” is “revealed in the reach of hand close to one in the form of passive having” to the already and always functioning subject. To have and to have passively is completely different. In the former, in its fringe, to let go is implied as its counterpart. But to have passively has no such counterpart. It must be to have in the sense that there is no letting go of it inspite that to have passively is also to have.

Let’s consider this argument in the context of Schutz. When one says that a reflective glance is given to the stream of experience, what makes the reflection as reflection possible? It is nothing else than “the stock of experience”. In other words, “the stock of experience” must be the pregiven meaning structure which precedes the operation of reflection and makes it possible.

By the way, who is the one that reveals “the stock of experience” here? It is of course, the subjectivity which performs phenomenological reduction. It is by no means the I who lives in his the everydaylife. One must be very careful about this because the subjectivity in the everydaylife ‘doesn’t know’ that “the stock of experience” is functioning to make reflection possible, while it is aware of the being of “the stock of experience” through reflection.

I believe it is made clear that “the stock of experience” is prior to the operation of reflection ontologically. But is it all? Of course not. It could also be said that “the stock of experience” is prior to ‘Erleben’ ontologically. It is because as long as the stream of experience is that of this unique I, “the stock of experience” is supposed to be given prior to this ‘I’. Just as Natanson points out in the introduction to the “collected papers”, “the biographical situation has as its cardinal feature the fact that at any moment in his life the individual has what Dr. Schutz terms a “stock of knowledge at hand.” (CPL. xxviii). In other words, ‘my stock of knowledge’ must be there working as horizontal functioning of my Erleben.

With the explication so far, we may conclude that “the stock of experience” which has ontological pregivenness is working already and always in the everydaylife. In other words, it may be construed as the condition of the possibility of the world experience. And this is the main argument that I wish I could have been able to present to you today. However, I am

not just arguing that “the stock of experience” is working already and always in the everydaylife as the condition of the possibility of the world experience. Because it also something which “is constituted in the polythetic synthesis of experience”. If so, we have a problem in our hand. A problem which requires one to return to the ordinary constitutioning of “the stock of experience”, In other words, a problem of genealogy of “the stock of experience”. Schutz already has revealed the way to this problem. Reconsidering problems such as “transcendence of the world” (CPI, 329), or “fundamental anxiety” (CPI. 228) in the context of time with their implication on the constitution of fundamental structure of our experience of the world.

Thank you for listening.

Note.

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