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SOCIAL WORLDS AND LEGITIMATION PROCESSES

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ABSTRACT

Various legitimation processes characteristic of social worlds are discussed, among them: Discovering and claiming worth; Distancing; Theorizing; Standard setting, embodying, evaluating; Boundary setting, and boundary challenging in arenas. These processes are related especially to the intersecting and segmenting of social worlds. The discussion is designed to add to researchers' theoretical sensitivity as they study social world phenomena.

The issue of "legitimation" is no stranger to social science, having entered traditionally and indeed classically into discussions of class and power; revolution, revolt, and other forms of collective behavior; the social bases of religion, mythology, and ritual; the sacred and the profane; social control; society or, more abstractly, social order itself (Berger and Luckman, 1966: 75-115); and so

on through a formidable table of sociological/anthropological/political science contents. What can be the justification for embarking on yet another discussion of legitimacy?

My aims here are to: (1) examine legitimacy and its attendant problems (establishing, maintaining, challenging) in relation to the phenomenon of *social worlds*, (2) underline the *intersecting* and *segmenting* (subdividing) of those social worlds as important general conditions for contemporary legitimation problems, (3) discuss several *legitimation processes* as they relate to segmenting and intersecting processes specifically, and (4) suggest thereby, a potentially useful approach for studying both legitimacy processes *and* social worlds.

The discussion is designed to add to researchers' theoretical sensitivity (Glaser, 1979) toward certain aspects of social worlds which probably should be studied, and more systematically. Only focused research will tell us whether any of the legitimation processes are of core relevance for understanding any given world, although some are strikingly in evidence in the worlds used as illustration below. Few of the facts drawn on in my discussion are particularly new, but they are put to the service of a "social world perspective" (Strauss, 1978).

Social worlds refers to "a set of common or joint activities or concerns, bound together by a network of communication" (Kling and Gerson, 1978: 26; see also Shibutani, 1955; Strauss, 1978 and unpublished; Becker, 1974, 1976, 1978 and 1982; Luckmann, 1970; Unruh, 1979 and forthcoming; Wiener, 1980; Gerson, forthcoming; Gerson and Strauss, unpublished). Ostensibly, if loosely, one can point to such social worlds as those of opera, ballet, baseball, surfing, art, stamp collecting, mountain climbing, homosexuality, and medicine, although the concept also is probably useful in conceptualizing and studying industries ("computer world," Kling and Gerson, 1978 and 1979) and the sciences (Gerson, forthcoming). These social worlds vary considerably in size, types, numbers and varieties of central activities, organizational complexity, technological sophistication, ideological elaboration, geographical dispersion, and so on.

One of the most important features of social worlds is their inevitable differentiation into subworlds ("the pervasive tendency for worlds to develop specialized concerns and interests within the larger community of common activities, which act to differentiate some members of the world from others," Kling and Gerson, 1978; Strauss, unpublished). The conceptual imagery here is of groups emerging within social worlds, evolving, developing, splintering, disintegrating, or pulling themselves together, or parts of them falling away and perhaps coalescing with segments of other groups to form new groups, often in opposition to older ones—in short, of subworlds intersecting, in powerful contact with other subworlds, both within the parent social world and with those "inside" other social worlds.

One can initially imagine something of the nature of legitimation problems which arise in that kind of social matrix. Questions of "authenticity" of performance and product, of genuineness and purity, real and fake, but questions also of propriety and impropriety, even morality and immorality, and legality and

illegality arise in kaleidoscopic, rapid, and intricate fashion—not merely in areas like "the arts" with their perennial legitimacy arguments and dilemmas, but in presumably less problematic, seemingly less ideologically-ridden areas like medicine, the sciences, industry, and business.

Imagery for what occurs in these rapidly changing social worlds (SWs) and subworlds (SSWs) should be the very opposite of what is called up by the term "stable" society. Consider that legitimacy in these worlds pertains to issues like what, how, when, where, and who; that is, who can legitimately or properly do certain things, with certain means or materials, at appropriate places and times, and in certain acceptable ways? The pragmatic answers in fast-moving, segmenting SWs and SSWs tend to be uncertain and their acceptance problematic. What is more authentic and what is less, and what is not authentic at all? Who is to say what is authentic and by what means? On what standards should specific judgments of authentic, proper, moral "truth" be based? How are challenges to those judgments to be met, including challenges made from "the outside" (another SSW, the general SW itself, or from outside the SW)?

For instance, what nowadays really *is* "the dance" or "sculpture" or "drama?" Some types of dance, sculpture, or drama are perhaps more authentic or significant than others, but on whose judgment, with what assumptions, and how do those people act to insure agreement on their judgments, how do they evaluate specific performances or products or technologies, and how are dancers, sculptors, or dramatists to be managed, who claim to be those kinds of artists but are "patently" not? Again, even the sciences or business or the various medical specialties, with their tolerance for exploding technology, expanding fields, and supplementary specializations, are far from immune to such kinds of questions. And as among the people involved in dance and drama, the arguments waged by scientists, businessmen, and physicians can be extensive, often bitter, and fought with a sharp eye to the fateful consequences of winning and losing these battles over legitimacy. (For legitimation issues in architecture, see R. Moulin 1973.) Those considerations suggest, too, that an understanding of the legitimation processes associated with SWs will require a close look at the arenas in which such issues are fought out.

