The Facticity of Practices

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Abstract: The paper sketches out the philosophical project for a hermeneutic theory of social practices. The theory gains its interpretive character by modeling the relations between the subjectivity involved in collective agency and the trans-subjectivity of concerted practices in terms of hermeneutic circularity. The main task of outlining such a theory is the overcoming of a dominant paradigm that consists in decomposing all assemblages of practices into manifolds of discrete elements determined by human agency. The strategy of overcoming this paradigm paves the way for working out a kind of conceptualizing the hermeneutic circularity which enables the autonomy of social practices. The paper argues that this conceptualization helps one to find a way out of the depressing dilemma between agency and structure.Actions and activities – as they are situated in and entangled with interrelated practices – neither causally determine nor impose norms on the ways in which practices are interrelated in their performances.An autonomous ensemble of social practices projects its being upon a horizon of possibilities which agents choose in accordance with their desires, plans, intentions, projects, moods, ambitions, presuppositions, prejudices, background and tacit knowledge. In the hermeneutic theory of practices, there is an important caesura that takes place in the passage from what human agency strongly determines to the authenticity manifested by the modes of being-in-concerted-social-practices.

Keywords: Ensembles of concerted practices, Cultural forms of life, Hermeneutic circularity, Trans-subjectivity, Endogenous reflexivity of practices.

1. INTRODUCTION

The composer Anton Webern, a leading exponent of atonality and a chief figure of the Second Viennese School, is famously known for his ambiguous political attitudes. Roughly, he was a strong opponent of Austrofascism, and nonetheless was inclined towards a positive reception of Nazism and the *Anschluss* in 1938. Did Webern suffer from a split personality? Should one approach his character in terms of depth psychology? In answering both questions in the negative, I should like to stress that there is no "inherent ambiguity" in Webern's personality. The inconsistency of his political positions is symptomatic for several leading Austrian intellectuals in the period 1935-1945. It is due to the person's involvement in various configurations of political, artistic, administrative, and educational practices. More often than not, the person was totally dissipated in such configurations. Personal existence in the facticity of configured practices is the theme of this paper.

The ontological difference between facticity and factuality play a pivotal role for the arguments that will be advanced in the remainder. According to existential analytic, *facticity* is the empirical manifestation of

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existence that in its finitude (being-towards-death) is projected upon infinite possibilities. Furthermore, facticity is the ongoing – and potentially never ending – articulation of meaning characterizing the modes of being-in-the-world. Facticity is the site where the world-horizon of possibilities becomes interpretively appropriated whereby the ongoing articulation of meaning comes into being. Since every human being projects her existence upon the world-horizon (and understands herself as a being-projected-towards-possibilities), facticity is the ontological condition of any one individual existence. By contrast, factuality (including the interpretive factuality of the human sciences) is always procedurally produced. Factuality consists of conceptually structured data (in particular, theoretically "saved" data-models.) The practices which produce factuality take place within facticity. Any kind of procedurally produced factuality is fore-structured by the shifting horizon of facticity [1].

Tentatively, the facticity of practices is changing configurations of practices which open up horizons of possibilities and contextually actualize these possibilities whereby a process of articulation of meaning takes place within the configurations. The contextual actualization of possibilities and the ongoing contextualization of practices' performances are mutually reinforcing processes. The facticity of practices manifests itself as ongoing contextualization of the articulation of meaning within open horizons of possibilities. A configuration of practices cannot be

reduced to the sum of particular practices composing it. Each particular practice can empirically be represented by the factuality of actors' agency organizing and performing it. However, this is not the case with the configuration of practices. An ensemble of configured practices is (a) not determined by actors' intentions and desires; (b) not goal-oriented'; and (c) irreducible to the constituent actions and activities involved in the ensemble.

Let me further spell out some of the preceding formulations. Any particular social practice is a repeated network of collective actions, organized around shared patterns, norms, and rules. The single social practice is determined by joint agency, and furnished in accordance with joint intentions. Even in the case of a practice devised and performed by an individual actor – and, in addition, not expressing an explicit we-attitude – it is not a personal habit but a social unit, granted that its normative design and performance presuppose a social partner implicitly present in the network of actions and rule-following activity. However, this picture becomes drastically changed when at stake is not an isolated, singular practice. An interrelatedness of social practices is no longer to be comprehended as continuous with repeatable collective actions and determined by joint agency. "Something astonishing happens" when an ensemble of concerted practices comes to the fore, and this happening cannot be accounted for – so a basic argument of this paper goes – in terms of the approaches searching for a mediation between structure and agency. Briefly, what happens is a transition (and a qualitative leap) from the factuality of human agency to the facticity of practices. The reducibility to actions/activities is tenable for any isolated social practice, but not for an ensemble of concerted practices. The non-derivability of such an ensemble from routine actions and goal-orientated activities should have profound implications for practice theory. The crucial turning point – supposedly legitimizing the autonomy of this theory – takes place not in the passage from actions guided by strongly personal intentions to actions/activities of group agents relying on collectively accepted conceptual presuppositions, but in the passage from what human agency strongly determines to the authenticity manifested by the modes of being-in-concerted-social-practices.

The guiding motif of this paper is that interrelated practices constitute something essentially different from inter-subjectively coordinated activities performed for identifiable reasons. An interrelatedness of practices "generates" its independence from constituent actions and activities. For several reasons that will be spelled out in the remainder, to conceive of a field of concerted practices as a field of purposeful skilled activities is ontologically wrong. Insisting on practices' independence, however, is not to be misunderstood as an attempt at attaining a "stratified" essentialist ontology of human behavior. It would not be correct to say that aptly organized orders of practices create the social-practical being as a special stratum of human existence that persists along with several other strata, like the "stratum of emergent personal properties and powers, which include the human capacity for innovative action." [2]. The rationale for insisting that interrelated social practices are capable of generating their irreducibility to the constituents of any particular practice is not to be sought in a presupposed – or a specially unfolded – stratification of human existence. The argument for the independence draws strongly on the "ontological authenticity" of what becomes disclosed, constituted, and articulated within and through a *properly arranged* interrelatedness of practices. The most evident example for such authenticity is a clearly delineated domain of discursive processes, techniques of symbolization, and material artifacts that embodies an autonomous cultural form of life.

