Knowledge and Behaviour*

LADISLAV HOLÝ

Vědění a chování

Abstract: Ladislav Holy argues in this paper that by virtue of the self-defining character of human activities, anthropological interpretation could proceed only on the basis of understanding indigenous categories and analysing activities in terms of those categories; imposition of outsiders' analytic categories onto local concerns wouldonly lead to confused analyses and the distorted representation of local systems of knowledge.

Keywords: knowledge, behaviour, social anthropology, norms, social reality

I.

Phenomenologically oriented approaches in sociology, of which ethnomethodology[1] seems to be the only one that has passed the stage of programmatic and methodological proclamations and has produced empirical studies, derive from the assumption that social reality is constructed through people's activities. They treat the manner of the emergence of social reality as problematic [*see Walsh 1972: 20; Filmer – Phillipson – Silverman – Walsh 1972: passim*] and their main concern is with the ways in which people accomplish their social world and in this process of accomplishment make it intelligible, reasonable and accountable. It is intelligible and accountable because those who inhabit it share the same "common sense knowledge" of it. This concept, which was introduced into sociology by the writings of Alfred Schutz [1962; 1964; 1966], is one of the central concepts of ethnomethodology. To talk about "common sense knowledge of social structures" [*Garfinkel 1967: 76–77*] means to talk about the agreement of the members of society about the social phenomena.

With regard to this concept, the main concern of ethnomethodology is again to investigate the processes through which this agreement is generated: "The study of common sense knowledge and common sense activities consists of treating as problematic phenomena the actual methods whereby members of a society, doing sociology, lay or professional, make the structures of everyday activities observable." [*Garfinkel 1967: 75*]

It is a problem that can best be investigated at the level of face-to-face interactional situations or by observing the behaviour of people who have to negotiate what others take for granted, which therefore makes it problematic for them (transvestites, lunatics, etc.). It is an important and legitimate problem in its own right but a problem of limited methodological implications. Although it throws light on social processes at the inter-personal

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[1] Understood here not in the sense given to it originally by Garfinkel [*1974: 15–18*] but rather as "school" regarded as such by practitioners of "traditional" sociology. The practical, professional kriteria, on the basis of which it can be considered such a school, were outlined by Turner [*1974: 7*].

or micro-sociological level, it is not directly applicable to the study of macro-sociological processes.

Wishing neither to limit ourselves to the study of micro-sociological processes, nor to restrict ourselves to the repetition of ethnomethodological exercises on new empirical data, our main concern is not with the process of generating people's knowledge in face-to-face interactions. Our analysis starts where ethnomethodology ends. It starts by taking it for granted that to be able to interact, to be able to accomplish successfully their day-to-day affairs, indeed to exist as social beings at all, people have to possess a adequate knowledge of the society they live in, leaving it to ethnomethodology to investigate the methods by which the members of society arrive at it through their practical accomplishments. Our concern is to investigate the ways in which people operate the stock of their knowledge of the social world in their everyday behaviour in this world, and the ways in which their experience of this world generates their sense of it. We are thus concerned with the relationship existing between people's knowledge of social reality and their social behaviour. Delineated in this way, our overall concern is coterminous with the whole sociological or anthropological enterprise: the study of actors' knowledge and actors' behaviour is what social science is all about, as Milan Stuchlik's paper has clearly indicated.

In this volume, we address ourselves to only a certain aspect of the interrelationship between actors' knowledge and their behaviour: our immediate concern is with the ways and means by which actors adjust their behaviour in various situations and manipulate their behaviour in these situations according to their relevant knowledge. Even if our direct problem is limited in this way, it still remains too wide to preclude us from exhausting analytically all its implications. It is still too complex to preclude us from abandoning the largely unexplicated common sense concepts we employ in describing and analysing the ordering concepts and forms of reason of the actors. The following introductory remarks are written with a full awareness of these conceptual and logical problems.

The question of what we actually mean by the word "knowledge" and "knowing", the question of what knowledge amounts to, is a subject of ongoing philosophical argument and controversy [*see e.g. Woozley 1949; Ayar 1956; Findlay 1961*]. Without wishing to enter into this philosophical discussion, we shall simply mean by knowledge "he certainty that phenomena are real and that they possess specific characteristics" [*Berger – Luckmann 1966: 13*].

This certainty is a state of mind. As we cannot enter other people's minds, and it is problematic how far we can understand our own minds, in all inferences about people's knowledge we have to depend on phenomena which can be taken as its manifestations. People express their certainty about the reality and character of social phenomena in two ways: by displaying behaviour which is in accordance with this certainty and by making statements about it. Consequently, two phenomena can be considered as manifestations of knowledge: people's verbal statements and their behaviour.

People's verbal statements are problematic as manifestations of knowledge for the simple reason that these statements are made, and consequently the making of them is in itself a special kind of behaviour. This holds true both for "action dispositional" propositions and for assertions that simply show knowledge, irrespective of whether these assertions are spontaneous conversational utterances or whether they have been elicited as answers to researchers' questions. Unless they are professional theoreticians, people do not go around

making declarations of their knowledge in everyday life: they declare their knowledge in the course of their everyday purposive behaviour. Every verbal utterance, or para-linguistic expression of agreement or disagreement, is part of some specific situation of interaction, part of the actor's definition of the situation and part of the impression he tries to create. In short, it is determined by the purpose of his behaviour within the situation: it is part of his manipulation of the situation. When the Reverend Dr Ian Paisley (leader of Protestants during the conflict in Northern Ireland) says that Catholics are not Christians, he does not make a simple statement of knowledge. By this statement he defines the conflict of which his statement is a part as basically religious, as irreconcilable, etc. He clearly demonstrates his position in this conflict, he makes it clear what he stands for and why. In short, his statement defines the conflict and his position in it in a specific way.