In this article I shall discuss several of the many possible important legitimation processes. They are as follows:

- Discovering and claiming worth
- Distancing
- Theorizing
- Standard setting, embodying, evaluating
- Boundary setting, and boundary challenging in arenas

Before discussing the legitimation processes themselves, I wish to touch on two additional points. The first is that legitimation issues arise not only from

segmentation and intersection, but from technological, spatial, and organizational considerations. Within SWs and their SSWs, there can be rapid and extensive organizational building, expansion, consolidation, and so on. And there are important technological processes such as innovating, manufacturing, distributing, as well as spatial processes like site designing, defending, and visiting (Strauss, unpublished). In this article, the linkages between legitimation and segmentation/intersection will be in central focus. The linkages with technology/organization/space will be secondary, although noted.

The second point pertains to segmentation itself, and specifically to the routes along which SSWs seem to develop. There are at least three routes. First, a SSW may bud off from another, as new specializations of activity and technology evolve, or as people at new sites feel sufficiently different because what they are doing or how they are doing it are quite different. Second, sometimes those differences are perceived as so great, so competitive, so antithetical, and the fervor of ideological position is so evident, that the budding off is better referred to as splitting off. Third, some SSWs arise from the intersecting of two or more SWs—as with radio astronomy, which began with people who were skilled in radio equipment conceiving that this equipment could be used for purposes of astronomy (Edge and Mulkay, 1976). As will be seen, these different routes or modes of initial development are conditionally relevant to the processual specifics of different SSWs.

DISCOVERING AND CLAIMING WORTH

When doing activities characteristic of a given SW or SSW, some persons do those activities in slightly or very different ways. Those variations flow from such conditions as differences in site where the activities are carried out, differences in equipment, or differences in adapting one's body to the activities if they are physical in nature. Some persons may explore aspects of the activity that are particularly challenging, developing special techniques to further the activities. Or they may have repeated relationships with somewhat different kinds of audience or client—or object—and shape their activities and technology in accordance with them.

The variance in activity can, of course, be continued because it is fun, interesting, effective, profitable, or in others ways satisfying. However, it is not enough for individuals, even when they recognize kindred souls engaging in the same activity, to explore together a few technological variants or, say, be mutually interested in collecting and exchanging a particular kind of object. To become a distinct SSW, there has to emerge a collective definition that certain activities are worth doing, and "we" are doing them. These activities can be usefully termed the "core activities" which begin to set the nascent SSW apart from other SSWs, and these activities must begin to get recognized as such. What is fun, useful, profitable, interesting, must be recognized as worth doing on a repeated basis.

"Worth doing" easily gets translated into deserves doing, and for some issues, should be done, must be done. This is a claim to *worthiness*.

A belief and then the claim that a particular path will lead to something of human value, and sometimes to significantly great value and even essential truth (about asteroids, architecture, arthritis, or in collecting New Guinea aborigine art) seems integral to the formation of any SSW.

Since SSWs seem to rise along varying bases, including technology, ideology, objects, geography, and intersection with other SSWs, the members of an emergent SSW tend to be making various claims to worth: around their evolving skills in a worthy technology, around a set of useful or exciting concepts, around the usefulness of collecting certain objects, around the necessity of recognizing the realities of geographic or spatial variation. The emergent SSW is asking for a deserved place in the firmament of the larger social world, and beginning to mark off its distinctiveness even from the more immediate SSW from which it is budding or splintering off, or even, through intersecting processes, invading.

All this will probably bring its members into arguments, however mild, about their segment deserving at least a recognizable and even distinct status, being worthy of more resources than they presently command in order to carry out their claimed, or deserving core activities. The new SSW will be arguing, then, for separateness, for resources (space, money, equipment, access to SW media and to its clients), and for legitimacy: legitimacy for its activities, ideas, technologies, organizations, and in the most global sense of the term, legitimacy "in and for itself" as part of, a segment of, the larger SW. (Thus each new medical or scientific specialty wants not only resources, but a place in the medical or scientific sun. Likewise, the men and women who put art photography "on the map" were striving for a recognized place in the world of art. "Cartier-Bresson helped legitimize photojournalism as a profession.")

DISTANCING

The defining of different types of activities, and the building of organizations for furthering them, is often accompanied by a growing conviction that "what we are doing" is not just as legitimate but even more legitimate than those of another earlier, established, or more powerful SSW. Emergent SSWs which splinter off rather than bud off from others (as with "splinter groups" in radical political worlds) are perhaps most likely to make those invidious comparisons—and to act on them—thereby gaining distinction in their own eyes and in those of sympathetic bystanders. This kind of distancing, however, need not be so reactive or so tinged with actual or symbolic violence. Even invaders from outside a given SW who now claim residence within it sometimes encounter little resistance, and indeed may be welcomed. And when SSWs bud off from others, as when they pursue some kind of specialized interest or activity, they may gain distance merely by distinctions being readily made between both what they do and what

others do, and how differently they now talk and even think. Thus, it is usual for computer specialists or specialists in some scientific fields to recognize quickly the emergence of new kinds of technologies, and persons who have the requisite skills for using and developing those technologies.