The facticity of practices is the terrain on which authentic lifeforms become disclosed and articulated. An authentic lifeform is first and foremost a form of authentic everyday life. The most important trait of such a lifeform is its resistance against the "colonization" of its everydayness by the routine practices of the anonymous public life. An authentic cultural lifeform opens up its own world-horizon, and constitutes its own routine of recurrent practices that articulate unique meaning. A lifeform of this kind succeeds in preserving its authenticity by sorting out possibilities in its horizon of articulation that convey the lifeform's "ultimate meaning". These possibilities are not fixed and static. They undergo constant contextualization, and are specifically revealed in each particular context. By implication, the "ultimate meaning" turns out to be potentially "inexhaustible".

2.   HABITUAL BEHAVIOR AND THE EVERYDAYNESS OF CONFIGURED PRACTICES

The facticity of practices involves the trans-subjective phenomena of hermeneutic situation, endogenous reflexivity, and pre-normativity. (These three are phenomena in the sense of hermeneutic

phenomenology.) A minimal condition for identifying facticity characterizing an ensemble of practices is that the disclosed lifeform enables agential behavior (of the lifeform's participants) that differs in kind from – what social scientists address through the expression – habitual behavior. Although habitual behavior may occasionally takes place in cultural lifeforms, it is shaped not by configured practices, but entirely by agents' habits. The everydayness of practices in which an authentic cultural lifeform gets articulated rules out habitual behavior. The everydayness of normal-scientific practices that articulate a domain of scientific inquiry shows how small changes in the configurations of research practices bring into play important experimental discoveries without casting doubt on the expectations of normal-scientific work. In their "normal-scientific conservatism", scientists "routinely avoid habits" by creating "everyday innovations". (Alison Hui [3] makes a similar point when stressing that the same set of practices "can never be enacted in exactly the same way, making even 'routine' practices the site of ongoing reproduction and change.")

I agree with the view that habits are functioning as "a switchpoint between individuals and the social." [4]. Yet this view is in need of an important specification: Habits are the switchpoint between individual and collective agency. They belong to – or better reside in – "the social", in so far as they are integrated with forms of collective intentionality or communal actions and activities. To a great extent, agents take part in larger social dispositions (expressing collective agency) through their individual habits. In many cases, collective agential behavior assumes coordinated and harmonized habits of agents participating in it. However, it is an objectivist-behaviorist delusion to believe that the "collectivization" of habits can unveil something interesting about the nature of sociality as some authors working in the tradition of post-Durkheimian sociology and social theory are inclined to admit. This tradition is credited with developing conceptions about the irreducibility of social behavior based on collective habits of acting, thinking, and expressing feelings to instinctual behavior. There is a caesura between instincts and habits that determines the difference in kind between human and non-human animals[5]. Because collective habits are the starting point of sociality, habitual behavior – as composed by orchestrated associations of sustained individual ways of acting and interacting – should ensure the substantive ground for historically reproducible social life.

It is the accent on the collective habits that legitimizes the most significant methodological step in several post-Durkheimian conceptions: Since collective habits determine a difference in kind between *conditiohumana* and animality, the social can be hypostatized as a sui generis reality. By assuming that all forms of sociality can be derived from types of collective habits that differ by the degree of the complexity of societal organizations they elicit, Durkheimian theorists are able to conceptualize the factuality of collective habits (and "collective representations") of any social form of life as a sui generis reality. Thus, these theorists commit an "ontological fallacy" by admitting that the factuality they methodologically construct has the character of fundamental social reality. One can avoid this fallacy by confining one's position to the claim that there are good reasons for conceptualizing habitual behavior as the primary – both in genetic and structural sense – form of sociality within the theoretical frameworks studying the forms of sociality by means of procedural objectification and its methodological criteria for objectivity. (In other words, one can reasonably argue for the ontic-factual primacy of habitual behavior within one's explanatory framework, given that this way of arguing refrains from any ontological claims.) A purely objectivist position that has no resources to take into consideration the ontological difference ought not to be criticized for epistemologically uniting the methodology of objectification with the ontic hypostatization of the social.

Yet when the strategy of conceptualization – in contrast to the post-Durkheimian tradition – takes into consideration the ontological difference between the factuality of habitual behavior and the facticity of practices, any hypostatization of the social is excluded. Procedural objectification (of habitualized elements of action and interaction) has quite limited applicability in such a conceptualization. It is not my aim to dispute the observation that habitual behavior is an important ontic distinctive feature of human life. Seen ontologically, however, habitual behavior only promotes inauthentic routine that takes place either in various (inauthentic) cultural lifeforms or in the anonymous public life that – in the ontic sense – preexists the formation of lifeforms. However, habitual behavior does not have the capacity to morph itself into agential behavior entangled with configured practices. It can only "parasitize" on forms of everyday life already constituted by assemblages of practices. Habitual behavior is not a "deep layer" of social existence upon which more complex forms of sociality are grounded.

Accordingly, one has to resist the temptation to conceive of the configurations of practices (capable of constituting forms of everyday life) as a second-order switchpoint between the factuality of human agency and the facticity of practices, provided that the passage from individual to collective agency is the first-order switchpoint. Such an approach would only restore the agency-structure dualism and all depressing dilemmas related to it. The interrelatedness of practices is also not a superstructure built over the socialized individual habits (as some critics of practice theory seems to admit). The basic contrast between behavior entirely tied with agents' habits and the everydayness of recurrent and properly configured practices is that the latter articulates new meaning. With regard to the ontological difference, one can put a dual focus on the relationship between habitual behavior and the everydayness of configured practices. On the one hand, habitual behavior of human populations is a privileged state of affairs in the objectivist human studies, since the point of departure of any objectifying conceptualization of social behavior is the search for patterns and regularities manifested as habitual behavior. Identifying collectively coordinated habits seems to be unavoidable in this objectification. But, on the other hand, the everydayness of practices sets up contextual conditions for the possibility of habitualizing behavioral elements. Yet it would be incorrect to assume that habitual behavior is no more than a "deficient mode" of the facticity of practices – a mode in which this facticity is decomposed into manifolds of discrete units. There is no coherent scenario in which one can treat factual reality as a privative mode of facticity. Indeed, compromised lifeforms – that is, lifeforms falsely promising authenticity – can degrade to residual collective habits. But this degradation can by no means be regarded as a deficient mode of the facticity of practices [6].

