Consumption and Production as Virtues in Cultural Evolution: Institutionalization and Transcendence

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Abstract

This paper attempts to apprehend the essence and the meaning of consumption and production as virtuous activities in cultural evolution. This is done from a combined perspective of cultural evolution and a phenomenological inquiry into human existence and consciousness. It will be shown that the theories of Adam Smith, Veblen, and Bourdieu converge on the logic of this evolution and on the principle of division of society into different classes with different virtues, and that this evolution draws on the virtues of freedom and independence on the one hand and industry and parsimony on the other, culminating in the virtuous activities of consumption and production. The principle of habituation of the apperceptive activity of mind plays a central role in these theories. Our phenomenological inquiry focuses on the priority of practical dealings in man’s existence à la Heidegger, and on the transcending act of consciousness à la Husserl. It will be argued that cultural evolution hinges on an interplay of the two principles: institutionalization of dispositions in accordance with the logic of division, and the transcending act of consciousness toward pure essences and the absolute basis of the intersubjectivity.

Key Words
Socio-economic order, cultural evolution, consumption, status seeking, emulation, production, human existence, practical dealings, consciousness, intentionality, transcendence, essence, meaning, habit, institutionalization

5. Conclusion

1. Introduction

Whether socio-economic order in which man’s existence unfolds its possibilities by his free spirit is a universe that evolves spontaneously or an arrangement of an artificial design is a matter of primary importance in apprehending the essence of man’s activities in the context of cultural evolution. Upholding the view that such order is a spontaneous process, not a taxis, this paper addresses the issue of how to capture the essence of consumption and production in relation to cultural evolution. We do so from a combined perspective of socioeconomic and cultural evolution and a phenomenological consideration of human existence and consciousness, abstaining from positing any ideational type, be it homo oeconomicus.
or *homo sociologicus*, or any other type. Whether individual agents are abstracted as *homo oeconomicus* (dictated by the instrumental rationality), or as *homo sociologicus* (possessed with institutionalized dispositions for behaving in conformity with common normative values), they are teleological agents acting always to achieve an end, hence necessarily deliberate on suitable means to be chosen, for whatever profits they pursue, socio-symbolic or real. Hence, the prudential wisdom and the circumspective vision, however they may be defined, are required for man to behave efficaciously under any circumstance and under any environment. Moreover, the essence of consumption and production is better apprehended as the virtues that have evolved from cultural and socio-economic evolution. If so, any understanding of consumption and production will be incomplete, until both are grasped as an intertwined pair of virtuous activities essential for the dynamics of the socio-economic development.

In the traditional theory of consumer choice, powerful in its own right, individual preferences are the givens, assumed to meet a certain set of axioms that assure the regularity of choice behavior, and this behavior is grasped as a consistent relation to the budget constraint (see, e.g., Mas-Colell, Whinston, and Green, 1995). Any social or cultural element that is pertinent to consumption behavior is assumed away behind the presumption that choice behavior is instrumentally rational, hence can be abstracted as a means-end relation. In the case of socially acquired dispositions, however, individual agents behave symbolically, in reference to a system of symbolism (a product of cultural evolution). In such cases, the preferences of individual agents are rightly seen as endogenously shaped within the cultural environment in which they are embedded. We believe that placing consumption, or, more generally, all human activities, in a bigger picture of cultural evolution makes it possible to understand man’s activities as the essential player of the spontaneous force of the cultural evolution.

In my paper [Hayakawa (2000)], which is an outgrowth of another paper [Hayakawa and Venieris (1977)], I argued that social interdependence through consumer choice should be abstracted as interdependence *via* reference groups and that the status seeking is an essential part of this interdependence. I then presented a sequentially satisficing model of a social norm-guided consumer choice that answers many of the concerns that had been raised against the conventional theory of choice. This model reflected the decision making environment in two respects: (1) the limiting conditions of the environment (including the limited power of cognition) that cause the rationality of agents to be bounded, hence raising the issue of where to search for heuristic solutions in order to reduce the cost of complex problem solving, and (2) the properties of the social space, in particular, the life-styles of social groups (viewed as capital in the form of consumption technologies) as the source of such solutions. The paper demonstrated that a reasonable social norm-oriented behavior, under the emulation and avoidance motives, is rational by the criterion of rationality in the traditional theory of consumer choice, but with one major difference, in that the norm-guided ordering of choice alternatives is convoluted with the social facts about (i) the distribution of social classes on the social status ladder, (ii) their life-styles, and (iii) the popularity of the goods that comprise these life-styles. The paper hinted that the norm-guided choice behavior, when combined with the motives of social status seeking, is a driving force of the economy. But, it
did not address the issue from the perspective of cultural evolution. This paper, therefore, is, partially, my renewed attempt to recapture not only such norm-guided behavior but also the essence of consumption and production in a broader picture of cultural evolution.

In this paper I will take up the three major theories of cultural evolution and institutionalization in economics and sociology, namely, the theories of Adam Smith, Veblen, and Bourdieu, along with Parson’s theory of social systems, in order to comprehend where these theories converge on the dialectic of cultural evolution and on the principle of class division, by focusing on the virtues of consumption and production that result from this evolution. We will look at the process of cultural evolution and the essence of human activities from another perspective: a phenomenological inquiry into human existence and consciousness, since culture and activities in it are made possible by the act of consciousness and originate in practical dealings. It is hoped that our discussion, although preliminary, will lead to a better understanding of the essence of consumption and production, or human activities in general, as the determined and determining player of the dynamics of the socio-economic and cultural evolution, in which man’s spirit to transcend to a limitless region of pure essences or ideas plays a vital role.

2. Institutionalization and consumption activities

The theories of Adam Smith, Veblen, and Bourdieu are among the major theories on the theme of cultural evolution. Here, I will review, in particular, Adam Smith’s The Theory of Moral Sentiments (1759), Veblen’s The Theory of the Leisure Class (1925), and Bourdieu’s The Logic of Practice (1990) and Distinction (1984). This review will be supplemented by Parsons’ theory of institutionalization in The Social System (1952), in which he explicitly sets forth the conditions to be met if society remains as a stable order.

There is a good reason why we take the issue of cultural evolution seriously. In recent years, a great many attempts have been made to grasp the interdependence aspect in consumer choice by modifying the conventional framework of analysis. Such modifications have undoubtedly helped identify various sources of externalities arising from consumer choice. Most of them, however, have remained within the confines of the traditional theory, by including only new variables in the list of the arguments in the utility function. Among such variables are: other consumers’ consumption or income, or, average consumption or income, or even the prices of certain goods. The rationale for such inclusion has been attributed to the influence of the culture of invidious comparison, real or pecuniary, or to the psychological makeup of man’s psyche getting some sort of satisfaction from comparison. Under such influences, one’s consumption, income, or wealth is compared with those of other individuals for their relative standing, and the goods are evaluated not only for their sheer utility but also for their social values. And, even the prices of certain goods, particularly the prices of those that possess significant symbolic values, were included in the same list as the surrogates standing for their images of social prestige or advantage, or quality. Although such modifications are not radical, these examples have yielded many results different from what the conventional theory implies, alerting economists on the validity of the general equilibrium theory when consumption externalities are present [see Hayakawa (2000) for many of such examples].