On the other hand, when the nascent SSW cannot be so easily distinguished by audiences which matter, then it will claim a legitimately different status by underlining and arguing for differences between its own ideas/activities/technologies and those of others which might be, and often are, easily mistaken for theirs. (We are ethnomethodologists and not symbolic interactionists or even phenomenologists.) The "erroneous" blurring of distinctions can be made not merely by, say, the mass media or by rather uninformed members of a parent world, but by powerful other segments within it. The members of the aspiring SSW will engage in such distancing maneuvers as exemplified by the early practitioners of art photography who sought to distinguish themselves from commercial photography and gain a legitimate foothold in the world of art (Becker, 1982). Stieglitz, for instance, set up a gallery in which he showed both paintings and photographs. He brought together a coterie of artists and photographers, and people interested in them and their work. The photographs were displayed in the carefully designed space of the gallery quite as if they were paintings or drawings, mounted on the wall separately and with an eye for maximum aesthetic impact. Special shows were given, following the practice of the regular art gallery. Styles of photographing pioneered by photographers like Stieglitz tended to follow that of painting, even to emulation by some of them of prominent artists.

Comparable distancing tactics could be found by examining emerging SSWs in other areas. Of course, these actions are not always tactical, but occur because people feel a growing distance or increasing kinship between themselves and others: so, with the emergence of some segments of microbiology, people drawn from chemistry or crystallography began to work and to talk with geneticists, setting up their own work and developing concepts, sometimes more like geneticists than scientists in the fields from which they had come. The new genetic specializations seemed less to engage in distancing tactics than just to have happened to gain distance. It is the distancing process, rather than the specific tactics, which is the important phenomenon.

THEORIZING

If a SSW comes under sharp criticism, antagonistic scrutiny—even is subject to coercive tactics to prevent its splintering off or invading—then understandably it will tend to quickly build an ideological base for defense and attack. Concerted criticism will come from established positions by proponents using ordinarily unquestioned canons of truth, morality, beauty, usefulness, and propriety. From those ideational positions they will decry, debunk, seek to discredit, even get in-world or governmental rulings to squash the disclaimed new core activities.

This opposition is not at all purely verbal, for it deals also in the materials stuff of the SW, that is, with resources—money, space, equipment, access to clients and so on. In consequence, the aspiring SSW will need to forge its own ideological weapons.

That is the negative source of "theorizing" by the new SSW, but even without such external provocation there are enough internal conditions to produce theorizing. Presumably a SSW might remain rudimentary enough so that it could operate with only a simple and almost implicit set of justifications about the worth of its existence. But repeated activities, the evolution of a collective memory about those activities and the events embodying them, and ideas about how those activities can be done better (as with more fun, profit, usefulness, efficiency) will lead to the elaboration of legitimating conceptualizations. They are needed not merely for defending the SSW from outsiders, but to give justification and guidance to insiders, and also to shape a legitimized order *of* the SSW.

Howard Becker has pointed out (1982) that even with the best of intentions, SW activities cannot be carried out exactly the same way at each time, on different occasions. He was writing about art worlds, but his point is equally applicable to any other SW. As its members explore the potentials of relevant ideas and concepts or of associated technologies, finding themselves, too, doing things somewhat differently because of considerations of space, time, material, budget, they will sometimes not need very explicit or elaborate justifications for doing those things differently than before. But eventually they will do that elaboration, or it will be done by a separate bunch of people (variously termed leaders, theoreticians, critics, academicians, etc.), who lend special credence to the new modes by mirroring those modes back to practitioners in fancier terms than ordinarily employed by the practitioners themselves. In time, the latter usually adopt some of those terms. As we all know, the interpretative elaboration characteristic of some SWs is tremendous—commentaries being made on commentaries, with specialists who work mainly at embroidering on this commentary itself, whether in the worlds of Hassidic Jewry, American psychology, or contemporary painting. Theory gets reshaped, however, not only by internal interplay but because theoreticians come to grips with the realities of practitioners moving out of the boundaries of established standards for using technologies, spaces, and organizations (Becker, 1982, see also, Chandler, 1978 for the significant role of theoreticians in business and industry). The novel needs to be ruled out of ideological court or brought sensibly within bounds. The established boundaries themselves thereby get stretched out. (In another context Kenneth Burke, 1937: 72, suggested the useful term of "casuistic stretching" for this purpose.)

Those members with theoretical bent or avowed function are also grappling with inconsistencies and seeming contradictions produced by the practitioners' activities (Becker, 1982; see also Judson, 1979, for many examples in genetics, and Jonsen for bioethics and medicine, 1975). Since SSW formation and evolu-

tion also can involve borrowing from other SSWs (even from another SW), either by contact with or invasion from them, there is further need for justificatory rhetoric—whether it takes the form of argument for outside elements, interpretations of them, explanations about them, or simple statements of their appropriateness for our own activity. A bridge of legitimacy is thus built over which the imports can travel, thus softening the impact of their strangeness and minimizing the chances of their outright rejection, even before they are experimented with. (It is, after all, something of a leap from John Cage's playing directly on the strings of an open piano to composing music directly on a computer: making the leap was understandably eased for audiences by a flow of written and verbal explanation, before, after, and sometimes during performance.)