An autonomous ensemble of practices can only disclose and articulate an authentic cultural form of life if its configurations of practices are sustainable enough to constitute an "authentic everydayness" of continuous articulation of meaning. Per definition, an everydayness of recurrent performances of configured practices is authentic if it is immune to influences of practices (not belonging to the ensemble) that can dissolve the configurations disclosing a lifeform. This immunity becomes enabled not by drawing – in a factual manner – demarcation lines between internal and external (configurations of) practices that subsequently are normatively fixed and imposed in a prescriptive manner. If this were the case, then the conceptualization of authentic lifeforms should be based on essentialism about firm factual differences in kind (demarcation lines) between configurations of inauthentic and authentic everydayness, granted that these differences dissects the factuality of the social world, which is absurd. (The very opposition between "internal" and "external" practices is quite dubious from anti-essentialist viewpoint.) The hermeneutic conceptualization of practices reveals the immunity of an authentic everydayness in a quite different way. The configurations constituting such an everydayness not only shift existing horizons, but they project a new horizon within which a new meaningful reality becomes disclosed and begins to take shape.

The configured practices of this everydayness do not need to form protective belts and walls. They ensure the authenticity of the everyday life by projecting a new horizon and disclosing a new reality. (Moreover, the authenticity is produced and reproduced not in a normative manner, but via that hermeneutic circularity which meaningfully articulates the disclosed reality. The authentic everydayness is the site of this circularity.) Connectedness with various external practices and their configurations is completely harmless (for keeping authentic everydayness intact) if this connectedness does not threaten to destroy the horizon. Diverse interconnections between "internal" and "external" practices may take place without damaging the lifeform's articulation. Consequently, the authentic everydayness does not need to cultivate isolationism or escapism. In its factual functioning and dynamics, this everydayness can successfully coexist and interact with assemblages of practices of various sorts. Let me now focus on the nexus between the ensemble's autonomous character and the lifeform's authenticity.

The resistance of the repeatable configurations taking place in an ensemble of practices to destructive effects coming from various sources is the primary condition for autonomy. If this condition is met, one can speak of an *autonomous* ensemble of practices whose way of being is projected-towards-possibilities. Authentic everydayness can only take place in an autonomous ensemble. But the autonomy of endogenously reflexive practices still does not warrant authenticity of what becomes articulated in the interrelatedness of these practices. On the contrary, expanding configurations of practices often constitute themselves as uncontrollable anonymous authority, effectively killing any kind of existential authenticity. This case which was already tackled under the heading

"the cunning of power" will be further analyzed by citing examples of interrelated practices (like those of stock market trading) that create the kind of irrational rationality which characterizes the anonymous authority mentioned. Generally, I strongly distinguish between autonomous ensembles of practices and autonomy of practices achieved through their endogenous reflexivity. The latter is much broader category that refers to diverse assemblages of practices that in crossing the threshold of facticity do not disclose particular lifeforms but effectively hold sway over agential behavior.

3. THE "ULTIMATE MEANING" OF AN AUTHENTIC LIFEFORM

There are among the possibilities upon which an autonomous ensemble projects its being such ones that encode the "ultimate meaning" of the lifeform disclosed and articulated by the assembled practices. Here are two examples:(a) the meaning of exotic theoretical objects – tied both with non-standard mathematical idealizations and complicated experimental situations for their empirical identification – in whose existence only those believe who are members of a community with a certain normal-scientific everydayness as a form of life, and (b) the meaning encoded in an idiom of painting that only the works of those who believe in the expressive power of this idiom can visualize, granted that the configured pictorial practices enable the everydayness of working in this style as an artistic form of life. In both examples, the meaning is "inexhaustible" which means that normal-scientific everydayness and the "working everydayness" of unfolding an artistic style cannot fully "visualize" the meaning of the theoretical objects and the meaning encoded in the aesthetic manifesto. In any context of visualizing the ultimate meaning, there is an unreachable "transcendent remainder" (not to be confused with a transcendental signified) that requires a re-contextualization of the ongoing work. The inexhaustibility of the meaning is a feature of the lifeforms' articulation within the facticity of practices.

The actors who participates in the lifeform and perform its everyday practices are convinced that in so doing the ultimate meaning they pursue will make their lives authentic. Yet the ultimate meaning of a lifeform is in its practices and possibilities. The actors have to single out the lifeform's ultimate meaning as inscribed on the same horizon of possibilities in which the lifeform becomes disclosed and articulated. To identify the ultimate meaning as projected upon possibilities is the primary condition for assigning authenticity to a

lifeform. The only way of being of a lifeform's ultimate meaning is the being-projected-upon-possibilities. Because the possibilities encoding this meaning are integrated with the open horizon of possible meaning that can be articulated in the lifeform's everydayness, they are revealed and concealed anew in each particular context constituted by configured practices. As a consequence, the appropriation of the lifeform's ultimate meaning within the growing contexts of everyday articulation remains "inexhaustible", and in each context the way of presenting/visualizing this meaning also indicates the essential absence of it. In other words, the ultimate meaning of an authentic cultural lifeform can never be fully transferred to the everydayness of recurrent and innovatively changing configurations of practices, thereby becoming totally incarnated in meaningful entities that are ready-to-hand within these practices.

The ultimate meaning is always open to be appropriated within the lifeform's everydayness, but the possibilities encoding it can never become completely actualized. As it will be shown, the actors' belief in the ultimate meaning as a transcendence that can continuously be made immanent in the lifeform's everydayness is a further condition for assigning authenticity to a lifeform. Put differently, in any particular context of this everydayness, the lifeform's ultimate (transcendent) meaning is an "absent presence". It is (made) present as a readiness-to-hand within the configuration of practices that succeeds in appropriating and actualizing (in the particular context) possibilities encoding the meaning. Once these possibilities have been actualized (and the meaning has contextually been "visualized"), the horizon is shifted and the ultimate meaning becomes projected upon, inscribed on, and encoded by further possibilities that require a new context (a configuration of practices) for their appropriation and actualization. This is why the transcendent meaning of an authentic lifeform is ever transcending any particular context in which it can (partially) be made present. By implication, its totality is absent in any context in which it has partial presence as readiness-to-hand within practices. Within the lifeform's everyday articulation, transcendent meaning and contextually actualized meaning are hermeneutically united in accordance with the figure of situated transcendence.