Despite these efforts, no serious attempt has
been made to go beyond such modifications and base the issue of consumer interdependence on a more systematic analysis of the social space as an ideational objectivity. We know that many sociologists are opposed to the economist’s rational choice scheme of instrumental rationality, and *a fortiori* to any modification of the sort that has been attempted as long it stayed within the same scheme. They hold on to the view that the basic scheme of the economist is contrary to the spirit of sociology [e.g., Parsons (1951), Bourdieu (1984, 1990)]. They advocate the idea that social order is something irreducible to the rational scheme of instrumental rationality, or, more broadly, to the self-centered utility maximization of isolated individuals. Social world or order is an ideational unity of its kind, which is constructed in the mind of individual agents in accordance with the laws of synthesis. Hence, if this order is to be sustained, individual agents must acquire certain durable dispositions vis-à-vis this social space. Parsons says in *The Social System* (1951) that those schemes that rely only on the motivational elements of rational instrumental goal-orientation is inadequate in describing and explaining social systems and social actions, because the issue of how the institutionalization of common normative values (essential for a social system to exist as a stable order) is brought about is completely left out (43). Similarly, Bourdieu, in the *Logic of Practice* (1990) is critical of any teleological description of rational agents interacting under perfect information of each other’s preferences and competencies, and of any description of the reactions of interacting agents as mechanistic responses (61), and in *Distinction* (1984) he criticizes any approach that considers only economic variables as insufficient to account for symbolic profits (175-177).

Thus, to delve more deeply into the problem of consumer behavior as related to the social and cultural environment, we need to get hold of how the motivational structure of an individual consumer becomes institutionalized with the norms of the culture in which his choice is embedded. But, because such institutionalization is itself a cultural phenomenon, answering this question amounts to understanding consumption (and production too, because the two are intimately related) from the principle of cultural evolution. This is why the theories of Adam Smith, Veblen, and Bourdieu are pertinent to our discussion.

Adam Smith, in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, advanced a powerful thesis on how man’s moral sentiments of approbation and disapprobation set off a dialectic movement between production and consumption, and Veblen followed suit with his version of a similar evolutionary theory, beginning with man’s instinct of workmanship as the source of this movement. And, more recently, Bourdieu extended Veblen’s theory into his idea of habitus with its own logic of practice that is essential for a similar dialectic movement. What is the nature of this dialectic between the virtues of productive activities on the one hand and the virtues of consumption activities on the other?

2a. Adam Smith : Moral sentiments

Adam Smith’s thesis, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), is known for its elegance in explaining how our moral sentiments of approbation and disapprobation, combined with moral faculties, can account for an evolutionary process of a harmonious economic order. Moral sentiments, by instilling ambition in man and by keeping his industry, initiate a race to accumulate wealth for the purpose of winning the moral approval of the spectators. This race splits society
into high ranks (the wealthy) and low ranks (the poor) with different virtues, the former respecting such virtues as freedom, independence, and generosity whereas the latter respecting such virtues as prudence, justice, frugality, industry, and strict observance of rules. The race also gives rise to emulation and avoidance as the rich seeks to distance themselves from low ranks by setting a new fashion to avoid the meagerness that their fashion may become associated with when it has been emulated successfully by those of low ranks. People of low ranks, however, work industriously, develop sciences and arts, and produce innovations, which will enable the economy to produce fancy contrivances that are acquired by the wealthy in setting their fashion. The race, through differentiation of classes and virtues, produce employment opportunities necessary to feed the multitude while the economy becomes more extensive in its order. The principle of custom and habit, as an extensive principle, mediate the exact process of evolution by habituating man’s tastes and the aesthetic sense of beauty and propriety on all objects of choice, modes, arts, and judgments. This is Adam Smith’s theory in a nutshell. The theory is simple yet powerful. Everything falls into the hand of Providence.

Adam Smith holds that if man is only interested in the direct utility of anything, the economy does not develop as an extended order. There simply won’t be enough driving force. To make this point, Adam Smith starts Part IV of The Theory of Moral Sentiments (hereafter, TMS) with an observation that the utility is one of the principal sources of beauty (TMS, p. 257) and that objects of happy contrivance produced by the art of production are valued more than the end for which they are produced and that the whole merit of such objects consists in attaining them with this attainment being worth all the toil and the adjustment of the means to acquire them (TMS, p. 258). A refined watch is a good example: What interests man is not so much the convenience and the knowledge that it affords as the refined nature of the good itself (TMS, p. 259). But, this subtle difference makes an enormous difference in the way the economy develops its order. The raw utility that articles of convenience yields is limited and does not justify the toil needed to attain it. But if such articles become objects of admiration by spectators, the merit of acquiring them takes on a different meaning and man’s striving needed to acquire them collects a force that perpetuates and drives economic development. When a poor man is exposed to the articles of convenience displayed by the rich, there arises in him ambition to be wealthy by being industrious. Man’s endeavors to acquire talents, professions, better jobs and his willingness to bear the required burden of hardship and sacrifice all originate in this ambition, although those observable articles of vanity sought so earnestly do not yield much of the convenience dreamed of, in comparison with cheaper articles of similar utility (TMS, pp. 259-261). The principal cause of this quest for elegant contrivances as means of happiness is rooted in man’s proclivity to pay more attention to the sentiments of others for his mode of living and in man’s belief that such fancy contrivances are objects of admiration and applause of the spectator, although this belief is separate from how much such goods contribute to the happiness of their masters (TMS; pp. 261-262).

The economy produces elegant contrivances through industrious endeavors, and man works diligently to acquire them as objects of admiration. Then the wealth as power to access such objects acquires the symbolic status of something grand. These are all confounded into a view that man’s unceasing endeavors to turn out fancy
goods of contrivance and man’s ambition to win admiration of others by becoming wealthy and obtain such goods are all part of the harmonious movement of the system (TMS, p. 263). On this grand beauty of the system, Smith says:

. . . . If we consider the real satisfaction which all these things are capable of affording, by itself and separated from the beauty of that arrangement which is fitted to promote it, it will always appear in the highest degree contemptible and trilling. But we rarely view it in this abstract and philosophical light. We naturally confound it in our imagination with the order, the regular and harmonious movement of the system, the machine or economy by means of which it is produced. The pleasures of wealth and greatness, when considered in this complex view, strike the imagination as something grand and beautiful and noble, of which the attainment is well worth all the toil and anxiety which we are so apt to bestow upon it. (TMS, p. 263).

The economy is a grand and harmonious order. People find a real source of satisfaction in fancy goods of contrivance as objects of admiration; the system arranges itself beautifully by keeping people industrious; wealth is sought as something noble; and the economy expands as a harmonious order with increasing opportunities of employment for the multitude. There is nothing intrinsic about such confounding of satisfaction, beauty, order, and nobility. It is part of Providence, although it may be a deception, that keeps the industry of mankind in perpetual motion and the economy as an extending order. The fact is that industry and ambition to be wealthy and acquire fancy goods of contrivance as objects of admiration is the source of all sorts of innovations that embellish our life and push the frontiers of sciences and arts. Our economy expands through this quest for more elegant contrivances, and the order of the economy never loses its harmony as the wealthy, whose stomach is far less than their desires for conueniency, consume only a small but the most precious portion of the output produced in the economy while the rest trickles down to lower levels to feed those who actually produce the trinkets and baubles enjoyed by the great (TMS, p. 263–264). Our love for the beauty of order and elegant contrivances permeates our desire for better institutions that promote the public welfare (p. 265–268). Thus, the moral sentiments for approbation and disapprobation rouse man’s ambition and industry, spawn innovations, promote development of sciences and arts, adore accumulation of wealth, extend the order of the economy with the employment of the multitude, and advance better institutions for public welfare, all part of Providence that sees to it that the entire system be kept in a harmonious movement without leaving any part unaccounted for.