In consequence, even in SSWs undergoing no great attack from without, the internal discussions and debates about proper modes of action can grow bitter. The emergent SSW carries seeds for further segmentation within itself, although sufficient consensus may evolve to keep that segmentation checked or at least slow it down. Internal disagreement can be over anything that takes on significance to the SSW members, but particularly those things pertaining to the new directions of activity. Should the newly professionalizing tennis SSW build this kind of organization or that? Should Intensive Care nurses have their own association? Is it wise to rely so much on this particular type of psychotherapy or should we encourage the development of that recently developed type, too? Is this novel technology really as safe as it seems or should it be employed with immense caution? In the internal debates the language employed may seem to be that of pure rationality, but the debates are political in the deepest sense: the protagonists are embodiments of advocacy of best routes to truth, morality, fun, beauty, divinity, efficacy, the good life.

Their arguments are not merely verbal, for again we must take note that implicit in these debates are questions of resource allocation. Internally the potentially diverse segments are vying for adherents to positions, recruits to activity, and for media space, organizational space, money, and other resources that will further their preferred lines of action. Among the voices in the internal debates are heard not only those of the professional theorists (critics, philosophers, theologians, "theorists") but a cacophony of less obviously legitimating types: promoters, distributors, salesmen, even practitioners emboldened to enter a more public arena than that represented by the work place or the fun place. If attacked by outsiders to the SSW, or competing with other SSWs for resources, one or another speaks in the service of the SSW in external arenas. They speak of past and recent results based on sound practice and sound theory, and give reassurances of future results based on "promising theory" and promised practice.

They are all, theoreticians and nontheoreticians, contributing to the negotiation of the legitimate order of the SSW. And they do this in at least two other additional fashions. First, there is the rewriting of SW and SSW history. Famous personages and also periods in the history of the parent SW may be reassessed,

some being demoted and others raised up or even rediscovered. The historians of a SW, if they exist, play a major part in this process, but distributors (gallery owners, publishers) and practitioners themselves in some SSWs find and evaluate their predecessors. Some are found worthless, stale; others provide stimulating ideas and even technology which can be built on. Some of those eras and ancestors may be discovered outside the parent SW itself, but they are genuine relatives: their ideas and work are more "relevant"—not merely more useful or suggestive—than that of many contemporaries. Physically dead or not, those ancestors are authentic members of today's SSW. No matter that the ancestors might be turning uncomfortably in their graves if they knew how their lives and works were reinterpreted and selectively used: they make contemporary contributions to the ongoing texture of their avowed descendents' legitimate activities. They are rewarded—and so are their descendents—by plaques and speechmaking at their birthplaces, awards named after them, and so on.

These are not necessarily only ritualistic gestures, since contemporaries may genuinely strive for continuity with the ideational and technological past, quite literally borrowing techniques and concepts, however selectively, and incorporating them in their own activities. They may do this as individuals, or as participants in a more general movement within the SW or SSW; and they may be supported by articulate, persuasive theoreticians. (The influential art critic, Clement Greenberg, developed such a supporting rationale for American artists in the 1950s and 1960s (developing a view that denigrators criticized as a unilinear theory of art history) with that history leading straight up to Greenberg's protégés and thence onward through their work. Theorists in the social sciences, linking the latest in neo-Marxist writing with the illustrious nineteenth-century ancestor, look about the same to their critics as Greenberg does to his.)

Not all SSWs have that kind of historical depth, but each is engaged in writing its own contemporary history, interpreting intra-SSW and inter-SSW events as they occur—looking backwards, reviewing them periodically. Thus the SSW gets a continuous perspective on its technological, organizational, and intersectional relationships. Of course, the makers of current and recent history get celebrated, and so does the SSW itself thereby, through interviews with the celebrities, their autobiographies, biographies, memoirs, photographs of them at work, and other forms of celebratory writing and interpretation. All that adds to the existential sense of SSW worthiness, and again quite without the necessity, always, to justify that worthiness to outsiders.

There is one kind of special history writing worth mentioning, and that is the creation by one person of an entire world—a Balzac, Fellini, Wagner, or Azimov—in which audiences can participate. To them, these worlds are rendered authentic by the authors' abilities to make the elements of those worlds so alive that one can quite lose oneself in the film, opera, or novel. These SSWs are created not only by their individual authors, but by assisting agents, sometimes a great many of them, and also in a certain sense by the audiences themselves. This SSW

exists not merely by virtue of a number of consumers reading or watching or listening, but because they talk to each other about this created but genuine world and their own experiences in and with it. Within that world there grows up, around the original musical or film theoretics, the same kinds of commentary, interpretation, and legend making that make the world an authentic slice of reality rather than just an enjoyable fiction. (When Soames, a main character in Galsworthy's *Forsythe Saga*, died, readers cried, felt they had lost a friend, and even wrote to the London *Times* to express their grief.) Some of those imaginary SSWs have been kept going long after their authors died, either through continual performances or, as with mystery story writers through the publication of ghost-written books. Who wants Hercules Poirot to die? or Humphrey Bogart to live only in memory? A point that should not be overlooked is that the authors and chief performers in those worlds are not only celebrities to their fans, but also are experts in their particular brands of technology. They have created these subworlds by inventing or adapting modes of technology, using technical resources sufficiently different as to set those worlds apart for those who reject them as well as for their devotees.

STANDARD SETTING, EMBODYING, EVALUATING

It is no news that every SW (and SSW) will have standards for performance, product and so on, along with modes of judging—at least roughly—whether the standards have been met. Members need standards as guides for properly performing, collecting, selling, appreciating, making products, improving technologies. But there are some complexities about standards that are worth exploring in terms of the phenomena of segmenting and intersecting which are at the focus of this paper.