The constitution of a routine everydayness of repeatable practices that project a horizon of possibilities transcending each and every context of agential behavior situated within this everydayness is a property of any relatively autonomous assemblage of

practices. In most cases, however, collective behavior entangled with the configurations of assembled practices does not lead to a distinctive (not to speak of an authentic) cultural form of life at all. Moreover, in many cases – to return to the problematic of habitual behavior – the everyday life in concerted practices institutes collective habits that systematically annihilate autonomous configurations that can induce an authentic everydayness. In these cases, the trans-subjectivity of the habitual-inauthentic way of being-in-practices-towards-possibilities succeeds in systematically destructing authenticity. More often than not, this trans-subjective destruction works (at a certain stage) in concert with political motifs. In saying "works in concert", however, I insist that the way in which the trans-subjective interrelatedness of concerted practices gains its distinctiveness is essentially underdetermined by subjective motifs, desires, and intentions. But once it has become established, this interrelatedness – taken in its diversity of assemblages, among which the autonomous ensembles of practices are extremely small subclass – may turn out to be quite instrumental for accomplishing repressive policies inspired by subjective political will and motifs.

The changing configurations in an ensemble of social practices and the shifts in the horizon (projected by these practices) are mutually reinforcing events. The actualization of a possibility within a context of configured practices reveals new possibilities (along with precluding some of the existing), while any shift in the horizon provokes a new configuration constituting a particular context of behavior. Accordingly, there is *ongoing interplay of practices and possibilities* that does not leave any room (within it) for practitioners' (personal and social) normatively fixed roles and identities unaffected by the shifting horizon. Practitioners are inextricably situated in – and transcended by – the interplay of practices and possibilities. Practitioners' choices of possibilities take place within this interplay. By the same token, all entities, events and states of affairs involved in configured practices hinge on the horizon's shifts and the process of re-contextualization. Since there is a mutual dependence of the whole horizon of possibilities and the actualization of every particular possibility within a configuration of practices, the ongoing interplay of practices and possibilities is characterized by a continuous hermeneutic circularity.

The interplay is between the two "totalities" of (1) changing configurations that constitute contexts of the articulation of meaning and (2) shifting horizons of possibilities that can contextually be appropriated. A

kind of hermeneutic circularity operates within this interplay, and consists of several interpretive circles, each between a specific whole and particular units. Against this background, it is obvious that the interplay cannot be equated with hermeneutic circularity. The latter is exclusively pertinent to the articulation of meaning, while the interplay of practices and possibilities comprises phenomena that can hardly be expressed in terms of this articulation only. However, the interplay gains its distinctive way of being by means of the hermeneutic circularity involved in it. It is the circularity of the articulation of meaning that discloses the being of a cultural lifeform. Though this circularity works within and through the interplay of practices and possibilities, it is the former that enables the autonomy of the latter. An ensemble of concerted practices autonomously exists through and within this circularity if (and only if) it is capable of disclosing and articulating a cultural lifeform. The way in which the hermeneutic theory conceptualizes the circularity (and the non-dichotomous ontological difference within it) brings into focus the qualitative leap in the transition from collective agency that determines behavior to the articulation of meaning within-configured-practices.

A particular configuration of practices constitutes a context of meaningful articulation. To reiterate, in the perspective of the temporalizing of temporality, any context of configured practices is not a pure and static presence-at-hand or something delineated once and forever. The earlier claim that there are no contexts preexisting the ongoing contextualization can be specified as follows. The context is *made present* thanks to the actualization of possibilities within the configuration that constitutes it. The shift in the horizon induced by this actualization opens up new possibilities whose appropriation can be contextualized by upcoming configurations. The contexts potentially constituted by these configurations are in a sense already involved in the context-made-present, since all of them appropriate the same horizon of possibilities and take place in the contextualizing appropriation of these possibilities. In the light of the newly opened possibilities whose contextualized appropriation is imminent, one sees the actual context has been made present. More specifically, one sees the contexts (and the actualized possibilities in them) that have been leading to the constitution of the context-made-present. These contexts also are in a sense involved in the actual context. In a nutshell, a particular context is made present via a regime of the temporalizing of the temporality of the interplay of practices and possibilities.

4. ONGOING CONTEXTUALIZATION AND INTER-CONTEXTUALITY

Let me now slightly change the perspective. In any context, some possibilities become appropriated and actualized whereby the contextual shift in the horizon invites the formation of a new configuration of practices. In view of the observation that the temporalizing of temporality is the way of being of the interplay of practices and possibilities, the very interplay turns out to be the *ongoing contextualization* of the articulation of meaning in the facticity of practices. Since the ongoing contextualization has a priority over any particular context that is made present, the particular contexts constituted within the interplay are "moments" of the temporalizing of temporality, provided that a "moment" is not a point in linear image of time, but a shift in the horizon opening up possibilities whose actualizations make-present in having-been. As "moments" of ongoing contextualization, the contexts are not separated from one another as cells in an organism. The contexts are always already inter-contextualized whereby traces of actual and possible contexts can be found in any one of them.

The last observation can be extended in the following manner. When the emphasis is placed on the ongoing contextualization, all contextual boundaries are relative to the situated transcendence of the articulation of meaning. By implication, the contexts taking place within the interplay are intrinsically interwoven, thereby building up a tissue that I called elsewhere "inter-contextuality" [7]. A further specification has to be added in this regard: Within the ongoing contextualization, there is only inter-contextuality, and no texts (articulated meanings) surrounded by (and contained in) contexts. The ongoing contextualization deconstructs any firm (factually present) demarcation between text and context. Like the contexts, the contextually articulated meaningful entities are always already "inter-textualized" [8].

Inter-contextuality "contains" potentially innumerable possible contexts and a limited class of actual contexts. But no one of the latter is endowed with factual presence per se. The conceptualization of the ongoing contextualization and inter-contextuality can succeed in describing a context only if its strategy would be capable of tracing the way of making the context present, which amounts to reconstructing a trajectory of the temporalizing of temporality. The leitmotiv of this conceptualization is that the ongoing contextualization

taking place in the facticity of practices enables diverse trajectories of the temporalizing of temporality through which contexts can be made present (but not as a factual presence that is "ready to be" objectified). Needless to say that the conceptualization (as procedural constitution) of a context is another story, different from that of intrinsically making-present a context through actualizing possibilities within the interplay of practices and possibilities. Yet this conceptualization aiming at capturing the contextual articulation of meaning within the facticity of practices necessarily assumes that it *constitutes contextualized objects of inquiry by means of revealing how contexts are (or have been) made present within the interplay of practices and possibilities*. Inter-contextuality is the ontologically primary state of human existence. To put it differently, human existence "begins" with disclosing the world in its inter-contextual totality [9].