Elaborating on the origin of ambition and the distribution of ranks (Ch. II, Section II, Part I, pp. 70-83), Adam Smith argues that because we, in our moral sentiments, are disposed to sympathize more with joy than with sorrow, we want to demonstrate our riches and conceal our poverty, and that because of such moral sentiments, we pursue riches and avoid poverty (TMS, p. 70). The end of our ambition is to acquire refined articles of convenience and to derive from this acquisition the advantage of sympathy, complacency, and approbation from the spectator. This vanity is only founded on our belief that we are exposed to the attention and the approbation of the spectator. Adam Smith says, “the rich man glorifies in his riches”, and “the poor man, on the contrary, is ashamed of his poverty”. And, “the poor man
goes out and comes in unheeded” (TMS, p. 71), and “the man of rank and distinction, on the contrary, is observed by all the world” (TMS, p. 72). It is this observation and admiration by others which renders greatness to the objects of envy, and compensates all the toil, anxiety, and loss of leisure that is forfeited in its acquisition (TMS, p. 72).

Despite the grand beauty of a harmonized system, Adam Smith is quick to point out that our disposition to admire the rich and neglect the poor causes our moral sentiments to be corrupted (TMS, p. 84), although this corruption is part of the great order. There are two roads man can take in gaining the admiration of mankind, either by taking the road to wisdom and virtue or by taking the road to wealth and greatness. Wisdom and virtue are admired only by a select few, but wealth and greatness are admired by the multitude. It is by taking the latter road that our moral sentiments become corrupted, but this corruption is not uniform. It splits between the inferior and superior stations of life. In the inferior stations in which most men find themselves, men develop the virtues of prudence and justice in seeking professional abilities and in observing the rules of justice, which are reinforced by the sentiments of neighbors. In the superior stations of life, however, where the success depends on winning the favor of the proud and vain superiors, the great virtues are tamed by the external graces of a man of fashion (TMS, p. 87). But, because of man’s disposition to imitate the living of the rich, men of the superior stations distance themselves from men of the lower stations by setting a fashion or a decorum, with all vices and follies to go with it. Men of the lower stations emulate this fashion as a noble object of admiration. In this way, the fashion set by the rich, through envy, takes most men away from the road to the great virtues, as they remain ambitious at emulating this fashion, although it is the illusion that it would give the successful emulator the joy of a more generous living and earn the respect and admiration of the spectator (TMS, p. 88–90). Those at the lower stations of life are not all miserable, as they, by their virtues of prudence and justice, work with diligence, produce innovations, and develop sciences and arts, which are all essential in keeping the economy going as an extending order. The point is that their moral sentiment or disposition is affected with the ambition to earn the respect and the admiration of the spectator. It is such affected disposition that is the source of man’s industry. Thus, the economy as a harmonious order thrives as a perpetual race to get the greatness and power of wealth. Corrupt as man’s virtues may be, such corruption is part of Providential Guidance.

While our moral sentiments become corrupted under our disposition to emulate the fashion set by men of the superior stations of life, Adam Smith holds that how our moral sentiments are shaped is affected by the principles of custom and fashion, or by the principle of habituation, which can cause different judgments of beauty to emerge in different ages and nations. Repeated observation of different things habituates our mind to appreciate similar connections in similar situations, and such habituation gives rise to our custom of connecting different things, with the sense of the propriety or the impropriety of varied combinations of things. Under the principle of habituation, a fashion, initiated by men of high ranks of life, through repeated observation, acquires the sense of being something genteel and magnificent. As this fashion is emulated by men of inferior ranks, it acquires the character of meanness and awkwardness and loses its grace it once had. Custom and fashion are an extensive
principle as their influence covers all objects of choice, be they modes of dress, furniture, poetry, music, architecture, manners, and so on. They even influence our judgments of the beauty of natural objects, as in our appreciation of a certain middle or the general pattern with respect to the features of things, animate or inanimate. Thus, custom and fashion habituate our mind to see, or, even to judge, certain things as beautiful or appropriate and other things as distasteful and inappropriate. In Adam Smith’s view, how our mind sees certain things in certain ways, with the sense of propriety or impropriety, is not something that can be assumed given, but rather a product of custom habituating and impressing our mind to see things in certain ways, although custom is not the exclusive principle of beauty (TMS, p. 288). If custom and habit permeate our sense of beauty and propriety of things, there is no reason why they do not influence, in some way, our sense of beauty on human conduct. But, this influence will be limited because such virtues of the inferior ranks of people as parsimonious frugality, painful industry, and rigid adherence to rules, are viewed as mean and disagreeable, while such virtues are also connected with the abject, cowardly, ill-natured, lying, and pilfering nature of their disposition (TMS, pp. 291–292). On the principle of custom and habit, Adam Smith adds that the golden mean of virtues observed in those who are most esteemed, being emulated by many, will guide the course of the development of the propriety of character and behavior (TMS, pp. 296–297). Admitting that custom and habit affect what is regarded as agreeable, appropriate, or beautiful, in seeing things or in determining conduct, such influences are only limited to the propriety or impropriety of particular usages of our virtues or behavior (TMS, pp. 302–303), although it must be admitted that good morals may be thwarted and seemingly immoral particular actions may be accepted as lawful and blameless (TMS, p. 304). But, again, this is all part of the order under the guidance of Providence.

We should not ignore the fact that while Adam Smith draws a picture of a grand system of harmony that originates in our moral sentiments of approbation and disapprobation, he does not forget to place an equal emphasis on the importance of the general rules of conduct in preserving the order of our society. He holds that man is endowed with a particular power of perception by which to distinguish the beauty or the deformity of passions and affections, and with a peculiar faculty of the moral sense by which to judge their own conduct (TMS, p. 223). It is by the power of this perception and this moral sense that man, by observing the conduct of other people, forms certain proper rules of conduct. These rules are not determined by any a priori examination of what actions are to be approved or disapproved by philosophical reasoning, but rather they are based on our own experiences of what has been approved by our moral faculties and our natural sense of merit and propriety (TMS, pp. 224–25). Custom and habit may influence the particular usages of our virtues or behavior, but conduct itself has to observe the proper rules of conduct, although such rules themselves cannot escape the influence of custom and habit as these principles habituate our sense of beauty and propriety. Adam Smith holds fast that this regard for the general rules of morality is, as man’s duty, a principle of the greatest consequence in human life, and only by which man’s actions can be directed (TMS, p. 229). This principle separates “a man of principle and honour” from “a worthless fellow” (TMS, p. 231). Without a reverence for the rules of morality, the very existence of human society would crumble into nothing (TMS, pp. 241–32).
Adam Smith says that the sense of duty is too important to the happiness of mankind to leave it to the slow and uncertain artificial reasoning and philosophy, while noting that religion has already given sanction to these rules (TMS, pp. 233). The observance of the rules of conduct is not without its own recompense: man’s industry, prudence, and circumspection have their recompense of success, wealth, or honors, while the practice of truth, justice, and humanity has the recompense of confidence, esteem, and love of others (IMS, p. 236). Smith holds that the observance of the general rules of morality can only be supported by the strongest motives of self-interest, which includes both self-regarding and other-regarding. In fact, one without the other is destructive of its foundation (TMS, p. 241). Thus, Adam Smith argues convincingly that our natural power of perception, our moral faculties, and our strongest motives of self-interest will, through experience, be able to grasp moral rules by which to guide our conduct in whatever circumstances we find ourselves, and that these rules keep the human existence in harmony with the entire system.

This is the grand order of our society as envisioned by Adam Smith. It is a view that connects all aspects of human existence (tastes, judgments, production, sciences, arts, innovations, ambition, industry, employment, the sense of beauty, nobility, and propriety, and what not) and the economic system into a unified picture of a harmonious order under the principle of custom and habit.