We might begin by considering that some standards pertain to whether a given activity or product is "really" authentically reflective or representative or appropriate to the character of a given SSW or SW. (Is "Greek dancing" by non-Greeks, who are learning to dance like Greeks in their adult years, under the aegis of an American-born Greek, really Greek dancing? Or is it, although relatively letter perfect, "pseudo-Greek," in the words of a sociologist who has studied this phenomenon? [Suczek, 1977])

This question of authenticity is a different issue than whether a given product or performance measures high, medium, or low on some scale: that is, the question of how useful, beautiful, safe, or moral is it? The former issue pertains to the boundaries of the SW or SSW; the latter involves not a question of boundaries but of the differential embodiment of in-world values. Within a given world, there can be plenty of disagreement about both questions ("Does it really belong?" and, "How good is it?"). In fact, if there is too much persistent disagreement, then recognized segmentation presumably is taking place or is soon to occur. A third issue pertains to evaluation of an entire SSW by members of

other SSWs, in terms of the generalized significant standards of the parent SW. (In the world of medicine, some medical specialties are generally ranked quite low, and there is fair agreement on the high ranking of others.) The boundary issue will be discussed later. Here the major topic will be value-embodiment. The question of SSW evaluation by outsiders will be touched on near the end of this section.

As a SW or SSW evolves, standards seem to emerge quite quickly, at first implicitly, but soon explicitly and even formally (how best to strip down a normal car so it can race faster, for instance). That is presumably a complex process itself, and I shall not deal with it here except to note that initial consensus begins to emerge about best ways to carry out core activities. As those are recognized—or fought over in competition with contending ways—they will get formalized in terms of more explicit standards. Of course, teaching and coaching reflect and contribute to their increasing explicitness. (The point is illustrated by the remark of an historian of the piano that "the pianist blood lines of the [nineteen] century were being drawn up" in the late 1700s, as various pianists developed different techniques, taught them, found enthusiastic followers, so that there developed stylistic subdivisions of the pianist world, itself a division of the classical music world (Schonberg, 1966:93).) When the SSW is splintering off antagonistically from another or invading it, the latter's standards provide a prime counterfoil to react against.

Exemplifications and models are always, then, there to point to, functioning both in the teaching/learning process and more silently as reaffirmations of best ways to carry out the world's activities. Codification of technique and technological usage may take such an exquisitely detailed form as in "exercises for the young" or the form of more individualistic studying of the technique and style of an exemplar ("a star"), the student, so to speak, pinning down the rules through his close study. But the exemplification processes can be very subtle, and internal elements of self-interest can be masked either deliberately or unwittingly. Thus, even seemingly straightforward documents like catalogues issued for special art shows can embody in their format and language convincing directives about how to perceive and conceive the paintings arrayed on the museum walls, and embody too the implicit or explicit legitimating interests of the people who have mounted the show (Marin, 1975).

Certain members of the world will earn the right—or be ceded the right, perhaps—to be expert legitimaters of exemplary actions and products. They are the in-world experts who institutionally—within a well-organized world—will give the kudos, award the prizes, assign degrees of competency, and if necessary both set up certification/licensing standards and see that these are enforced. To say all that is immediately to suggest that evaluating mechanisms can be institutionally very complex (and that, too, is no news), but what is perhaps more pertinent to segmenting and intersecting SSWs, namely that the evaluating sometimes can become most perplexing to insiders as well as to onlookers.

The ensuing debates are quite unresolvable. As an instance: Stravinsky was known for complaining about performances of his music, noting both sarcastically and plaintively that his own performances had been recorded, so why did performers violate his exemplary authentic models except out of ignorance, vanity, or other impure motivation? But performers could, and did, respond to his barbed complaints in two or three different modalities. Performances vary—and even Stravinsky's were not exactly identical each time, and certainly not over the years; so which was the "true" performance? Besides, the orchestras led by Stravinsky could not be exactly duplicated, so how would it be possible to reproduce exactly the requisite tonal qualities and other finer points of his performances? Also, performers have their own jobs to do and identities to maintain; hence, slavish imitation of Stravinsky's models is inappropriate to the musician's own authentic self. True, one must not take uncalled-for liberties with his music, but a fettered musician is a dead musician and so is his or her performance. Finally, there is the question of the recording of Stravinsky's performances: just how accurate were they? Since recording technology has vastly improved, additionally it might be (and probably has been) argued that even if one performed exactly as Stravinsky did, the listener would hear a lot of differences between the respective performances—and so would listeners hearing the same recordings on different stereo sets or the same stereo under different conditions. Which one of all those possibilities, Stravinsky's included, has the stamp of authenticity?

Aside from the more rarified latter arguments noted above, it is quite clear that each generation of performers will believe its own conceptions are closest to those of Bach's or Beethoven's—or if not closest, at least those to which we and our audiences can best respond, and so most authentic. (If a performer does not believe that and simply bows to audience taste, then he believes he is giving a less than authentic performance but does so for clear reasons, much like any professional departing wittingly from professional standards—whether jazz musicians, cynical cosmetic surgeons—they are "playing to the audience" or "grandstanding.")