That it is part of the actor's manipulation of the situation is only one aspect of every statement of knowledge. Its other aspect is that it is, at the same time, determined by the situation. Ian Paisley's statement about Catholics not being Christians not only defines the conflict in a specific way; it is in itself defined or determined by the conflict. Being a clergyman, Paisley might be expected to make statements on things religious. But that of all things religious on which he could have commented, he felt the need to make the statement he made, was determined by the overall political situation of Northern Ireland. I do not think this point needs further elaboration.

This overall situational determination and manipulative function of every verbal statement imposes certain limits on our treatment of verbal statements as manifestations of knowledge. It means, first of all, that we cannot treat social knowledge as something existing independently of particular situations. From this it does not follow, however, that each particular piece of knowledge will guide, and be relevant for, only one particular act. Ian Paisley's knowledge about the non-Christian status of Catholics can be relevant for his rejection of ecumenical efforts, for his opposition to integrated education, and probably for his behaviour in many more situations. Most knowledge will, in this way, guide other acts and will be relevant in a whole range of situations other than those in which it was verbally stated. It does not necessarily have to be verbalized in all these other situations. We can infer its relevance for them only from the behaviour of the participants in these situations. Such an inference is made possible because the knowledge which guides behaviour in the situation under investigation has already been verbalized in some other situation, and because the observer shares the logic by which the same knowledge can be meaningful in different situations. A sociologist working in his own society shares this logic because he has learnt it in the process of his socialization and through his practical behaviour as a member of his society. An anthropologist working in a foreign society learns this logic through living with the people he studies and through the necessity of behaving towards them, and thus sharing the same meaning, in the process of his participant observation. Anthropological fieldwork means, in this sense, the anthropologist's socialization into the culture he studies.

Apart from verbal statements, people's non-verbal behaviour is another source of the anthropologist's inferences about their knowledge.[2] If we assume that all behaviour is guid-

[2] Behaviour is considered as the manifestation of knowledge by at least some philosophers [*e.g. Ryle 1949; Strawson 1959*; for the problem of action as the manifestion of belief cf. *Needham 1972: 98–102*].

ed by relevant knowledge, and is meaningful to others only because the actor and specific others share the same knowledge, it follows that by observing behaviour and by accounting for it as meaningful, an anthropologist must be able to postulate the knowledge guiding this behaviour, even if this knowledge was never verbalized by the actors themselves. If, for example, an anthropologist in the course of his fieldwork consistently observes women, and never men, handling grain supplies, and men, and never women, milking cows, he can infer that the people he studies know that handling grain is women's work and milking cows men's work, even if they themselves have never made a single remark to this effect. In this way he is able to postulate the minimum knowledge which the actors must have to be able to perform any act that he has observed and understood as meaningful in the same way as the actors themselves and other members of their society.

We have so far been able to formulate the problem of the relation of knowledge and behaviour in a typically tautological way: people's knowledge of social reality guides their actual social behaviour, and their social behaviour, both verbal and non-verbal, is the manifestation of the knowledge they hold. The relationship between knowledge and behaviour is a dyadic relationship and the knowledgebehaviour dyad is a closed, self-explanatory unit of social reality. Our basic assumption is that all behaviour derived from a certain knowledge is valid within this unit and at the same time adequately explains it. As far as the particular piece of behaviour is concerned, the particular piece of knowledge is its adequate explanation. To return to our previous example, when Ian Paisley says that Catholics are not Christians, we may naturally ask whether he knows or believes that Catholics are not Christians and then ascertain that he does, because his demonstration at an ecumenical conference in Dundalk derived from this knowledge: he went to protest against fraternizing and compromising with non-Christians. Having established what his knowledge is (both from what he says his knowledge is, and from his non-verbal behaviour in some situations) and having observed his behaviour in other situations, which is consistent with his knowledge, what can we actually say about the relationship between his knowledge and his behaviour? We can say that his behaviour at the ecumenical conference is accountable for by his knowledge about the non-Christian status of Catholics. It is accountable for in this way by other members of society, that is, it is accountable for on the level of commonsense reasoning. If this were the only level of explanation to consider, all anthropological enterprise would be reduced to reporting people's behaviour and the knowledge which guides it. It would be reduced to the level of common sense.