2 b. Veblen: The culture of the leisure class

Adam Smith’s theory was inherited by Thorstein Veblen, who expounded another version of an evolutionary theory under the title of The Theory of the Leisure Class (1925). For Veblen, man is an agent constantly seeking to achieve an end through his actions, hence is possessed of an instinct of workmanship, which is a socially acquired aptitude or propensity to appreciate the merit of the serviceability and the efficiency of what man does for his end, over and against the demerit of the futility and the waste in his effort, which makes it natural for man to make comparisons of persons based on visible demonstration of success (TLC, pp. 29–30). This instinct, going through different stages of cultural development, habituates man’s apperceptive activity of mind and habituates man’s sense of beauty, nobility, and propriety as well as his tastes. Through this habituation, the generic and the honorific beauty become blended, and the brute and the honorific reputation become conjoined. It is this habituation that sets in motion an evolutionary process of culture and tastes in a dialectic manner, between the instinct of workmanship serving as the positive and creative principle (i.e., the principle of innovation) on the one hand and the habituated tastes serving as the negative and regulative principle (i.e., the screening principle) on the other. The human culture, going through a series of stages of development, with wealth and leisure becoming increasingly more important, evolves into a stage in which the community splits into different classes, the working class on the one end and the superior class (the leisure class) on the other, with different virtues and measures of success. The working class is characterized by industry and thrift, while the superior class by wealth and exemption from labor that wealth makes possible. With this class division, consumption, measured by its pecuniary strength, becomes another vicarious means to demonstrate the pecuniary reputation by seizing those innovations in refined goods for consumption. How to live a life of ostensible leisure,
by demonstrating refined tastes for manners and
valuable goods becomes just as important as
demonstrating conspicuous leisure.

On the life of an invidious pecuniary culture, Veblen states:

The accepted standard of expenditure in the
community or in the class to which a person
belongs largely determines what his standard
of living will be. It does this directly by com-
mending itself to his common sense as right
and good, through his habitually contemplating
it and assimilating the scheme of life in which it
belongs; but it does so also indirectly through
popular insistence on conformity to the ac-
cepted scale of expenditure as a matter of pro-
priety, under pain of disesteem and ostracism.
To accept and practice the standard of living
which is in vogue is both agreeable and expedi-
ent, commonly to the point of being indispens-
able to personal comfort and to success in life.
The standard of living of any class, so far as
concerns the element of conspicuous waste, is
commonly as high as the earning capacity of
the class will permit—with a constant tendency
to go higher. The effect upon the serious activi-
ties of men is therefore to direct them with
great singleness of purpose to the largest possi-
ble acquisition of wealth, and to discountenance
work that brings no pecuniary gain. At the
same time the effect on consumption is to con-
centrate it upon the lines which are most pat-
tent to the observers whose good opinion is
sought; while the inclinations and aptitudes
whose exercise does not involve a honorific ex-
penditure of time or substance tend to fall into
abeyance through disuse. (TLC, p. 86)

Veblen traces how the instinct of workmanship
affects man’s apperceptive activities through suc-
ceeding phases of cultural development, from the
peaceable barbarian or savagery phase in which
the incentive and the scope of emulation is lim-
ited, through the predatory phase in which exp-
loit and acquisition by war and seizure is
praised more than industrial employment, and
then finally to the quasi-peaceable phase of an in-
cipient organization of industry and private prop-
erty, in which accumulation of wealth becomes a
common basis of esteem in the community while
the highest honors are still granted on predatory
or quasi-predatory efficiency in war or statecraft
(TLC, pp. 36–38). In the quasi-peaceable phase,
the acquisition of wealth, as the source of popular
esteem and self-respect, sets in motion a process
of the struggle for a higher relative standing
against competitors in the community. The in-
stinct of workmanship is thus channelled into a
straining race for pecuniary achievement (TLC,
pp. 38–40). The struggle for reputability is al-
ready started in the predatory phase, being split
into two directions depending on the class. Those
who are bound to work with productive effi-
ciency struggle for increased diligence and parsi-
mony, where as those of the superior class, with
their wealth being predominantly consisting of la-
bor, struggle for abstention from labor as they
consider labor debasing to a spiritual human life
and associate it with a mark of weakness, subjec-
tion, and inferiority (TLC, pp. 41–42). Thus, in the
predatory phase and also in the early part of the
quasi-peaceable stage, the life of leisure is already
established as the most definitive evidence of pe-
cuniary achievement and reputability. But, as
slaves make conspicuous abstention from labor
possible, there will be emulation of the life of lei-
sure by the working class, which inhibits the hab-
its of industry and thrift. Wealth was a direct
meritorious measure of social standing, but now
it is taken over by insistence on the exemption
from productive labor. Thus, with the working class emulating the life of exemption from labor, the life of the leisure class becomes institutionalized with all its honorific and meritorious requisites (TLC, pp. 43–45). The institutionalization of the life of leisure brings with it a refined code of decorum including tastes, manners, and habits of life. Manners, which are intrinsically good, now acquire the honorific character as “the voucher of a life of leisure”, and being proficient in decorum, become an irreplaceable means of demonstrating the life of pecuniary decency (TLC, p. 49). The race for this proficiency leads to the cultivation of decorum in many details and to the development of a comprehensive discipline as a social norm. Thus, conspicuous leisure grows into a detailed code of decorum as well as into discriminate tastes on the decorous nature of consumption (TLC, p. 50). And, as competition for conspicuous leisure becomes increasingly strenuous, the leisure class turns to consumption as another means of demonstrating their pecuniary reputeability, by cultivating their tastes to discriminate consumption goods based on their nobility, and by seizing those innovations that turn out more elaborate goods to be consumed. Thus, demonstrating refined tastes for manners and consumption becomes an important part of how to live a life of ostensible leisure, turning conspicuous leisure and consumption into the social norms of the leisure class (TLC, pp. 60–64).

Man’s habits, complex as they may be, permeate each other. Habits of thought unavoidably affect man’s habitual view of what is good and right in life. The economic interest is not separate from other interests in the organic complex of habits of thought (TLC, p. 88). The canon of conspicuous or honorific waste traverses the canons of moral conduct, beauty, utility, ritualistic fitness, and even scientific sense of truth in the community. The institution of the sacredness of private property is traversed by the habit of accumulating wealth for the reputable value of conspicuous consumption (TLC, p. 88–89). Likewise, the canons of reputeability permeates the popular sense of what is useful and beautiful in consumable goods, as superior articles are appreciated more often for their honorific serviceability than for their brute beauty or utility. The canons of conspicuous waste also traverse our sense of what is beautiful and discriminate consuming articles (TLC, p. 95). The beautiful and the honorific are no longer separate; they meet and blend, making the intrinsic beauty of beautiful things inseparable from the honorific service that they confer. The beauty of an object under this blending, therefore, subsumes both features, its expensive-ness and its honorific serviceability (TLC, pp. 95–97). The beauty in this blended sense is not uniform across different classes. Just as classes are differentiated by their norms of reputeability, so are the matters of taste allowing for diverse views on what is beautiful. What specifies what objects meet the criteria of honorific consumption in different classes is the code of reputeability of the class to which the critic belongs (TLC, pp. 98). The beauty of an object in the sense of its economic efficiency in facilitating the material ends of life becomes circumvented by our taste for articles that give evidence of a reputedly wasteful expenditure (TLC, p. 109). This circumvented taste is the sense of novelty, that discriminates goods for their combined effect of ingenuity, ostensible economic end, and pecuniary waste (TLC, pp. 109–110). It subjects the physiognomy of the objects of choice to the “the selective surve-illance of the canon of expensiveness” (TLC, p. 110). The sense of novelty now becomes the canon of taste for the honorific and the wasteful, and skillful workmanship or ingenuity becomes
the ground on which to select goods for their honorific serviceability. The canon of conspicuous waste thus works as a selective principle (negative and regulative), not as a creative principle of innovation and initiative. Whenever innovative articles or methods are introduced, the canon of conspicuous waste screens such forms as are fit as effective means of invidious comparison (TLC, p. 118). The instinct of workmanship splits into two principles that govern the course of cultural evolution, one positive and creative as the principle of innovation and initiative and the other negative and regulative as the principle of selection and surveillance. Refined goods are produced through man’s industry and creativity, while the canon of conspicuous waste screens them for their serviceability as means of invidious comparison. The two principles interact.