The response to such departures from authenticity, whether generational or not, is likely to be segmentation taking the form of the evolution of specialists in authenticity. To continue with the world of classical music: specialties grow up around true performers of the music of Bach, of baroque music, of Renaissance music, and so on—complete with historical research, "rediscovering" the real technique, style, and meaning of that music, even the refusal to play on modern instruments (old ones are used or new ones designed after old designs) or under conditions very different from the original ones (small halls). The irony of this particular example, paralleled of course in other social worlds, is that inevitably musical fashion (and so named by dissenters—every world has its fashions and its dissenters from fashion) discovers that the original research was inaccurate in essential ways. Or if accurate in detail, it was wrong in meanings assigned to its

findings. This particular world of classical music has a long history, and it may well be that SWs of more recent vintage and with less complex segmentation do not have these particular dilemmas of authenticity. Only research will tell us. But we can hazard that there are always some such perplexities of authenticity.

Another specific perplexity of authenticity derives not from a general issue but from questions about possible fakes, frauds, and other corruptions. The existence of standards means that someone can produce or sell fraudulent goods as if they were authentic, or act in ways seemingly proper but in fact, improper. Of course the members themselves may engage in such illegitimate behavior ("throwing" fights, publishing false scientific papers, knowingly passing along fake antique ceramics); but outsiders, knowledgeable about the world, are often "passing" in action—in identity—and in their handling of products. In addition, in some social worlds there is a gray area where products are not deliberately faked but where nobody may really know enough about the goods to detect spurious articles from genuine ones. So, unwittingly, fakes may be passed.

Regardless of the source of inauthenticity, a social world has need of authenticators —experts in at least raising the probability of telling the real from the spurious. Collector worlds produce such sophisticated agents and their techniques in quantity. The specific agents and technology will vary greatly, even in somewhat related worlds or subworlds. For instance, as Raymonde Moulin (1979) has noted, collectors of antique art need as archeological authenticators the archeologists and scholars of ancient cultures, while modern art collectors use as specialist verifiers the curators, critics, historians of recent art history and the artists themselves—even the spouses of deceased artists. These are not necessarily disinterested consultants; they may have vested interests in their own or their institution's prestige or profits. One of the most famous verifiers, Bernard Berenson, a specialist in Renaissance art, had a standing business arrangement with Duveen, the art salesman who sold most of America's famous business collectors the paintings now gracing the National Gallery in Washington and the Metropolitan Art Museum in New York.

Authentication of art has its paradoxes: artists who believe that every scrap of their drawing represents themselves will sign virtually everything, authenticating everything, indiscriminately, though some have been known to do so for quite commercial motives (Moulin 1976). So have unscrupulous dealers and collectors. Knowing this, artists sometimes have destroyed work they did not want shown after their deaths, by those acts negating the possibility of false authentication. But this has also led to certain dilemmas, as when the daughter of the famous sculptor of welded forms, Gonzales, posthumously cast some of his forms in bronze, arguing that Gonzales had said repeatedly that it was the forms that counted, not their welded character. Antagonistic critics have wondered if, as the inheritor of his estate, she is simply avaricious or just mistaken. Widows have been known to have been wrong when asked to authenticate imitations of their husband's work— and so have aged artists confronted with fakes of their early work (Irving, 1971).

So, authenticators can make mistakes; worse yet, they can be mendacious. Consequently there may be need within the subworld of other agents and agencies for verifying the veracity of the authenticators. And quite like verifiers who make mistakes or lie about someone's inauthentic actions, these can mislead good people about those other bad people. Mistakes can be made in the opposite direction, too, with the genuine rejected as spurious and those engaging in authentic behavior spurned or punished or in other ways reacted to as inauthentic.

But the point I wish especially to make is that these phenomena are to be conceived in relation to SWs and SSWs; otherwise, analysis gets lost in the generalized mist of their debatable relationships to "society." For instance, the historian Trevor-Roper (1977) has uncovered the decades-long and many-sided fraudulency of the famous "Hermit of Peking," an Englishman who passed as an expert in Chinese art, fooling fellow experts in that world and its various specialist divisions of painting, calligraphy, ceramics, and other forms of art. He also passed successfully for a while as someone with many local connections in Chinese high society, who in a pinch could serve the British as a secret diplomat— even to selling arms. He was dropped eventually when his fraudulency was suspected and then verified. Of course, the experts in oriental art knew nothing about his secret diplomatic life—and British government officials knew nothing about his fraudulent career in Chinese art. But, neither did the devotees of and the experts in Chinese art (a few of the latter suspected), who were amazed when Trevor-Roper posthumously uncovered the Hermit's secrets.

A less exotic example of how authenticity questions are tied to specific SWs or SSWs is how lobbyists for wealthy commercial farmers, in the form of the officials of the American Farm Bureau, managed to pass themselves before the federal legislature as true representatives of the entire world of American agriculture. The organizations truly representing other segments of that embattled world have long waged a mostly losing fight, in which many legislators of course know the name of this particular game but play it collaboratively behind the scenes (McConnell, 1953).

Finally, we should at least briefly note an issue that was mentioned earlier: namely, that an entire subworld can be evaluated in terms of the generalized significant standards of the parent world. The subworld, naturally, may not accept a negative evaluation, defending itself at home and abroad with the argument that its core activities have been underestimated, and that indeed those activities embody general standards. (The opponents simply may be mistaken, or knowledgeable but accused of self-interest.) Budding off SWs sometimes battle self-consciously to better their statuses, especially if they have begun at a rather low place on the SW totem pole. (Hughes' well-known discussion of paramedical occupations makes this point, 1971.) Splintering off SSWs seem prone not only to differentiate themselves from parent SSWs but are in open battle with them for better evaluations of themselves from the larger SW, while those opponents seek to downgrade the breakaways to the larger social world. In the

ensuing battles, everyone's assumptions about the meeting or violating of standards are central, and standard bearing (to borrow a convenient term) is explicitly warlike.