Making inter-contextuality a special theme of inquiry has important consequences for the (post-metaphysical) recasting of a traditional methodological distinction in the human and social sciences. I am referring to the micro-macro distinction which in many cases is postulated as a dichotomy. Societal trends, mentalities persisting over long historical periods, social structures organizing functional systems that regulate the social dynamics of large human populations are among the prominent examples of a hypostatized macro-level of theoretical conceptualization. Statistical methods and mathematical models are successfully applicable to this conceptualization. What is hypostatized and formalized on a macro-level is then stylized as explanans enabling various explanatory scenarios for the diversity of particular cases. I am not going to discuss the flaws of such macro-approaches which are largely criticized from different viewpoints. It suffices to point out that the hypostatization of trends, structures, mentalities, systems, human populations, etc. mingles diverse agencies of actors in order to construct a "resultant" that as such is not existing in the diversity of agencies.

This is a completely incorrect theoretical idealization that might serve only the political function of gaining the opportunity to exert more effective control over the particular groups of actors. (Mingling agencies of different human actors and nonhuman actants prevents one from studying the synergy of these agencies as the latter is the central subject of actor-network theory. In criticizing "the sociologist of the social" who tend to explain the social phenomena with hypostatized social forces, Bruno Latour warns of this danger, and

consistently insists that one needs to carefully identify any particular agency [10]. But this identification is not for the sake of an accurately differentiation between social, material-technological, biological, psychological, and economical connections within the actor-network. All agents or actants are imbued with the effects of all of these connections building up a network. The rationale for identifying the particular agencies operating within a network is to prevent one from jumping from the recognition of local interactions to the existence of a social force resulting from the synergies of agencies. This is why Latour often makes the case for dissolving the notion of social force as an integral agency and replacing it with short-living contextual interactions and their contextually heterogeneous agency.)

A criticism should be levelled at several micro-programs as well. A dominant position in the research programs concentrated on a micro-level of conceptualization admits that one places what one is going to study in a certain pre-delineated context as it has been laid down by a particular social agency. This position does not reject the existence of a multitude of relevant contexts. It stresses, however, that all of them are already present-at-hand before starting the research process. Depending on his investigatory interest, the researcher has to "find" the most appropriate context. Studying, for instance, in a micro-historical perspective the engineering practices in Dutch society of the late 16th century implies that the researcher has to choose among a variety of contexts, each of them prioritizing specific technological, scientific, economic, administrative, religious, and several other factors. But the (configuration of) engineering practices one is studying has been interrelated with many other practices constituting possible contexts in which these factors have been taken place. The point is that many possible contexts can be figured outwithin the whole interrelatedness, but none of them is ready-made, pre-prepared, or pre-delineated. In the same way in which the meaningful outcome of performing configured engineering practices is in a state of ongoing contextualization, the researcher should be led by the methodological principle that any procedural delineation of a micro-context is only a "moment" of what the research process conceptualizes in terms of ongoing contextualization. (In this regard, Giovanni Levi [11] makes the case that studying biography-in-a-context does not amount to distilling practices representing typical behaviour determined by contextual factors. For him, "interpreting biographical vagaries" and

constituting a relevant context are mutually reinforcing each other, thereby making each other possible [12].)

Conceptualizing inter-contextuality taking place in the facticity of practices opposes the metaphysical hypostatization of both macro-structures (trends, mentalities, etc.) and micro-contexts (allegedly laid down by a particular social agency). The basic assumption of this conceptualization is that one can envision macro-scenarios of research by "tracing inter-contextual traces" that the ongoing contextualization (the interplay of practices and possibilities) leaves in any context, regardless of how it would procedurally be constituted as an object of inquiry in the research process. Thus, a diversity of "macro-images" can be achieved without any hypostatization of meta-contextual structures. More specifically, by "discovering" in any context the trajectory of the temporalizing of temporality through which the context is made-present, one brings in one's range of investigation all possible contexts involved in the trajectory. Following the trajectory of the temporalizing of temporality through which the context is made present amounts to envisioning a macro-scenario of research. The constitution of a context-as-object-of-inquiry by conceptualizing the way in which a context is made present in the interplay of practices and possibilities ineluctably involves tracing the traces which future contexts and contexts that have been leave in the context made present. It is through the trajectories of the temporalizing of temporality that the "macro" is contextually encoded in the "micro". Decoding the "macro" by means of tracing the traces left – in a context made present within ongoing contextualization – by future and past contexts involved in a unitary horizon of temporality implies a deconstruction of the metaphysically postulated micro-macro dichotomy [13].

5. HERMENEUTIC SITUATIONS, ENDOGENOUS REFLEXIVITY AND HERMENEUTIC PRE-NORMATIVITY

Conceptualizing the facticity of practices requires taking into consideration the hermeneutic situation characterizing the articulation of meaning within the circularity of interplaying practices and possibilities. The concept of the hermeneutic situation must not be reduced – in a mentalist way – to presuppositions ingrained in the practitioners' "collective consciousness". Considered with respect to the appropriation of possibilities on which a lifeform's ultimate meaning is "inscribed", the hermeneutic situation amounts to the fore-having, fore-seeing, and

fore-grasping – as this triad is embedded in practices, and not in mental structures – of the expected transference of the ultimate meaning to everyday contexts. Seen in this way, a hermeneutic situation of the articulation of meaning within the interplay of practices and possibility belongs to this interplay, and has a trans-subjective status. A hermeneutic situation taking place within the facticity of practices consists in the tendentious fore-structuring of the meaningful entities within the disclosed lifeform's everydayness.