The instinct of workmanship as man’s aptitude and the seeking of the honorific reputation guides the evolution of cultural development. What appears as an honorific life affects the complex organization of all habits including the apperceptive activity to perceive beauty and man’s tastes for invidious comparison. The accumulation of wealth gradually brings with it abstention from labor and the life of leisure as an object of emulation. The life of leisure is first made possible by the work done by slaves, but finds other vicarious means of demonstration, in refinement of a code of decorum and in consumption. The goods for consumption are increasingly sought not only for their beauty in terms of economic efficiency that promotes man’s welfare but also for their serviceability as an evidence of the honorific consumption. The intrinsic beauty and the honorific serviceability become blended into the sense of novelty, and acquires the status of a principle of the selective surveillance for the wealthy class. While man’s tastes are habituated and culminate in the sense of novelty, society splits into different classes, the wealthy at one end and the working class at the other, with different virtues. The wealthy struggle for abstention from labor, and the working class for increased diligence and parsimony. As the working class emulates the life of leisure as something genteel and magnificent, their habits of industry and thrift are inhibited. Man’s aptitude to appreciate the workmanship, rooted in the teleological existence of human beings as acting agents, thus, sets off an evolutionary process of wealth accumulation to gain the honorable reputation along with man’s search for the effective means of invidious comparison. The process culminates in the honorific value of the life of leisure as it becomes institutionalized as something genteel and magnificent, hence to be emulated by the rest of the society. Throughout the process of evolution, man’s habits are influenced by the apperceptive activity of his mind which perceives things that brings honor and reputation as beautiful.

Thus, Veblen’s theory is a theory of a dialectic between the instinct of workmanship and the principle of habituation interacting and setting in motion, along with the accompanying industrial development, an evolutionary process of cultural evolution, in which man’s strife to get ahead in the race of winning invidious comparison and gaining esteem is just as important as the attainment of impartial well-being. His theory shares the same insight that runs through Adam Smith’s thesis that man’s ambition to get ahead in the race of competition is the basic driving force of the economy while man’s tastes, habituated to appreciate the life of the rich, may corrupt his virtues and industry.

Veblen’s theme was recapitulated by Bourdieu, who developed his theory of habitus and its logic of practice. Bourdieu’s habitus and Veblen’s hab-
its "as the organic complex of habits of thought which make up the substance of an individual’s conscious life" (TLC, p. 88) are of the same nature. Bourdieu characterizes habitus as "systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures" and Veblen views habituation of man’s apperceptive activity of mind as essential for the formation of man’s tastes and sense of beauty, nobility, and propriety, which serve as the regulating (screening) principle of cultural evolution. Likewise, in Adam Smith’s theory as the precursor of Veblen’s, habituation of man’s mind, as an extensive principle, was crucial to the shaping of man’s moral sentiments by the principle of custom and fashion. This habituation comes from repeated observation of different things, forming man’s sense of the propriety or the impropriety of varied combinations of things. Man’s sense of beauty, magnificence, the propriety of things is a product of habituation, without which a fashion set by the superior class and emulation of it by the lower classes as something genteel and magnificent would not follow. As the theories of Adam Smith and Veblen indicate, the principle of habituation is crucial to the human existence and the formation of culture. We can trace it to Aristotle’s notion of hexis as state of having and arete as excellence [Nicomachean Ethics]. Bourdieu scrutinizes the theme of habitus explicitly, and characterizes it as a structuring and structured principle with a logic of practice of its own. Man encounters many entities in this world and grasps them as ideal objectivities by the act of intentionality in his mind, but between the two there must be some phenomenological domain of laws or the principle of synthesis that makes this grasping possible. If this domain is understood as the site of the habitus (the socially acquired dispositions), it becomes a structuring structure by which man acts, responds, feels, and judges. Habituation is the process through which such dispositions are formed by internalizing the conditions of existence.

2c. Bourdieu: Habitus and distinction

In Logic of Practice (1990) (hereafter LP), Bourdieu, in understanding how man acts in the social world, returns to the site of socially acquired dispositions as pre-adapted schemata that produce practices that are compatible with the conditions of existence. He insists that a theory of practice should be sought neither in objective understanding of social relationships nor in subjective viewing which abstains from any objective account of the social world. Because the objects of knowledge are not passively recorded but rather actively constructed by the principle of construction, building a theory of practice has to return to the very site of this active construction, where the dialectic of practice, “the dialectic of the opus operandum and the modus operandi”, unfolds (LP, p. 52). Bourdieu defines this site as habitus. It is defined as a set of “systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them” (LP, p. 53). Habitus, being inculcated with the conditions of existence including the probabilities and impossibilities, freedoms and necessities, opportunities and prohibitions, become compatible with these conditions (LP, p. 54). It is a virtue created of necessity, to refuse what is denied and to will what is inevitable, preserving the past; it preserves past experiences as active schemes of perception, thought, and action, more
reliable than all formal rules and explicit norms (LP, 54). They connect the internal with the external and become the source of the continuity and regularity in the social world. It is not only the logic of practice of everyday choices, but also the generative source of all thoughts, perceptions, and actions that is historically and socially conditioned. It is a spontaneity in the unconscious, which forgets history while its objective structures leave their imprints in the quasi natures of habitus (LP, 56). Bourdieu says:

Thus the dualistic vision that recognizes only the self-transparent act of consciousness or the externally determined thing has to give to the real logic of action, which brings together two objectifications of history, objectification in bodies and objectification in institutions or, which amounts to the same things, two states of capital, objectified and incorporated, through which a distance is set up from necessity and its urgencies. This logic is seen in paradigmatic form in the dialectic of expressive dispositions and instituted means of expression (morphological, syntactic and lexical instruments, literary genres, etc.) which is observed in the intentionless invention of regulated improvisation. (LP, pp. 56–57).

If the social world into which man is born is already divided into different classes with different life-styles or fashions and related conditions of existence, man will socially acquire certain schemata of thought and practice that will be fit for the class of his belonging. But, man is engaged in economic activities, in which innovations, either in the form of newly designed goods or in the form of consumption technologies, occur frequently. Such innovations inject new information into the existing order and disrupt the stability of the habitus. So, one critical issue that arises when discussing the function of habitus in assimilating new information concerns how the habitus keeps its stability or copes with the new sources of instability or integrates what it has with what it encounters newly. Habitus is not a rigid set of dispositions, but rather a pre-disposed state with its own dialectic movement. Bourdieu says that this dialectic is between the stability that it seeks on the one hand and newly occurring experiences that may threaten its defense against possible crises on the other. The movement will remain dominated by earlier and accumulated experiences through a defense mechanism of rejecting such information as threatens its stability, possibly by avoiding exposure to such information, although, paradoxically, the habitus needs a higher piece of information to tell which information is to be avoided or accepted for its stability. For example, if the class distinctions or the life-styles of different classes are defined by privation relative to what other classes have, it inevitably follows that the habitus belonging to a given class must be aware of what it does not have. Bourdieu, focusing on the self-fulfilling nature of the habitus, reconciles this paradox by saying that the avoidance strategies (or, more fundamentally, the underlying schemes of perception) are “the product of nonconscious, unwilled avoidance,” be it automatic or strategic in origin. The issue is difficult to resolve, because the question is how accommodating the laws of synthesis are that lie between the objects one encounters in the social world and the abstract objectivities as a logic of practice. Adam Smith was saying that repeated observations of certain combinations of different things become habituated, and that such observations are responsible for the habituation of man’s sense of beauty or magnificence. If such observations are disrupted by a new set of information,
the old habit will gradually give way to a new one with a different product of synthesis. Bourdieu has this to say on this important issue:

The habitus which, at every moment, structures new experiences in accordance with the structures produced by past experiences, which are modified by the new experiences within the limits defined by their power of selection, brings about a unique integration, dominated by the earliest experiences, of the experiences statistically common to members of the same class. Early experiences have particular weight because the habitus tends to ensure its own constancy and its defence against change through the selection it makes within new information by rejecting information capable of calling into question its accumulated information, if exposed to it accidentally or by force, and especially by avoiding exposure to such information . . . . Through the systematic ‘choices’ it makes among the places, events and people that might be frequented, the habitus tends to protect itself from crises and critical challenges by providing itself with a milieu to which it is as pre-adapted as possible, that is, a relatively constant universe of situations tending to reinforce its dispositions by offering the market most favourable to its products. And once again it is the most paradoxical property of the habitus, the unchosen principle of all ‘choices’, that yields the solution to the paradox of the information needed in order to avoid information. The schemes of perception and appreciation of the habitus which are the basis of all the avoidance strategies are largely the product of a non-conscious, unwilled avoidance, whether it results automatically from the conditions of existence (for example, spatial segregation) or has been produced by a strategic intention (such as avoidance of ‘bad company’ or ‘unsuitable books’) originating from adults themselves formed in the same conditions. (LP, pp. 60–61).

In *Distinction* (1984), Bourdieu turns his attention to the question of how life-styles are constructed to constitute the social space with appropriate signs of distinction, by returning to the site of habitus as the source of the generative principle of this space. Taking an institutional approach to sociological investigations of the social space, he holds that the question of what the social space is and how it is constructed should be raised within this space itself. In his view, the social space is a classified structure, hence there must be a classifying act, itself classifiable, that produces this structure. Where else can we find a principle that generates the social space but in the principle of the habitus. The habitus is a set of dispositions whose systematicity and transportability is assured by the fact that it is both a structuring structure (*modus operandi*) and a structured structure (*opus operatum*), and that, by the virtue of this combined structure, the internalization of the habitus in the mind of agents becomes the source of life-styles supported by a distribution of symbolic capital and power in the social space. This is what Bourdieu says:

The relationship that is actually established between the permanent characteristics of economic and social condition (capital volume and composition, in both synchronic and diachronic aspects) and the distinctive features associated with the corresponding position in the universe of lifestyles only becomes intelligible when the habitus is constructed as the generative formula which makes it possible to account both for the classifiable practices and products and
for the judgements, themselves classified, which make these practices and works into a system of distinctive signs. . . . . The habitus is necessity internalized and converted into a disposition that generates meaningful practices and meaning-giving perceptions; it is a general, transposable disposition which carries out a systematic, universal application—beyond the limits of what has been directly learned—of the necessity inherent in the learning conditions. (Distinction, p. 170).

Since the social space is an ideational objectivity grasped by the intentional act of man’s mind, there must be laws of construction or synthesis by which this act identifies the life-styles as qualified sign systems of some kind. In this sense, the life-styles and associated class consciousness are an active product of the habitus, not an objective truth that is spontaneously generated and lies out there independent of this act. The habitus has its own dialectic movement between the conditions of existence and the formation of the dispositions that reflect them as acting principles of construction. In the construction of the social space, this dialectic movement takes place through lifestyles and a distribution of symbolic capital to go with them, in the plane of perceived differences in the mind of agents, while the practices and products of agents of the same class preserve the objectivity of such differences without any conscious effort at orchestration (Distinction, pp. 172–173). If the mind of agents, so far as the act of synthesis, difference, and identity is concerned, is pre-structured by the structuring structure of the habitus and if life-styles are the products differentiated by the structuring structure of the habitus, there must be something that mediates the two in their structuring-structured relationships. This something, as the generative formula of life-styles, Bourdieu identifies, is taste. Think of the universe of objects as an order of physical bodies that are more or less continuously distributed with little symbolic distinction, that is mapped into the universe of symbolic expressions of life-styles as an order of symbolic distinctions. And, also think of the universe of objectively classified practices that is mapped into the universe of classifying practices of symbolic expression. These two mappings are performed by taste, the first mapping as part of opus operatum of the habitus, and the second mapping as part of modus operandi of the habitus as a systematic expression of the condition of existence which constitutes a life style (LP, 173–175). It is this system of a life-style, which is brought about by the internalization of the structure of social space with all its symbolic expressions, that transforms the necessity (or the limitations) into the virtue of making appropriate choices that constitute it. In a sense, life-styles are the bounding or the shaping of a taste by the habitus. It naturally follows from Bourdieu’s argument that an agent’s preferences are inseparable from the conditions of existence; his taste is part of the opus operatum and the modus operandi of the habitus already. Choices and the regularities that they exhibit within a budgetary constraint accord with the self-fulfilling nature of preferences that reflect the condition of existence. The non-mechanical relationship between the necessity of this condition and the virtuous nature of the choices made is central to Bourdieu’s position that the social space is constructed and reproduced continuously from within the habitus through life-styles as symbolic expressions and tastes as a medium that turns mere objects into symbolic ones and takes classified practices into classifying ones of symbolic expressions.

Each life-style is a system of symbolic expressions maintained by a taste, and there are, in the
society, multiple life-styles with appropriate distributions of symbolic capital. But, in Bourdieu’s thinking, the principles of oppositions and correlations constituting different systems of life-styles are structurally homologous to one another. Because this homology is based on the fact that such systems are homologous to the structure of the objective oppositions between class conditions, the generative schemes of the habitus apply extensively across varying life-styles of different classes despite their dissimilar practices and choices made. Given this homology, Bourdieu, arguing that the dispositions and practices of different classes are differentiated by the degree to which economic and cultural capital are appropriated, show how the two key principles (or axes), namely, economic capital and cultural capital, organize the universe of life-styles and govern the space of cultural consumption. The rich appropriate both capital, and the poor lack both. Hence, their tastes and virtues develop in different directions. The rich and the dominant develop the tastes of luxury and freedom, while the opposite the tastes of necessity. Even in art, those at the top tend to appreciate a denial of the social world along a hedonistic aesthetic of ease and facility, whereas the dominated, caught between ambition and restraint, develop an aesthetic disposition for self-imposed austerity, restraint, reserve, and relaxation in tension, and tend to praise a pessimistic representation of the social world. Such stylization of life permeates all areas of practices, in language where the opposition is observed between the refined and the outspoken styles of speech, in body language between the noble and the fast gestures, and in primary tastes between quantity and quality. This two-way organization of the social space, by way of economic and cultural capital, helps explain the differences in tastes of those who belong to the same income bracket but differ in the cultural capital they possess. Economic variables, therefore, are necessary in explaining human behavior, because such variables measure the distance from or the proximity to the necessity and the degree of freedom from the material constraint, but they are, by themselves, not sufficient to account for the human proclivities to look for symbolic profits of cultural consumption in the social world (Distinction, pp. 175–177). The taste of necessity forms the basis of a life-style only by the relationship of privation vis-à-vis other life styles (Distinction, p. 193). In this sense, a life-style as a classificatory system can be as such only if it is defined by what it lacks, not by what it has.