An especially dramatic instance of all this is recounted in Tom Wolfe's book about the astronauts, *The Right Stuff* (1979), who initially felt the scorn of pilots of all kinds, but especially that of the test pilots. The latter regarded the astronauts as nonpilots, mere test animals cooped up in a capsule, "spam in a can," having no role in guiding the capsule through space. The astronauts felt their low status keenly; indeed few of them had established outstanding records as pilots before being chosen as astronauts. Against considerable opposition from the space program's administrators and engineers, they managed to establish themselves as indispensable to successful flight, especially when automated systems failed. The adoration of the public, abetted by both the space program's promotional efforts and the hero-making capacity of the American press, eventually established the astronauts at the very top of what Wolfe calls the "pyramid" of the pilots' world, and new standards of flying—in "space"—eventually took precedence over even the standards guiding the fantastically complicated and very successful flights of pilots who were testing rocket planes. The certification of the new status, and the standards met and set by "our boys"—in the face of Soviet competition—was epitomized by presidential handshakes, visits to the White House, and by some material rewards, too.

BOUNDARY SETTING, AND BOUNDARY CHALLENGING IN ARENAS

Some arguments and decision making, as noted earlier, pertain to whether a given activity or product is "really" reflective or representative of, or appropriate to, the character of a given SSW or SW. The major issue being raised, then, is about the boundaries of the world: what lies definitely within, what without, and what placements are ambiguous? How is all this to be determined or ratified, and by whom? In the discussion below, I am concerned especially with the ambiguities of such placements, and the perplexities, paradoxes, and debates to which they lead. (Sociologists too are perplexed by the matter of SW boundaries; almost the first question they ask, in my experience, is "How can we know where an SW ends?") Probably the less problematic placements have continual consequences for distinguishing the world from, and for, other worlds. The contestable placements underline the importance of segmentation and intersecting for the changing shapes of social worlds and their subdivisions. My discussion will touch on only a few of these many and complex boundary issues.

Perhaps these issues can be approached usefully, at first, by considering the following cases. For most people who are professionally associated with or very knowledgeable about the activities and products of "the art world," it is quite clear that so-called Sunday painters are not really part of that world: these

amateurs know little or nothing about art history, about contemporary art movements or fashions, nor do they closely follow professional canons of painting. Probably few Sunday painters think of themselves as part of that world, in fact. Then there are people who do "folk art" (painting, artistic quilting, etc.), who are neither accepted by the art world nor, as Becker (1982) has clearly shown, know anything or care about it. Under certain conditions an occasional folk artist is "discovered" and promoted into the art world by important functionaries through vigorous institutional measures—shows, articles in art magazines, and so on. (Grandma Moses is the most famous American example.) Folk artists tend to be linked with local communities, rather than with a larger world of art.

That last point is very well illustrated by comparing the casual interest of the occasional purchaser of a piece of pottery or a handwoven scarf with the following invitation:

Dear Collector:

   You are cordially invited to become a Charter Subscriber to THE CRAFT COLLECTOR, a monthly bulletin which will keep you on top of trends, prices and profits in the modern art world. With this newsletter you can stay current, if not a little ahead of developments in the galleries, the museums and the studios. . . . The demand for distinguished craft is fueled by the recognition that unique craft works have achieved status on a par with fine art. . . . Knowledgeable art collectors are now turning to crafts since paintings and sculpture prices have soared to astronomic heights. . . .

P.S. In building your collection, please remember that your subscription may be a tax-deductible expense.

Then there are those artists who specialize in painting naval scenes, or sports events, or cowboy activities. Are they part of the world of (fine) art? The audiences for their work mostly are interested in the subject matter rather than in the niceties of their painting, and indeed frequently are devotees of sports or are interested in the navy and in naval history, or have a special interest in things "western." So, it seems safe to say that these branches of art are more "in" other worlds than subworlds with the world of fine art, even if the practicing artists have gone to art schools and acquired skills there. A quotation here makes the point: "Despite determined inattention by Eastern art critics, cowboy painting and sculpture are so popular that their prices are inflating faster than intrastate natural gas. Cowboy art has its own heroes, its own galleries—even its own publishing house" (Lichenstein, quoted by Becker, 1982). Of course, there are collectors of cowboy art who also own and are "up on" contemporary New York art, but then they can be said to partake of both worlds (just as some birdwatchers are also reputable ornithologists or comparative psychologists). This is quite different than the instance of a sports lover who admires sports painting because it reminds him of his favorite sport or of an event famous in the history of that sport or kindles enthusiasm for the skill of the sportsmen portrayed. All the cases cited above bear quite a different relationship to the world of fine art than does a new "school" of art, which, when splintering off from another, declares

both its professional integrity and stakes its claim on the forward march of art history.