Although the problem of the relationship between knowledge and behaviour has been, of necessity, formulated in a tautological way, it does not follow that, apart from formulating the basic assumption about the relationship between knowledge and behaviour, no meaningful statements can be made about it. To be able to make them, we have to conceive of the relationship not as the relationship between one particular piece of

Those who reject behaviour as the manifestation of knowledge base their argument on truth as the criterion of knowledge (Knowledge is a true statement of facts). They argue that we cannot tell what a man knows by observation of his behaviour because his behaviour does not settle the question of truth: that can only be established independently of that particular man's behaviour [*see e.g. Powell 1967: 64–72*]. As the intersubjective meaning of any knowledge, and not its correspondence with any "objectively" established truth, is relevant for people's social behaviour, this objection can be disregarded.

knowledge and one particular piece of behaviour, but as a relationship between one particular piece of knowledge guiding some particular behaviour and deriving from some wider knowledge. This means that one particular knowledgebehaviour dyad is taken as a unit of investigation and related to the knowledge from which it derives, that is, we must investigate what makes the existence of the dyad possible and of what it is a systematic part. While the investigation of the dyadic relationship between one particular piece of knowledge and the behaviour deriving from it in various situations concentrates on the statement of knowledge as its manifestation, the investigation of the relationship between the dyad and the wider social knowledge that makes its existence possible, concentrates on another aspect of the statements of knowledge. It concentrates on the making of these statements, that is, it treats them as one specific aspect of behaviour that needs to be explained. To illustrate this with our example: what is now problematic is not the content of Ian Paisley's statement, but why he, of all people, made that statement and why he made it at that particular time, in that particular place, and to that particular audience. In other words, the problem is to establish what is the knowledge of social reality that enables Ian Paisley to make the statement about Catholics not being Christians and to act accordingly, and that enables him to make it under circumstances under which he did make it. This problem is legitimate, as in this particular instance we are dealing with just one portion of Ian Paisley's total stock of social knowledge; and although at common-sense level it explains one or several particular instances of his behaviour, it is itself, in a different context, yet another particular instance of behaviour requiring explanation. It can be explained by making explicit both his theological and political knowledge. Naturally, the whole process of explanation does not have to end up with making explicit this level of knowledge. It is again possible to treat the making of statements of this wider theological and political knowledge as particular instances of behaviour and ask again what makes this behaviour possible. This particular process of explanation enables us to explain more than behaviour in isolated social situations and knowledge relevant for particular situations. It is the main methodological device that enables us to analyse not only face-to-face interactional situations but to analyse and explain quite complex macro-sociological processes. Milan Stuchlik's analysis of the system of Mapuche land tenure employs this methodology. In his study he treats the contemporary system of land tenure on Mapuche reservations, and the rules and norms of interpersonal claims and obligations which legitimize it for the Mapuche themselves, as a social reality emergent from the Mapuche knowledge and interpretation of a set of limiting conditions brought into existence by the Chilean conquest. It was their knowledge of these limiting conditions that made it necessary to adapt the rules of land tenure, and the concomitant Mapuche knowledge and behaviour, so as to be consistent with it. This process of analysis and explanation enables us to conceptualise social reality as a system whose component parts are not interrelated and interdependent social forms, but social processes. It is a system of integrated social knowledge, or of rules that people possess for their behaviour in the social world, for the manipulation of social reality, and for making this social reality meaningful.

When treating statements of knowledge as one particular instance of behaviour, we are in fact treating claims to knowledge, or the making of statements about knowledge, as instances of behaviour. They are significant data in two respects.

Firstly, they are the basis of the anthropologist's inferences about the actors' knowledge of social reality, about the vast amount of intersubjectively shared background expectancies, or indeed certainties, that things are what they are. Because the actors take these expectancies or certainties for granted, they are hardly ever making them explicit. When an actor makes claims to knowledge, that is, behaves in a specific way, he is "responsive to this background, while at the same time he is at a loss to tell us specifically of what the expectancies consist. When we ask him about them, he has little or nothing to say." [*Garfinkel 1967: 36–7*]. In many instances they are, metaphorically speaking, the only doors through which an anthropologist may enter into the realm of these background expectancies. When a teacher in a session with his students makes claims to a certain knowledge, he does this because he and the students know that they live in a world and share a world in which there exist specific agreed ways of learning, specific people who teach and specific others who learn, specific areas of knowledge which are to be transmitted from one generation to another, etc. The teacher makes a claim to knowledge because of his and the students' knowledge of this reality. It is this intersubjectively shared knowledge of social reality that makes any particular statement of knowledge, and for that matter any other behaviour, meaningful. When an anthropologist tries to explain why a particular actor makes a particular statement of knowledge at a particular time and in a particular context, he has to make explicit the actor's knowledge of social reality from which his behaviour derives. The particular statement he is trying to explain, together with other statements and behavioural acts of the same actor, and with statements and acts of other actors who share the same world, are the sources of his inferences about that knowledge.

Secondly, the statements of knowledge are significant data in that by making a statement of knowledge, an actor is not only manipulated by social reality; he himself manipulates it. He sustains or changes the definition of the situation as it has been agreed on by its participants; he sustains or changes his or others' roles in the situation; he manages, in this way, to be taken by others for what he wants to be taken as. He and all others who participate with him in the given situation are, in this way, engaged in the creation or recreation of social reality. Whether he simulates knowledge when making claim to it, is irrelevant in this process. As every teacher will certainly realize, he has to claim certain knowledge to sustain an agreed definition of the situation in a tutorial session. All of us have probably at one time or another simulated knowledge to be able to sustain this definition. As far as we have managed to do that successfully, that is, as far as our behaviour has been accounted for by the students as following from the intersubjectively shared knowledge of the situation, the definition of the situation has been maintained. It was still a tutorial as we intersubjectively know it. We could even plead ignorance on certain occasions without changing the definition of the situation. The situation could be sustained because the claim to ignorance could be contingently explained: we know that a teacher is a specialist in a certain branch of the subject and is not expected to know everything about the subject. But if the teacher were constantly ignorant of things he is expected to know, and his students constantly had knowledge of things they are expected to learn from him, a new reality would be constructed and a new knowledge would come into existence. I shall return to this point later on.