While in the theories of Adam Smith and Veblen, the habituation of the apperceptive activity of man’s mind plays a crucial role in determining the course of cultural evolution, the active principle of habituation is taken for granted. Bourdieu, on the contrary, goes directly into the site where habituation takes place and sees that it is the active principle of habitus that produces the social space of life-styles with a distribution of cultural capital. Bourdieu’s thesis is: The knowledge of the social world is the product of an act of construction mediated by a system of internalized embodied schemes based on the principles of division common to all agents, and such divisions are revealed in the opposition between the dominant and the dominated. Bourdieu holds that there is a correspondence between the real world (social structures of real divisions) and the thought world (the mental structures of the practical principles of division), and, in consequence, the relations of order that run through them are accepted as self-evident structures of the social world and become embodied in people’s schemes of cognition, although such cognition is a miscognition. It is this conformity that “makes it possible
to act as if one knew the structure of the social world, one’s place within it and the distances that need to be kept” (Distinction, p. 472).

In Bourdieu’s theory, the system of classificatory schemes in the habitus is not a taxonomy of the social reality constructed by an intellectual operation. The sense of social space is always the product of a pre-adapted scheme of classification in a particular situation. For him, the content of the logic of practice and the image projected by classificatory schemes is inherently fuzzy but fluid, depending on man’s position in the social space, but the social structure is inscribed into one’s taste like a ‘memory jogger’ that finds its expression practically in all acts and gestures within the location of the social space (Distinction, pp. 472–475). It has to be kept in mind that the interest in using classificatory schemes or making attributive judgments is inherently related to the advantage of doing so, which has to be taken into account in any inquiry into the social world (Distinction, p. 476).

The classificatory schemes bring about a system of the differences and distinction out of undifferentiated continuity. If such schemes are institutionalized in the mind of individual agents, the schemes will no longer be perceived as limitations, and individual agents will act as agents of production for the established order. Thus, classificatory systems become a principle of reproducing the established order of the society by maintaining the differences by way of the symbolic logic of differentiation. Such systems, therefore, acquire a symbolic power that reproduces themselves as a symbolic logic of practice and distinction that is imposed on the mental structures of individual agents without a sense of being coerced by it. (Distinction, p. 479)

And, finally, Bourdieu reiterates that social science does not have to choose between social semiology that aims at knowing the reality through the logics of classification and the idealist semiology that describes a social world as a product of mental (linguistic) structures, or between the objectivist and the subjectivist theories. What we need is the practical knowledge of divisions and classifications that social agents acquire by internalizing the external conditions into their dispositions. This brings us back to the thesis that the habitus, as the site of the dialectic between the opus operatum and the modus operandi of divisions and classifications, is what constructs the social space in the mind of individual agents, with the principles of division common to all agents (Distinction, p. 483)

This is how Bourdieu explains the emergence of the life-styles and the symbolic marks of distinction. The logic of practice at the site of the habitus is responsible for the construction of life-styles as systems and for the development of a taste that transforms the universe of undifferentiated objects into the universe of classified objects with symbolic meanings. But, the crucial factor that is responsible for life-styles to emerge is how much of economic and cultural capital is appropriated. Of the two, appropriation of economic capital is primary, the reason being that acquisition of cultural capital is consequent upon accumulation of wealth, which is just another name of this capital. As the society splits into different social classes by accumulation of wealth, the rich and the poor will be placed in different economic conditions of existence that lead to different styles of cultural consumption. The rich, as the dominating class, are exempt of labor and acquire cultural capital that allows them to develop the tastes for luxury and freedom as well as the aesthetic sense along with a more refined code of decorum to go with such tastes. The poor, as the dominated class, are placed in more straining eco-
nomic conditions with less access to cultural capital and cultural consumption. Being ambitious but restrained by their conditions of existence, they develop tastes for a more austere style of living. In both cases, the conditions of existence are, by the principle of internalization of the habitus, turned into systematic structures of virtues, tastes, and aesthetic sense, that are classified as different styles of living. But, social classes will not remain as a rigid division as the economy produces innovations that will inevitably change the composition of the wealthy and the poor. In simple terms, appropriation of economic and cultural capital governs the space of cultural consumption, which is a sweeping word for the social space constituted by different life-styles of the dominating and dominated classes.

One cannot help but see that Bourdieu’s theory of the logic of practice and distinction resembles, in logic, the theses of Adam Smith and Veblen. Adam Smith, starting with the moral sentiments that favor approbation and disfavor disapprobation, explicates how the ambition to get ahead in the race of wealth accumulation in order to win the moral approval of the spectator drives the economy, by dividing the society into the superior and inferior classes, with the principle of custom (another name of habituation) shaping the virtues, the tastes, and the sense of beauty and propriety of the two classes differently, with men of the superior class setting a fashion with a refined code of decorum that goes with it and with men of the inferior class emulating this fashion as something genteel and magnificent, all to win the moral approval. In his theory, the moral sentiments are the sources of the two essential elements for the development of the economy as an extending order: man’s ambition for success and man’s sensitivities to sympathize more with joy than with sorrow. The first, keeping man’s industry, becomes a positive driving force of the economy by developing innovations, arts, and sciences that that keep supplying the superior stations with refined goods of contrivance, and the second leads, under the principle of custom, to specific forms of tastes and aesthetic sense that serve as a screening principle on what is to be consumed for the reputability, hence as an emulating and avoidance force between the superior and inferior stations of life. Adam Smith’s theory is, indeed, a theory of the dialectic between these two forces of evolution that originate in man’s moral sentiments. It is also an account of wealth accumulation splitting the society into different classes, whose styles of living and virtues become differentiated but still united by the imagination that the style of living of the superior stations, with its refined tastes and code of decorum, is something to be worth emulating. Veblen’s theory is not much different from this as it is equally a theory of evolution based on the dialectic between the instinct of workmanship as a positive principle of innovations on the one hand and habituated tastes as a regulative principle on the other, i.e., a theory of the dialectic between production and consumption. Bourdieu, returning to the site of the habitus, elucidated the logic of practice of the site as a structuring and structured structure, and gave an account of how the society becomes differentiated into different classes with different styles of living, virtues, and tastes, and of how this class division is maintained as a stable order. Bourdieu’s theory is more explicit on how man’s mind apprehends a correspondence between the real world and the thought world through his schemes of cognition that are embodied in his dispositions. Bourdieu called the cognition through such schemes a misconceptions, just as Adam Smith called the grand order of the economy a deception. What is com-
mon to the three theories is the evolution of the social order viewed as the dialectic between the appropriation of economic capital through accumulation of wealth and the development of cultural capital for the purpose of endowing consumption patterns with their symbolic profits.

2d. Parsons: Institutionalization of need-dispositions

With this understanding of the three theories, it is useful to take a look at Parsons' theory of social systems as developed in *The Social System* (1951), since this theory looks at social systems from a purely theoretical standpoint of integration. He builds his theory by following through the necessary conditions that must be met before society turns into a stable order. It is developed along the following line of reasoning.