The concept of hermeneutic situation is an ontological concept. But it also refers to the tendentiously growing structuration of a behavior that can be conceptualized through discrete factuality. Accordingly, there is an aspect of the concept that covers the tendentious fore-structuring of behavioral factuality within the facticity of practices. Dealing with this aspect reveals that the ontological difference between facticity and factuality resides in any particular hermeneutic situation. The prefix "fore" (in the expression "tendentious fore-structuring") has three special connotations. It connotes at once (a) something that is coming (possibilities that can be appropriated and contextually actualized), (b) something that has been and plays the role of active background (already actualized possibilities that can be reactivated and repeated), and (c) something that is made present (the context in which possibilities are chosen to be appropriated and actualized). With regard to these connotations, the tendentious fore-structuring of meaningful behavior is tantamount to a regime of temporalizing of the open horizon of possibilities whose appropriation and actualization by configured practices articulate a cultural lifeform. The insistence on tendentiousness in the fore-structuring is justified because the orientation towards possibilities that can be appropriated has a priority in every regime of temporalizing. Yet this tendentiousness also alludes to the progressive transference of the lifeform's ultimate meaning to the everydayness of practices. The tendentious fore-structuring of agential behavior and its outcomes within an autonomous ensemble of practices articulating an authentic cultural form of life is another way of defining the concept of characteristic hermeneutic situation.

Following the strategy of conceptualizing the facticity of practices, one realizes that the factuality of human agency and agential behavior – as schematized by sets of objectified discrete facts – can only procedurally be isolated from the facticity of practices. Factuality consists of facts about conceptualized phenomena as these facts are represented by models of data (say statistical data about particular social behavior guided by specific cultural values and norms). The expression "conceptualized phenomena" stands for phenomena explained through theoretical models. Factuality comes into being due to the conceptualization of phenomena via embedding models of data into theoretical models [14]. This conceptualization produces procedurally objectified (manifolds of discrete) facts representing "theoretically saved" phenomena.The procedural objectification of factuality about behavior and agency unavoidably has as a hidden premise that the implemented procedures extract data from the continuity of existing-towards-possibilities. Accordingly, this objectification ignores the ontological difference (between factuality and facticity), but ineluctably retains it as a hidden premise.

Although not representable by discrete factuality, the manifestations of facticity can be studied and conceptualized in an empirical manner, without implying any form of reductionist objectivism or Durkheimian essentialism about the nature of the "social facts". The empirical studies of facticity do not rest on a description of indexicalities. These studies require a proper interpretive conceptualization of the articulation of meaning within a characteristic hermeneutic situation. The empirical being of the interpretively conceptualized facticity is the contextualized appropriation of possibilities by configured practices. The ontic-ontological difference is integrated not only with the strategy conceptualization, but also with the empirical being of the conceptualized facticity. It is the facticity of assembled practices articulating meaning within a characteristic hermeneutic situation that brings to the fore the nexus of autonomous ensembles and authentic cultural forms of life. Autonomy and authenticity are not emergent properties since they cannot be objectified as properties at all. Properties are theoretically explained factual phenomena.

The autonomy of an ensemble of configured practices rests on *practices' endogenous reflexivity*. Studies in ethnomethodology provide an observation that attests for the way in which this reflexivity operates: Practices display a propensity ("predilection") to enter into certain configurations (while avoiding others), and this propensity is underdetermined by agency that is effective in practitioners' collective behavior. The cross-references within the interrelatedness of properly arranged practices single out "preferences" in the formation of configurations,

while the interrelatedness remains constantly open to the emergence of possible new configurations. To a great extent, the way of forming "preferred" configurations is independent of actors' motivations, desires, plans, and intentions. The formation of such configurations takes place in a characteristic hermeneutic situation of disclosing and articulating meaning. Practices' endogenous reflexivity that works within such a situation is basically promoting that trans-subjective agency which has been partially emancipated from human agency without becoming an independent force imposed upon agential behavior [15].

More generally, this reflexivity is a dimension of the characteristic hermeneutic situation of a lifeform's articulation as far as the articulation is carried out by the agential-behavior-entangled-with-configured-practices. But practices' endogenous reflexivity does not attest that practices' interrelatedness creates a mysterious "meta-agential" agency. The "logic of practices" brings into unity the articulation of meaning within a characteristic hermeneutic situation and the reflexive formation of pertinent configurations without becoming a Hegelian logic. (In studying how "logic is related to practices", Lynch [16] shows that actors' judgmental reflexivity effectively works only in the medium of practices in which the existing configurations are revealing possible significance and relevance. Actors' judgements single out what in any particular case is significant and relevant.) When the cooperation of practices' reflexivity and practitioners' judgmental reflexivity takes place in the articulation of an authentic lifeform, this cooperation is subjected to the tendentious appropriation of possibilities that makes the transcendent meaning immanent in the lifeform's everydayness. In this case, the cooperation serves the lifeform's ethos, and is trans-subjectively regulated by a characteristic hermeneutic situation. The converse claim is also valid: It is the characteristic hermeneutic situation that institutes such a cooperation which is instrumental for the tendentious appropriation of possibilities.

Furthermore, this cooperation is a sine qua non for the nexus of autonomy and authenticity. The assemblages of configured practices whose routine performances elicit inauthentic everydayness are deprived of such a cooperation. The relations between the two types of reflexivity gets more or less damaged and distorted. Thus, practices' endogenous reflexivity may become strongly dominant, holding sway over actors' reflexivity in a manner that prevents actors from

taking rational decisions. Unexpected configurations of practices massively produce unintended consequences. This case is typically instantiated by configurations of practices of market economy. As a rule, these configurations are hardly controllable by virtue of actors' judgmental reflexivity. A symptomatic situation of market economy is that individual and collective agents who perform particular singular practices are unaware of the conigurations to which these practices belong. Roughly, it is this unawareness that causes the "irrationality of markets".

Consider, for instance, the practices of trading corporate actions under the conditions of the "anonymous" financial markets, *i.e.* the markets where buyers do not meet sellers. A manifold of practices – performed by dealers, position holders, investment banks, agency brokers, institutional investors, and so on – that are involved in this trading form configurations in which any particular practice is guided by a certain private or institutional interests. The participants try in a reflexive manner to bring into harmony the competing and conflicting interests (related to the distribution of profits on equities, the raising of capital, the re-organization of the issued capital, and the redemption of debt), but more often than not practices' endogenous reflexivity overtakes their efforts. As a rule, the participants are successful in settling a conflict of interests within a particular configuration/context. However, practices' reflexivity recurrently re-configures them, responding to the changing milieu in which the configuration is performed. The more the reconfiguring process is progressing, the more the participants are losing control over the effects of performing configured practices. It seems as if the configurations of practices – in which competing agential desires, intentions, and plans are infused – are protecting themselves from both the destructive effects of the conflicts of interests and the challenges of an unpredictable milieu. This protection is the main achievement of practices' endogenous reflexivity: Practices are matching and re-matching each other neither in an arbitrary way, nor is this process guided by the performers' intentions, beliefs, and desires.