Although we can assume the existence of the basic stock of common-sense knowledge for every fully socialized member of society, although we can assume that there is

something that "everybody knows", it does not follow from this that everybody knows everything. As Berger and Luckmann put it: "There is always more objective reality 'available' than is actually internalized in any individual consciousness, simply because the contents of socialization are determined by the social distribution of knowledge. No individual internalizes the totality of what is objectivated as reality in his society, not even if the society and its world are relatively simple ones." [*Berger – Luckmann 1966: 154*]. There are areas of social reality in which an individual does not have adequate knowledge; he may experience large sectors of social life as incomprehensible [*Ibid.: 78*]. He may also lack knowledge in and of whole areas of social life. This state of affairs is the consequence of the social distribution of knowledge (cf. Schutz), or role-specific distribution of knowledge (cf. Berger and Luckmann).

As claims to knowledge are significant data for the anthropologist's inferences about the actor's knowledge of social reality, so are the claims to lack of knowledge. The latter are also means of manipulating social reality in the same way as are claims to knowledge. And, incidentally, the lack of knowledge guides behaviour, although not exactly in the same way as knowledge does. Fallers reports the following incident from Busoga:

> N.K. was showing me around his homestead. After looking at the dwelling huts and out-buildings, we walked out into a large, well-kept plantain garden and I asked about methods of cultivation and the different varieties of fruit. N.K. laughed and beckoned to one of his three wives who was working nearby. "Oh, one of the wives will tell you about that," he said. The wives rule the plantain garden. (…) I was then shown around the garden by the wife, who pointed out the differences, invisible to my untrained eye, between the different varieties and rather proudly showed me how to handle the knives used for felling and peeling plantains. All the while, N.K. followed along, looking interested and expressing surprise as if each bit of information were new to him. This seemed partly a pose, but it clearly indicated to me that in the plantain garden N.K. felt on unfamiliar ground. [*Fallers 1956: 76*]

Fallers generalizes his observations in the following way: "Men say that they know nothing about plantains and pretend not to know the distinctions between the different varieties suitable for boiling, roasting, beer-making and eating uncooked" [*Ibid.*]. Both from this generalization and from the description given above it is clear that Fallers's view is that the Soga men simulate their ignorance of the cultivation of plantains and of their various varieties and their uses. Whether they only simulate this knowledge or indeed do not know is again irrelevant. What is relevant is that:

1. This lack of knowledge guides their behaviour: for example, that N.K. asked one of his wives to supply Fallers with the required information derived directly from N.K.'s lack of knowledge, as well as from his knowledge that his wife possessed the required information.

2. The claim to the lack of knowledge about the plantain cultivation and use, and the behaviour which derives from this lack, derive jointly from N.K.'s and other Soga's knowledge that a certain division of labour exists in Soga society, that certain tasks are performed by men and others by women, etc.

3. Behaviour that derives from the knowledge that a certain division of labour exists in Soga society, one aspect of which is men making claims to the lack of knowledge of plantain cultivation, sustains and thus perpetually recreates the social reality in which the given

division of labour exists. When acting on this knowledge in his interaction with Fallers, N.K. defined the interaction in terms of this reality. Were N.K. to provide Fallers with the information the latter sought, his behaviour could still be contingently explained within the existing reality. It could be said, for instance, that N.K. really did not know anything about plantain cultivation but fabricated some story to please an inquisitive anthropologist. If, however, most Soga men admitted knowledge about plantain cultivation, which then could not be contingently explained away, and started to display behaviour deriving from that knowledge; if, for example, they became at least occasionally involved in plantain cultivation or started giving their wives advice about it, then a new social reality would be created, at least to the extent that the rigid rules of the division of labour, according to which plantain cultivation is exclusively women's work and responsibility, would no longer be part of it.

It follows from the last point that, by making claims to knowledge and by making claims to the lack of it, an individual uses his knowledge to manipulate social reality. He uses it to define his status in an interactional situation and to indicate to other participants in the situation the reality in terms of which he interacts.

An incident from my fieldwork among the Berti will further illustrate the point, as it concerns an interactional situation in which the status of the participants was ambivalent and a claim to the lack of knowledge was employed in its negotiation.

On almost every day it was held, I visited a market near the village in which I worked. I spent most of my time at the market sitting in the shop of one merchant, Ibrahim, and chatting with people who came to the shop. Very often I stayed till late at night and, before returning to the village, I had supper with Ibrahim. Sometimes other people were eating in Ibrahim's house, sometimes just Ibrahim and I shared the meal. Ibrahim delivered and received my mail; if I wanted to go to town, he would organize a lift for me in some merchant lorry that was passing through the market place, and he helped me in many other practical ways.

Once I asked him what his lineage was, and he replied that he had not the faintest idea and that in any case he did not know anything about Berti lineages. I have not met any other Berti man of Ibrahim's generation who did not know his lineage. Ibrahim claimed a lack of knowledge of Berti affairs on several other occasions when I tried to discuss with him things I had been discussing routinely with other Berti men. By claiming this ignorance, Ibrahim defined the situation of his interaction with me in terms of different statuses than those of an anthropologist and a Berti informant by perpetually displaying a complete lack of knowledge of Berti affairs. Thus he was able to maintain this definition of the situation in which he treated me differently from Berti men and consequently was treated differently from them by myself.

