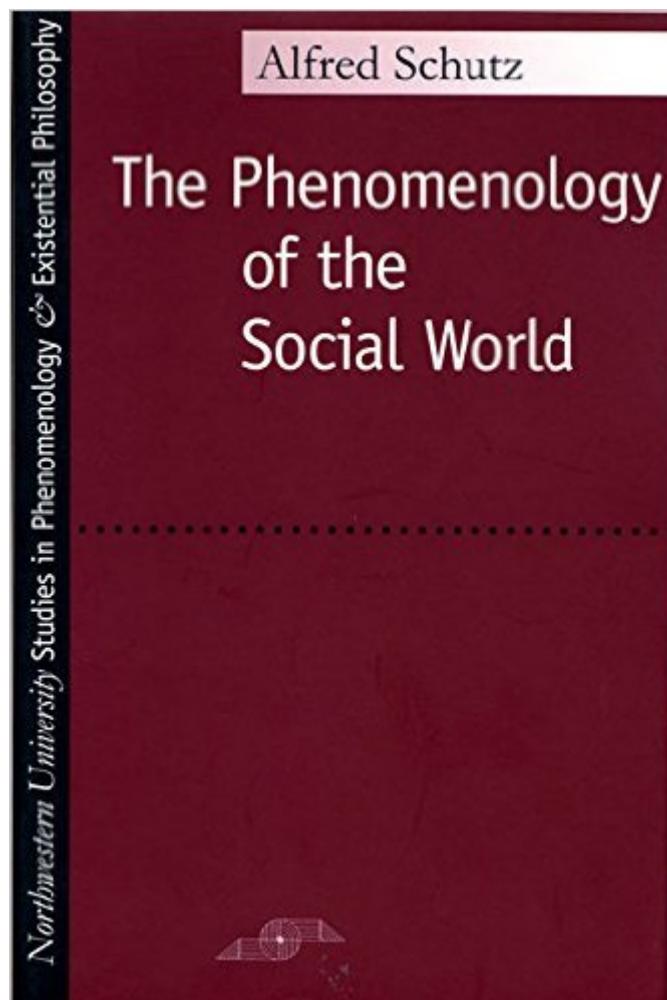


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Phenomenology Of The Social World (Studies In Phenomenology And Existential Philosophy)



Synopsis

In this book, his major work, Alfred Schutz attempts to provide a sound philosophical basis for the sociological theories of Max Weber. Using a Husserlian phenomenology, Schutz provides a complete and original analysis of human action and its "intended meaning."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Quoting from the backcover of my edition "In this book, his major work, Alfred Schutz attempts to provide a sound philosophical bases for the sociological theories of Max Weber [...] Using Husserlian phenomenology, Schutz provide a complete and original analysis of human action and its "intended meaning". [...] In the process he offers a possible answer to a fundamental question - whether the social sciences can provide genuine understanding of human beings" After having read it I can only agree with the above. In my opinion this is a masterpiece of social philosophy. The questions which this book touches upon are the ones always lurking in the back of every social scientist, namely the epistemological status of the science as such. The great thing about this book is that it, unlike any other I have read, manages to pinpoint this questions and sketch a possible answer to most of them. The book is, as the quote points out, based upon the phenomenology of Husserl. Now, this might scare away many people familiar with the writings of Husserl or Heidegger, but no need to worry. Upon its release in 1932 Schutz sent a dedicated copy of the book to Husserl whom replied "I am anxious to meet such a serious and thorough phenomenologist, one of the few who have penetrated to the core of the meaning of my life's work, access to which is unfortunately

so difficult .."This then is exactly what Schutz have managed, namely to produce an easy access/introduction to the profound thoughts of Husserl. This book is written with great rigour, but without ever loosing clarity or direction. It reads easy for anyone customed to reading philosophical essays. The translation from german I think was very well done.

I agree very strongly with the prior reviewer, and any reader must also know that most academics who quote or refer to Schutz, do not have enough of an understanding of either Husserl or particularly of Schutz. Schutz is often cast as an Austrian economist based upon him having lived in and emigrated from Vienna, Austria. The primary reason that Schutz had to emigrate has that he was a progressive, and Hitler certainly would have certainly either imprisoned Schutz or executed him. Schutz may have attended a few classes given by von Mises, and his day job was as an international banker. There is also myth that he led a split life, as in being interpreted as a banker by day and a philosopher by night, as if there was a obvious split between the two worlds. Further Schutz was also a close friend and collaborator with Adolph Lowe at the New School after Schutz emigrated to NY. I yet to see anyone who claims to under Schutz to place him within Schutz's own actual context. Husserl started out as mathematician and in the context of Principia Mathematica Husserl was attracted to the psychology of Franz Brentano. Unfortunately most of the people who claimed to advocate Husserl's phenomenology have never had the appropriate academic and intellectual background to understand Husserl in his own terms. Schutz is a similar philosopher/sociologist which to a large degree came with substantial experience in the real world and broadly as an intellectual. This makes Schutz a probable difficult read for people not having a comparable breadth of experience or intellectual scope. I believe that he is entirely worth the effort. I would largely ignore Aron Gurvitch's over-write of the manuscript left by Schutz unfinished.

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