The fact that the endogenous reflexivity of practices may constantly bring surprises is also epitomized by practices propagating policies of protectionism. Here again the reflexive rationality of practitioners does not suffice to cope with the irrationality of unintended consequences. A case in point is a protectionist configurationof anti-dumping practices, practices of restraining trade, practices of imposing regulatory

mechanisms, juridical practices of controlling the ownership of domestic firms, practices of subsidizing export, and practices of controlling exchange rate. Because this configuration immediately gets mingled with indefinite "invisible" configurations, the initial agential intention becomes dissipated in a manner that prompts the so-called risks of protectionism – effects that work in opposition to the initial agential intention. Here again unpredictable economic crises owe their growing frequency to the increasing inability of the players to reflexively adjust their behavior to new situations in coping with changing configurations of endogenously reflexive practices.

To stress again, the cooperation of actors' judgmental reflexivity and practices' endogenous reflexivity is simultaneously instituted by the characteristic hermeneutic situation and it serves the tendentious course of the articulation of authentic meaning. In lacking this cooperation, the preceding examples of configured economic practices refer to assemblages that in crossing the threshold of facticity do not constitute specific lifeforms. Under these circumstances, practices' endogenous reflexivity holds sway over the behavior of the economic players. The lack of a characteristic hermeneutic situation forecloses not only the cooperation between the two types of reflexivity, but also the possibility to differentiate between risk and danger – a differentiation on which theorists like Luhmann and Ulrich Beck insist. When practices' endogenous reflexivity strongly dominates over the driving forces of agential behavior taking place in the inauthentic everydayness of concerted practices, there is no possibility to decide whether the emergence of destructive effects is caused by hidden factors in agents' intentions or by practices' "matching logic".

More generally, the collapse of the cooperation between agents' reflexivity and practices' reflexivity is what makes today societies into "the risk society". Notoriously, Ulrich Beck characterized "world risk society" in terms of "second reflexive modernity". Paradoxically enough, the most essential feature of this modernity seems to be the proliferation of assembled practices that defy integration with characteristic hermeneutic situations whereby the probability of various sorts of accidents is increasing: Reflexive modernity dramatically suffers from a deficiency of reflexivity with regard to the facticity of its own practices.

A particular manifestation of this deficiency is the growing inability (modern society) to promote the constitution of characteristic hermeneutic situations

within the facticity of practices. It is hard to believe that Beck would have accepted this conclusion. Nonetheless, the conclusion is in full agreement with his view that the task of the reflexive "sociology of risk" is to reconstruct networks of techno-social practices through which "the foundations of everyday life are in flux." [17]. He also acknowledges that risks are man-made hybrids of cultural and natural entities – hybrids that can only exist within configured practices. His scenario of how risk societies can become self-critical societies – a scenario that, in my view, has to be freed from the ideology of reflexive modernity – bears some resemblance to the idea that the facticity of practices has the potential for producing configurations capable of disclosing authentic lifeforms.

Beck argues that different forms of critical reflexivity capable of tracking contexts in which normal consumption habits produce "organized irresponsibility" increase the society's potential for identifying not only the local risks but also for gaining knowledge about the "global risk" (or more correctly, the risk of globalization). It is my contention that the proliferation of authentic lifeforms (and not the changing institutions of reflexive modernity) can cope with unintended consequences and "manufactured uncertainties". For Beck, intensifying the public recognition of risks is already an important step in instituting a self-critical society, since – according to his basic formula – the more risks are publicly recognized, the less risks are produced. Like all kinds of neo-Enlightenment ideologies, Beck's ideological doctrine puts the rationally organized human agency first. It is evident however that many "dangerous risks" – and, a fortiori, the risk of globalization – are produced not by intended or unintended actions and activities, but by trans-subjective arrangements of practices that can only be studied by means of those post-metaphysical (and post-humanist) discourses which Beck strongly denies.

The hermeneutic conceptualization of the facticity of practices admits that all kinds of norms are contextually fore-structured, and the ongoing fore-structuring exerts a pre-normative power that should also be attributed to a trans-subjective agency that is entangled with agential behavior and has a modus operandi rooted in actors' agency, but nevertheless is in an important sense autonomous. More generally, while (individual and collective) agency is determined by normatively organized dispositions and attitudes, the interplay of practices and possibilities engenders a kind of (what I call) *hermeneutic pre-normativity* that orientates and constrains the articulation of meaning within a characteristic hermeneutic situation [18]. Pre-

normativity is the power of fore-structuring as specified by such a situation. Hermeneutic pre-normativity comes from the kind of interpretive circularity which – in constituting meaning – is fore-structuring what becomes constituted (including normativity) within concerted practices. Prima facie, pre-normativity is a function of two "controlling parameters". On the one hand, it lays down constraints and limitations for performing actions and activities whereby any particular practice (as involving constrained actions and activities) is, as it were, designed to prefer practices (also matching these constrains and limitations) in forming configurations. This function is to be assigned to practices' endogenous reflexivity. Performing a practice is already orientated towards the performances of those practices which seems to be "preferred partners" for having a configuration. On the other hand, pre-normativity as informed by the characteristic hermeneutic situation keeps intact the dominant tendency of the articulation of meaning within configured practices.

A special aspect of the concept of hermeneutic pre-normativity concerns the fore-structuring of normative structures in agential behavior. Conceptualizing the pre-normative fore-structuring of normativity – as this fore-structuring releases its own constraining and orientational force – invokes the ontological difference. Normativity consists of entities (prescriptions, proscriptions, taboos, instructions, criteria, standards, sanctions, constraints, conventions, regulative patterns, etc.) that have ontic presence. These entities are not "natural objects" (or "natural kinds") [19], and more importantly, their way of being cannot explanatory be derived – without committing a kind of naturalistic fallacy – from entities that are distinguished by ontic presence. Normativity is "prepared" within the facticity of practices. Since normativity is a kind of factuality, this is a particular case of producing-factuality-within-facticity, which epitomizes the way in which the ontological difference proceeds. In this regard, normativity-integrated-with-configured-practices "harbors" the non-dichotomous difference between normativity-as-factuality of agential behavior and hermeneutic pre-normativity.