II.

I started the discussion by mentioning that people express their knowledge of social reality by displaying behaviour that is in accordance with this knowledge and by making statements about it. As behaviour is amongst the things about which statements are made, there exists a problem concerning the actor's knowledge of his own actions and of the actions of others. The whole question of the actor's knowledge of his own actions is

an epistemological question and does not concern us here. An actor's knowledge of the actions of others is equally an epistemological problem, but also an anthropological problem. It concerns us directly in its anthropological dimension, i.e., insofar as it enables the actor to orient himself in the social world in which he lives. His knowledge of the behaviour of others enables the actor to account for that behaviour. When accounting for it, he is doing exactly the same as a professional anthropologist is doing: he uses the behaviour of others as a manifestation of the others' motives, intentions, and goals, and thus makes it meaningful. He can account for it only on the basis of the motives and intentions from which it derives and his knowledge of the goals it is supposed to achieve. The process of making the behaviour of others accountable for by a particular actor is thus a process of confronting it with his knowledge of possible motives, intentions and goals. Only when he can account for it in this way, does he know what the other is doing.

Hastings Donnan's paper gives a vivid description of how the white English speaking workers in a London factory account for the behaviour of Pakistani workers and make it meaningful to themselves in terms of their knowledge of the Pakistanis' motives, intentions and goals. This case is significant in that although this knowledge is intersubjectively shared by the English speaking workers, it is not shared by both them and the Pakistanis. On the contrary, we can reasonably assume that the Pakistanis' motives, intentions and goals are quite different from how they are perceived by the English speaking group. This group can in fact maintain its knowledge of the Pakistanis only because it never guides their behaviour in any inter-ethnic situation. As Donnan shows, a completely different kind of knowledge guides the interaction between members of different ethnic groups in the factory. Yet it still holds that when English speaking workers account for Pakistanis' behaviour, they make it meaningful in the way in which the professional anthropologist makes meaningful the behaviour of the people he studies. The method they use, however, is rather like that employed by Harris in accounting for the split in the Bathonga lineage (cf. Stuchlik's paper) rather than the one suggested here. This parallel can be extended by pointing out that, in both Harris's and the English speaking workers' cases, their accounting for the behaviour of others can be maintained only as far as it serves to explain the behaviour of others to members of one's own group: in one case to the group of professional colleagues, in the other to one's own ethnic group. It cannot be maintained in a situation in which the members of the group doing the explaining have to interact with members of the group whose behaviour they explain, as the English speaking workers very well know. The differences in motives, intentions and goals, as held by one group and as perceived by another, would sooner or later lead to a necessary breakdown in any meaningful communication, as this would become insurmountably problematic.

Before dealing with this problem, I have once again to point out that for most of the time the behaviour of others is intersubjectively meaningful as a result of every actor's knowledge of the actions of others. Because of this knowledge, the routine behaviour of others in everyday life is accountable for and thus, according to Berger and Luckmann, unproblematic [*Berger – Luckmann 1966: 37–38*]:

> (…) the others with whom I work are unproblematic to me as long as they perform their familiar, taken-for-granted routines – say, typing away at desks next to mine in my office. They become problematic if they interrupt these routines – say huddling together in a corner and talking in whispers. As I enquire about the meaning of this unusual activity, there is a variety of

> possibilities that my common-sense knowledge is capable of reintegrating into the unproblematic routines of everyday life: they may be consulting on how to fix a broken typewriter, or one of them may have some urgent instruction from the boss, and so on. [*Ibid.: 38*]

This kind of "problematic" behaviour can be "reintegrated into the unproblematic routine of everyday life", that is, made accountable for on the basis of my existing knowledge: for example, I know that typewriters may break down and that broken typewriters are being repaired; I know that bosses give instructions; I know that people consult others and seek their advice. There does not arise any discrepancy between the behaviour of others and my knowledge thereof: I have only to account for the behaviour of others on the basis of other knowledge than that which makes their behaviour meaningful to me routinely (that is, on the basis of other knowledge than that they are typists working in the same office). There might, however, arise a situation in which there will be a discrepancy between others' behaviour and my knowledge:

> I may find that they are discussing a union directive to go on strike, something as yet outside my experience but still well within the range of problems with which my common-sense knowledge can deal … [*Ibid.: 38*]

Provided I do not know about strikes, there arises a discrepancy between my fellow-workers' behaviour and my knowledge: the behaviour of my fellow-workers is momentarily unaccountable. But it remains as such only temporarily. I can account for it as a result of my immediate socialization, as a result of somebody telling me that there is going to be a strike, what a strike is, and that my fellow-workers are discussing that strike. I can thus account for the behaviour of others as a result of acquiring additional knowledge of social reality which I lacked before. Newcomers to the London factory studied by Donnan, find themselves in this situation when confronted with an Irishman and a West Indian whose mutual behaviour violates the basic rule of conduct in inter-ethnic situations. They can account for their behaviour only after they have learnt what everybody else in the factory knows: that these two fellowworkers are friends.