Now let us look at more ambiguous cases. A few years ago a West Coast enthusiast of sailing invented the trimarin. His first model caused a sensation in the world of sailing. This three-hulled boat was immensely speedy and was claimed to be unsinkable, even in the heaviest seas; but most who sail have refused to buy or build one, because it does not really seem or act like a sailboat. It doesn't tip, doesn't demand the same kinds of sailing skills, and so on. Functionaries who control the sailing races, locally and internationally, flatly refused to consider the trimarin: it simply did not qualify as a proper sailboat. Its inventor understandably argued that it was as much of a sailboat as the very many varieties invented over the centuries, each of which had contributed to expanding the concept of what *was* sailing. Now, several years later, the trimarin is still being marketed as well as built by devotees, and its sails are seen occasionally among those of other (nonracing) craft, but the sailing status of its owners can be regarded—by us as analysts of social worlds—as either yet ambiguous or as definitely associated with a special world apart from the much segmented world of sailing. The important sociological point, however, pertains to the debated and debatable placement of trimarin sailing, considerations of profit and self-interest aside.

Then, there is the interesting case of acupuncture. Long an established feature of the Chinese medical and social landscape, as well as long practiced in American Chinatowns, it has been recently discovered by ordinary Americans. Without tracing its already fairly complex recent history, it is enough here to say several things. American physicians have not exactly rushed to adopt acupuncture, but then again the AMA has not censured it. Some physicians seems to be using it and others are referring "difficult" arthritic and other conditions to acupuncturists. People with those conditions are taking themselves to those practitioners also. Americans seem generally to have thought of acupuncture as simply a set of techniques that are potentially useful and have abjured—if they know about—the complicated ideological accompaniments to acupuncture so prominent in China and Chinatown. Now, compare that history to that of laetrile, whose practitioners and advocates claim success in cancer treatments, but to which physicians have offered powerful organized resistance. Passion permeates this field of battle, which embraces legal as well as promotional and verbal manners. To physicians and other health professionals, laetrile is not only unsafe but it deceives the desperate victims of cancer, and can divert them from better chances of survival offered by proper medical treatments. This scorn and anger are reminiscent of all attacks on medical "quackery," although some practices, like that of psychoanalysis, that were vigorously attacked in the 1920s by that high functionary of the AMA, Morris Fishbein, have eventually gained acceptance within the medical world.

The story of acupuncture suggests that a subworld of acupuncture practitioners

might develop, joining the ranks of other "paramedical" specialties within the larger medical world. The story of laetrile suggests also that a special world—rejected by medicine—is in the process of developing, unless it collapses, if laetrile is ruled illegal by the courts or lacks continued membership support. Many medical "quackeries" have vanished in the past in this fashion. The case of psychoanalysis, however, suggests that some initially defined inauthentic groupings gain some sort of acceptance eventually within the larger world. The case of other medical rejects (chiropractice, osteopathy) suggests that these competitors may win over state legislators and sufficient numbers of clients so that they have an existence independent of and partly competitive with the medical world.

All those cases pertain to the gray areas of boundary drawing, but there is a less noisy series of debates and battles that proceed along more restricted and often less acrimonious lines. Without repeating previous discussion, it is enough to recollect that for various reasons there will be inevitable shifts in how activities are actually carried out by different members of a given world, and these differences will be variously justified if deemed necessary. Each divergent act or product has the potential of being censured because it lacks priority, beauty, or other important values. If engaged in or produced by a reputable member, then his worldly soul is still redeemable—perhaps he was out of sorts, or showing lapse of judgment, or ill, or just joking "or something." But people who step out of bounds too frequently will either be considered mavericks and disregarded (as Charles Ives was by serious musicians for many years) or may become candidates for informal or formal excommunication.

The more important point is that if a legitimate member, preferably a leading member, departs from more usual practices but the departure eventually makes sense to others, then the standards of the world are likely to be stretched, the world itself becoming almost insensibly reshaped. (Howard Becker [1982] recounts an amusing story about himself; as a jazz musician he first reacted negatively to the Beatles' music, judging they didn't even know how to write music according to the usual standards. Of course, the Beatles left a profound imprint on contemporary popular music.) The business world and its various subdivisions abound with similar examples of departures from usual practice that reshape future practice, though many were looked on as outlandish or unworkable or even harmful when first introduced.

It will be adding nothing much to preceding pages to say that the end point of repeated divergency from conventional worldly practice will be segmentation: the formation of another SSW, complete with its own standards, boundary setting, and maintaining mechanisms, and subject to the same potential debates and challenges or drifts which lead to *its* segmentation.

Perhaps one further point about boundaries should be made: the phenomenon of disputes over jurisdictional boundaries—who has the legitimate and possibly legal right to do something, in this way or that—can be usefully thought of in terms of the intersecting and segmenting of worlds. These disputes do not only

occur within the general public, but also within SWs and SSWs. They are one variety of issue among many potential others making for *arenas*. The arenas are not necessarily massive, public ones (the energy crisis, the question of auto safety) but inevitably arise within both SWs and SSWs. The outside world never hears about most of the in-world arena debates—though the government may step in as umpire or regulator—but many are fateful for the careers of participants and the unfolding histories of the worlds themselves. Some of the discussions and disputes are about boundary issues, and probably most of them at least implicitly bring in legitimacy questions. These arenas and their implicated struggles over position, influence, power, and resources need to be studied from a social world perspective (Gerson, forthcoming; Strauss et al., unpublished; Moulin, 1973).

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