CONCLUSION

The considerations of this paper show that the distinction between facticity and factuality is in the first place a manifestation of the ontological difference that can subsequently be read in epistemological terms. However, there is a threat of placing the concept of

factuality in a narrow epistemological framework if one ceases to treat it as a counterpart of facticity. Ontologically seen, the facticity of practices has so far been contrasted with the *factuality of human agency*. The latter consists of all indispensable components of agential behavior – actions, activities, tacit knowledge, motivation, cognitive resources, desires, moods, rule-following, norms, patterns, etc. The empirical theories in sociology, social psychology, cultural anthropology and several other disciplines conceptualize the factuality of human agency by means of its procedural objectification. As a result, this factuality becomes represented through discrete data models. But as it is well known, this kind of representing human agency in terms of the social sciences is not the only game in town. Moral and political theories dealing with the issues of autonomy and authenticity are designed to reconstruct the intrinsic normativity of human agency, whereby they gain the status of normative theories. Yet studying the normativity of agency and agential behavior does not leave the territory of factual inquiry. This normativity is again epistemically represented in terms of manifolds of discrete elements (prescriptions, rules, norms, sanctions, taboos, proscriptions, constraints, criteria, and so on). If the empirical (descriptive) theories of human agency procedurally objectify its factuality via data models, the normative theories tend to address this factuality by hypostatizing normative structures. The hermeneutic approach to practices I tried to sketch it out in this paper opposes both kinds of theories, since it conceptualizes the factuality of human agency as being entangled with the facticity of interplaying practices and possibilities.

In a nutshell, the argument against the hypostatization of normativity runs as follows. When specified by a characteristic hermeneutic situation, the interplay of practices and possibilities elicits both constraining and orientational power. It constrains the subjective choices of possibilities that do not match the tendency of articulating the cultural lifeform within the open horizon of possibilities for articulation. The interplay orientates this articulation by bringing to the fore those possibilities to be appropriated which make the "ultimate meaning" transferred to the everydayness of routine practices. The interplay succeeds in fore-structuring the formation of normative structures within the lifeform. It is this fore-structuring that should be regarded as the ethos of the cultural lifeform: The *ethos* is the (hermeneutically pre-normative) constraining and orientational power that the interplay elicits in fore-structuring the articulation of an authentic cultural form of life.

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[6]   Against this background, habitus might be regarded as an intermediate link between habits and everydayness disclosing an authentic lifeform. Roughly, the "system of durable and transportable dispositions" – Bourdieu's shortest definition of habitus – is "something more" than a concerted habits within a social group because the former involves "embodied understanding". Habitual behavior reduces embodied understanding to a pre-reflexive resource for executing (collective) bodily habits. But when dispositions to bodily comportment encode meaning that this comportment gradually articulates, then embodied understanding taking place in agential behavior mediates between the encoded meaning and the comportment's meaningful outcomes. In this case, embodied understanding works within a horizon in which practitioners – in whose behavior an appropriated habitus is inculcated – articulate their everyday form of life. Thus considered, the concept of habitus (as "structuring structures" of behavior) has both an ontic interpretation in terms of (an extended reading of) habitual behavior, and an ontological interpretation in terms of the everydayness of practices disclosing and articulating lifeforms.

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[10]   See in this regard Latour B. Reassembling the Social. An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2005; pp. 61-78.

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[12]   In referring to the perspective that hypostatizes historical contexts, Levi [11] argues that one can "regret that the context is often represented as rigid, coherent and that it functions as a static background against which the biography can be explained. The individual paths of life have roots in a context, in this way, but they have no influence on it, nor do they alter it."

[13]   Achieving a macro-picture through inter-contextuality is essentially different from Michael Lynch's proposal for an inductive generalization of contextual descriptions of orders and organizations. See Lynch M. Silence in Context: Ethnomethodology and social theory. Human Studies 1999; 12: 211-233.

[14]   Ginev D. Hermeneutic Realism. Reality within Scientific Inquiry. Dordrecht: Springer 2016; pp. 209-219.
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[15]   Practices' endogenous reflexivity is not a self-referential mechanism, and should not be confused with what Niklas Luhmann addresses in terms of self-referential social systems – or systems distinguished by communication – that by means of self-reference constitute their identities and differences. Self-reference seems to be, in Luhmann's theory, a trans-subjective mechanism that avoids, however, a purely objectivist construal. For Luhmann, this kind of self-reference does not result from the agency of agential behavior. It is to be attributed to the autopoiesis of the social-communicative systems. (In his critique of Habermas, he also treats communication as independent of agency.) A concrete manifestations of social systems' self-reference are self-referential structural integration and self-referential constitution of elements. Yet all these claims rest on the metaphysical dichotomy between (biological) life and meaning. Luhmann's approach to self-reference suffers from the same metaphysical hypostatization of levels of organization that characterizes any version of system theory. See Luhmann N. Essays on Self-Reference. New York: Columbia University Press 1990; pp. 8-14.

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[19]   I admit that normative entities are not natural kinds. Yet this statement is hardly to be defended in terms of scientific realism. Paradoxically enough, one can treat – via a scientific-realist ontology – normative units as natural kinds. Such an ontology does not dispute that natural kinds might be also man-made entities. From the viewpoint of scientific realism, natural kinds are kinds revealed by science. A class of clinical norms revealed in the scientific study of the etiology of an illness is a classic example for a "normative natural kind". If one goes on to reduce the class of these norms to non-normative entities, one is jeopardizing the conceptualization of the illness under study. Yet one should also regard as normative natural kinds those classes of social norms, rules, standards, normative patterns, etc. which are revealed (in the sense of scientific realism) by means of objectivist social-scientific theories. (There is a dubious moment in the scientific-realist approach to natural kinds that

is quite relevant to the present discussion. It is science – so the argument of this approach goes – that is entitled to decide how to define the category of kinds and what can be accepted as constituting a natural kind. But if this is the case, then the whole approach to natural kinds crucially depends on the normative concept of scientific rationality: Science decides what should be counted as natural kinds by bringing to bear its own normative criteria and standards for objectification. By implication, all natural kinds are in a sense "normatively laden".)