Needless to say, an actor can only use additional knowledge that was acquired to account for the problematic behaviour of others, if it complements his previous knowledge of social reality and does not contradict it. The behaviour of others will remain, for him, unaccountable, should there arise between it and his knowledge, a contradiction that he cannot overcome either by explaining the behaviour on the basis of some other knowledge that he possesses but ordinarily does not employ in accounting for the behaviour in the given situation (which is the basis of contingent explanation), or by acquiring additional knowledge that would complement his existing stock of knowledge and enable him to account for the behaviour he is confronted with. Experiments conducted by Garfinkel's students, in which they were asked to spend some time in their homes imagining that they were lodgers and acting out this assumption [*Garfinkel 1967: 47–49*], provide good examples. After the experiments the students reported that:

> (…) family members demanded explanations: What's the matter? What's gotten into you? Did you get fired? Are you sick? What are you being so superior about? Why are you mad? Are you out of your mind or are you just stupid? [*Ibid.: 47*]

> Explanations were sought in previous, understandable motives of the student: the student was "working too hard" in school; the student was "ill"; there had been "another fight" with a fiancee … [*Ibid.: 48*]

These explanations clearly indicate that the family members tried to account for the behaviour of their son or daughter on the basis of their existing knowledge; they tried to explain it contingently. As offered explanations by family members went unacknowledged by their children, and as the children did not provide their parents with additional knowledge on the basis of which they could account for their behaviour (as it was an experimental situation, this was only done after the experiment had ended), the contradiction between the child's behaviour and the parents' knowledge of it had to be resolved in a different way. It was resolved by the parents' rejection of the child's behaviour. In Garfinkel's words:

> (…) there followed withdrawal by the offended member, attempted isolation of the culprit, retaliation and denunciation. "Don't bother with him, he's in one of his moods again"; "Pay no attention but just wait until he asks me for something"; "You're cutting me, okay, I'll cut you and then some"; "Why must you always create friction in our family harmony" (…) "I don't want any more of that out of you and if you can't treat your mother decently you'd better move." [*Ibid.: 48*]

Obviously because of this rejection of their behaviour by the family members the students found their assignment difficult to complete [*Ibid.: 49*], or, in some cases, it was not successful in the sense that the family treated it as a joke or refused to be concerned with it [*Ibid.: 47*]. The reason why the children's behaviour was rejected was that the children did not give, in their behaviour, any clues on the basis of which the parents could interpret it: the students did not react to explanations of their behaviour by their parents. The latter, thus, could not apply the documentary method of interpretation [*Garfinkel 1967: 77–79*] or that property of interpretative procedure which Cicourel calls the "retrospective-prospective sense of occurrence" [*Cicourel 1973: 54*] to their children's behaviour and thus account for it. As the parents could never learn during the experiment that their children were trying to behave as lodgers, the situation remained defined, for the parents, in terms of parent-child statuses. Within this situation the children's behaviour could not be accounted for. To reject it was the only possibility left to the parents.

To reject behaviour is one possible way of resolving a contradiction between knowledge and behaviour, but short of cases in which people go suddenly mad, I cannot imagine its empirical existence in nonexperimental situations. Even in a number of experimental situations that Garfinkel analyses, the subjects of the experiment did not reject the experimenter's behaviour, but rather used their existing knowledge to account for it. For example, from the ten undergraduates who underwent the experiment "to explore alternative means to psychotherapy as a way of giving persons advice about their personal problems" [described in. *Garfinkel 1967: Ch. 3*], "none (…) had difficulty in accomplishing the series of ten questions and in summarizing and evaluating the advice", i.e. none rejected the experimenter's behaviour. When the random answers to the subjects questions appeared nonsensical, contradictory to the previously given answers and so on, the subject interpreted them by reformulating what he assumed to be the context of meaning

he held in common with the experimenter. This tendency to treat behaviour as meaningful, albeit possibly in some other "game", follows from the necessity of behaviour being intersubjectively meaningful if social life is to exist at all, and from everybody's recognition that all behaviour is "normally" meaningful. When a discrepancy between behaviour and knowledge arises, which cannot be reconciled on the level of existing knowledge (i.e. contingently explained), the knowledge that behaviour is "normally" meaningful militates against its rejection: behaviour is meaningful, therefore the behaviour in question must be meaningful. The only possibility then is to adapt or adjust the existing knowledge to account for the behaviour. The alteration of genealogical knowledge among the Berti illustrates this process.

Among the Berti, the resolution of conflicts by payment of financial or material compensation to the injured party is the only situation in which kinship groups act corporately; by their behaviour in this situation, the participants clearly proclaim their kinship positions. By his behaviour in the situation each individual manifests his own kinship position and his kinship tie to the offender. For example, among *agrabun,* who usually comprise the descendants of four paternal and four maternal great-great-grandfathers, no compensation is ever paid for damage to property: it is not asked for.

Muhammad Usman married a great-granddaughter of Dudu, and since his marriage he has lived uxorilocally in her village inhabited by members of the Dudu lineage segment. His married son Abdullahi Muhamad lives there too. The members of the Dudu segment are his *agrabun,* and when their cattle damage his fields or his cattle damage their fields compensation is not paid. His father's brother's son, Abdullahi Hamadun, moved after his father's death into the village of Muhammad Usman, where he married and set up his own household. Although the descendants of Diidu are not his *agrabun,* he refused to accept even a part of the offered compensation when their cattle caused damage to his fields, as did Abdullahi Muhammad, his father's brother's son. Thus he started to behave towards the members of the Diidu segment as towards his *agrabun* and accordingly they did not accept compensation from him when his cattle caused damage in their fields. Abdullahi Hamadiin's behaviour, which was indicative of his close kinship links to the members of the Dudu segment, was in contradiction with the knowledge of his genealogy. This contradiction was nullified by the adjustment of the genealogical knowledge to account for the existing behaviour. Today, Abdullahi Hamadun is considered by members of the Dudu segment to be a direct descendant of Dudu.

> I recorded elsewhere other instances of the changes in genealogical knowledge caused by the need to account for the conduct of people who, according to the existing knowledge of their genealogical position, behaved differently from the way they should have done in conflict situations involving material compensation. [*Holy 1974: 137–142*]

This explanation of a change in genealogical knowledge is only a partial explanation, what remains to be explained is why the behaviour changed in the first place, as each Berti's behaviour, in every situation of conflict resolved by the payment of financial or material compensation, is guided by his knowledge of his own genealogical position. This determines whether or not he will participate in the payment of compensation, what will be the size of his contribution if he participates, and, if he is the injured party, whether

or not he will be entitled to compensation and from whom, whether or not he will accept an offered compensation, etc. For example, conflicts between individuals from maximal lineages other than his own do not affect him at all. In a conflict between a member of his maximal lineage and a member of another he is forced to take an active part in the resolution, and the manner in which he is involved is determined by his kinship to the offender. For example, if he is one of the offender's *agrabun,* his contribution to the compensation is bigger than that of the members of the offender's lineage who are not his *agrabun.* The full list of these rules is given elsewhere [*Holy 1974: 130–134*]. They are only a part of what every Berti knows about behaviour in conflict situations requiring material compensation; and they are only a fraction of his total corpus of knowledge.

Every Berti also knows that the closeness or distance of kinship which binds him to his kin defines the extent of his economic, political, ritual, and other obligations to them and the extent of their expectations from him. At the same time, he knows that the extent of his duties and expectations, by which he is bound to those kinsmen with whom he lives in close spatial proximity and interacts frequently, is greater than it would be if he was not in daily contact with them. Thus, if he did not live in their village, Abdullahi Hamadfin would behave towards the members of the Dudu segment as he would ordinarily behave towards his father's brother's affines. But because he lives in their village, and because they are spatially his closest relatives, his behaviour towards them is much more intimate. When he refuses compensation from any member of the Dudu segment, his behaviour is not guided by his knowledge of the rules governing behaviour in conflict situations requiring material compensation. It is guided by his knowledge that the members of the Dudu segment are his only relatives around and he must treat them as such. He thus decides in which of the two possible "norm games" he is going to play. For anybody else than Abdullahi Hamadun and the member of the Dudu segment whose cattle trespassed on Abdullahi's field, Abdullahi's behaviour is meaningful only as behaviour in a situation calling for material compensation. But, because he refuses compensation, there arises a discrepancy between his actual behaviour and the knowledge about his genealogical position. To be able to account for his behaviour requires an adjustment of the knowledge: his behaviour can be accounted for only as behaviour between two *agrabun;* he comes to be considered as a direct descendant of Dudu.

The possibility of choice between two or more systems of norms, or norm games applicable to the same situation of interaction, is probably the main mechanism for the manipulation of society by an individual, and at the same time the main process generating the discrepancy between knowledge and behaviour. This arises whenever people or things consistently do not behave according to any available expectation or definition. The following adjustment of knowledge which leads to the redefinition or to the change of expectations is the main process through which knowledge changes and probably the main process through which new patterns of behaviour emerge.

It might seem that any methodological approach that insists on explaining an actor's behaviour as deriving from his knowledge, and which explicity eliminates the anthropologist's knowledge as a legitimate source of explanation of the actor's behaviour, necessarily reduces the anthropologist's role to that of a journalist/reporter or at best an ethnographer. This would certainly be so if all that was needed for recording the actor's knowledge was to record his voluntary statements about social reality and to elicit other statements from him

in the form of answers to the observer's questions. This would be a sufficient procedure for getting at an actor's knowledge of social reality if that did not amount to more than the sum total of statements he makes, or is able to make, about it. But it should be clear by now that the concept of an individual's knowledge of social reality, as I have been using it, also comprises that part of what he knows which he never needs to verbalize and probably is not even able to verbalize. The anthropologist's task, before he can do anything else, is to establish what this knowledge amounts to. Peters's study of the blood feud among the Bedouins of Cyrenaica is illustrative here.

The Bedouin tribes of Cyrenaica are divided into primary, secondary and tertiary sections. When a member of one tertiary section is killed by a member of another, the immediate killing in vengeance is considered to be the best way of settling the affair and both killings are recognized as having cancelled each other out.

When a member of one secondary section kills a member of another, the immediate killings in vengeance is taken to be just one in a long series of killing constituting the blood feud. When a member of one primary section kills a member of another, the near kinsmen of· the dead raid the camp of the culprit and an armed conflict ensues between the members of both sections [*Peters 1967: 262–269*]. This generalized picture based on the verbalization of the Bedouins themselves (what Peters calls their "conscious model") might be taken for what the Bedouins know about the blood feud and for what the blood feud meaningfully is for them. This knowledge guides their behaviour in situations of blood feud. But it does not help any individual Bedouin to decide whether or not he finds himself in a situation of blood feud when, after a member of his own section has been killed, he meets a member of the killer's section. If the latter is, for example, his near matrilateral kinsman, he will not kill him. He has thus decided that, in this case, the situation of blood feud does not obtain and he defines the situation as something different. He makes this decision on the basis of his knowledge of various situational factors. When asked about them, he probably "has little or nothing to say", in Garfinkel's words. This is not only because he takes them for granted, but because in verbalizing them he would have to give a recital of almost the total stock of his social knowledge. If the anthropologist then presents his account of the blood feud, which differs from the conscious model of the Bedouins in that it includes at least the most important or usual situational factors that define whether blood feud obtains at all, it does not mean that he is accounting for it as an institution of a system of which the Bedouins themselves are unaware and ignorant. He arrived at his account of the blood feud from observation of the actual instances of individual feuds, and of instances of abstention from the feud. To be able to perform them or to abstain from them in the way in which the anthropologist observed them, the Bedouin had to know not only about the feud but also about the factors which define any situation as one of feud or non-feud. His knowledge had to be the same as that which the anthropologist employs in making his account. This account is then an account of the Bedouin knowledge.

Not only the Bedouin's but every person's total stock of knowledge consists basically of two kinds: knowledge of how to behave in a given situation, and knowledge of how to define a situation. These two kinds of knowledge derive from the dialectic relationship between man and society. His knowledge of how to define a situation is the knowledge by which he manipulates social reality, in the sense that he perpetually creates or recreates

it. His knowledge of how to behave in a given situation once it has been defined is, on the other hand, the knowledge through which he is being manipulated by society: through this knowledge his behaviour is socially determined.

The fact that different knowledge is applicable to different situations permits the empirical existence of a seemingly paradoxical state of affairs when people manage to negotiate unproblematically their everyday interactions while holding simultaneously knowledge that is obviously contradictory. The analysis of this problem is a central theme of Hastings Donnan's paper and an important theme of David Riches' paper.

Donnan shows how the white English-speaking workers in a London factory are able to explain the behaviour of coloured immigrant workers in overtly ethnic terms, while at the same time interacting with them seemingly on the basis of the knowledge that ethnicity does not matter. They achieve this through being able to define the possible situations of interaction within the factory as either ethnically closed or ethnically open, and having them so defined, through adhering strictly to the rules of interaction appropriate to these respective spheres.

Similarly, Riches shows how the Eskimo in a small arctic Canadian settlement know simultaneously that the Canadians do a good job in helping the Eskimo, and that they are bastards who should go back south. The local Canadians equally hold a contradictory knowledge of senior officials in the regional administrative centre. As far as the latter are concerned, the Canadians in the settlement maintain that they are slowly but surely working in the right direction for the benefit of the Eskimo, and at the same time blame them for maintaining no liaison between various departments and for having no idea at all of the real situation in Eskimo settlements. Riches not only points out how all this contradictory knowledge is situationally determined, but goes one step further in his analysis and explains how the local Canadians' contradictory knowledge of their bosses in the administrative centre is generated through the ongoing interaction between the former and the latter.

Both papers demonstrate that socially available knowledge is not a perfectly integrated system; there are many instances of contradictory knowledge being held. Moreover, the total stock of knowledge available to any individual is different, due to the unique character of his biography, from the knowledge available to any other member of his society. The knowledge every individual possesses is determined by his position in the society in two ways: in the sense that, due to his specific social position, he has no access to certain knowledge, and in the sense that his position in society, if it is to be sustained, has to be corroborated by corresponding knowledge. Here again, the stock of socially available knowledge is determined, for each individual, by his position in society. The corollary of this social determination of each individual's stock of knowledge is the process whereby, claiming a certain knowledge or the lack of it, an individual manipulates his social position: by claiming or disclaiming knowledge adequate for his position, he either sustains its previous definition or changes it. Only by treating the problem of the relationship between knowledge and behaviour within the overall framework of this dialectic relationship between man and society, can we grasp people's knowledge in all its possible aspects: as a guide for practical behaviour, as a means of accounting for behaviour, as a tool for manipulating social reality and as a thing which itself is the object of manipulation.

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*Dr Ladislav Holý (*1933 Prague, †1997 Kingsbarns) studied in the fifties ethnography at the Charles University in Prague. In 1965 he became Head of the African Department at the Academy of Sciences and assistant curator at Naprstek Museum. Influence of the eminent Cambridge scholar Prof. Meyer Fortes steered him and his friend and colleague Milan Stuchlik towards British style of Social Anthropology. Ladislav conducted two fieldworks in Africa, among the Berti people of Sudan and later the Toka in Zambia. After 1968 he and his wife Alice did not return to normalized Czechoslovakia, instead he accepted a post of Lecturer in Social Anthropology at the Queen's University in Belfast, where again he formed a formidable intellectual partnership with his friend Milan Stuchlik. In 1979 Ladislav moved to St. Andrews, where he was elevated to Professorship in 1987. Ladislav Holy and Milan Stuchlik in 1963 established the very first Department of Social Anthropology at the Faculty of Arts of the Charles University in Prague.*