Parsons' fundamental question in *The Social System* (1951, hereafter SS) is: How the two systems, a social system and an action system of individual agents, become integrated. In his view, an action system of individual agents is an integrated system of motivational and cultural elements, whereas a social system is a structure of roles and statuses that functionally integrates social actions of individual agents. The pressing problem to be resolved before any integration of these systems is hoped for is the problem of the double contingency of actions of *ego* and *alter*. If interacting agents' actions are contingent loosing sight of how to form complementary expectations, no society would have any chance of subsisting as an integrated order. For this problem to be resolved, actors must hold certain expectations that complement each other's actions. Such expectations are possible only if two conditions are met: (1) There be symbolic systems of communication, and (2) actors be mutually oriented to the normative aspect of their expectations. The latter condition is met only if agents are oriented to common normative standards under some appropriate measures of sanction for conformity and deviation, and only if actors' motivational structure is integrated with such standards. This integration at the personality level requires that such values be internalized into their motivational structure by way of socially learned sentiments or value-attitudes. The motivational structure shaped by such internalization defines the need-disposition of individual actors. When conformity with a value-orientation standard not only fulfills the need-disposition of an actor but also optimizes the reactions of other actors, the normative standards are said to be institutionalized. Once the motivational structure is institutionalized, the actor's conformity to and deviation from the value-orientation standard acquires the meaning of gratification and deprivation. The conformity to role expectations, accordingly, becomes an ego-ideal for an actor, with the moral responsibilities it entails. Thus, Parsons' answer to the problem of the double contingency of actions and the integration of society as a system is found in the formation of the need-disposition, which, in his view, is possible only by the internalization of the common normative values into the motivational structure of individual actors.

What is then the mechanism through which a commonly shared system of symbols is integrated into the personality structure of individual actors? Parsons attends to three foci of integration: (1) the individual actor, (2) the interactive system, and (3) a system of cultural patterning. For the integration to be possible at these foci, the psychoanalytic structure of the personality has to be integrated with the social system. To make this integration apprehensible, Parsons argues that sociological analysis of social systems and psychoanalysis of the personality need to
converge around some unifying conceptual scheme that binds the two. Society is a system of interacting individuals with cognitive, cathetic, and evaluative orientations, and likewise culture is a system of (1) the cognitive reference system, (2) the system of expressive symbolism, and (3) the system of moral standards. Therefore, if society as a system of interacting agents is to be in harmony with culture, these systems must permeate the three orientations. But, even if this permeation is completed, there must be a moral regulator of emotional reactions that arise from interaction. This function is performed by the superego, which is acquired socially by learning how to regulate such reactions in social interaction by the guiding hand of the system of cultural symbolism [Parsons (1952); Parsons, Shils, et al. (1951)]

This is Parsons’ theory on how society as a system of interacting individuals becomes integrated as an order regulated by superego. Parsons, in essence, argues that the culture, explicitly as an organized whole of the three systems: the cognitive system, the system of expressive symbolism, and the system of moral standards, needs to be introjected into the personality structure of individual agents before a system of interacting individuals becomes a stable order, with normative orientations that keep their behavior in harmony with the culture. This is the reason why Parsons says that “the integration of a set of common value patterns with the internalized need-disposition structure of individuals is the core phenomenon of the dynamics of social systems,” and that the stability of any social social system depends on the extent to which this integration is made possible (SS, p. 42). Parsons’ approach is neither phenomenological nor evolutionary in nature, but, it breaks down the social system into its essential components that need to be integrated if it is to be sustained as a stable order. While Adam Smith, Veblen, and Bourdieu focused on the process of cultural evolution or the habituation of man’s natural propensities into certain dispositions which have a logic of practice of their own that reflects social organization and the state of culture, Parsons focused his attention on what conditions need to be met to avoid the ultimate chaos, the state of the war of all against all, called the Hobbesian disorder. That is why the condition of complementary expectations marked a starting point of his analysis, that led eventually to his theory on how individuals and society become integrated, normatively and structurally. Essential to this integration was the internalization of common normative values into the motivational structure of individuals, and when this internalization is fulfilled in the sense of optimizing the responses of all individuals against all other individuals, the normative standards or values can be said to have been fully institutionalized.

Parsons’ theory of institutionalization explains why it is not legitimate to hold a dichotomous view that splits the motivational structure of an individual actor and the socio-cultural elements. Interacting actors have cognitive, cathetic, and evaluative orientations. Just as anything expressed verbally is mediated by a shared language (an expressive symbolism with its logic, which is socially acquired), an action in a social system is an expression in reference to some cognitive system (which includes knowledge and reasoning we share), some shared expressive-affective symbolism (which confers symbolic meanings), and a set of common moral and evaluative standards (along with sanctions for conformity and deviation), hence becomes interpretable in a socially meaningful way. Consumption as an act is no exception. It is an act of expressing one’s need-disposition in reference to: (I) a shared ex-
pressive symbolism (which makes it possible to send a symbolic message to other spectators, therefore becomes the source of symbolic profits), (2) the cognitive knowledge we share about choice objects, and (3) common moral and evaluative standards (which legitimate and screen what we consume in the light of what is socially acceptable or valuable as a means of emulation, and bring about a harmony between conformity-deviation and gratification-deprivation). Thus, in a broader picture of culture, a system of preferences of each individual consumer is a convoluted preference-value system, convoluted in the sense that it cannot be determined independently of the facts of the social space, valued in the sense that it absorbs the essential elements of culture in orienting itself.

3. A phenomenological perspective: Heidegger

Adam Smith calls the grand order a deception, for there is nothing intrinsically beautiful about the things that man is habituated to see as beautiful, and Bourdieu likewise calls the relations of order that run through a correspondence between the real world and the thought world a miscarriage, for there is nothing necessary about this correspondence except that man sees it in his mind. So the question is how the whole of undifferentiated continuities is transformed into the universe of differences and identities in the form of social classes and their styles of living by man’s act of intentionality, or, more specifically, how the social space or the social world is constructed as such by the synthesizing act of categorial intuition and perception [Husserl: *Logical Investigations*, 280–283]. This question calls for a phenomenological inquiry into this construction.

Heidegger, performing a phenomenological analysis of Dasein (human existence) in *Being and Time*, taking many elements from Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, brought to light the Being of Dasein as care, and how man, thrown into this world, exists as Being-in-the-world and encounters entities. His ontological philosophy is particularly pertinent to economics or socio-economics, because man always exists alongside with things that are encountered in his practical dealings. But, man, in his circumspective vision over such dealings, encounters things through their equipmentality. But, each item of equipment does not exist as an isolated entity. It is related to all other items of equipment, hence the equipments constitute a totality of equipment in which each is placed in relation to one another. Items of equipment are something man uses in order to achieve an end; this in-order-to of equipment is its assignment. If so, man’s being-in-the-world is man’s being-alongside-equipment-for-assignment. What does this mean for man as Being-thrown-into-this-world. Since the Being of Dasein is care, Being-thrown-into-the-world is the Being-alongside-with-entities-as-equipment. The Being of equipment is the readiness-to-hand. Hence, the Being of Dasein is always with the Being of the readiness-to-hand in his practical dealings. Heidegger says:

... We shall call those entities which we encounter in concern “equipment”. In our dealings we come across equipment for writing, sewing, working, transportation, measurement. The kind of Being which equipment possesses must be exhibited. The clue for doing this lies in our fist defining what makes an item of equipment—namely, its equipmentality.

Taken strictly, there ’is’ no such thing as an equipment. To the Being of any equipment there always belongs a totality of equipment, in which it can be this equipment that it is. Equipment is essentially ’something in-order-to...’ A
totality of equipment is constituted by various ways of the 'in-order-to', such as serviceability, conduciveness, usability, manipulability.

In the 'in-order-to' as a structure there lies an assignment or reference of something to something. Only in the analyses which are to follow can the phenomenon which this term 'assignment' indicates be made visible in its ontological genesis. Provisionally, it is enough to take a look phenomenally at a manifold of such assignments. Equipment—in accordance with its equipmentality—always is in terms of its belonging to other equipment: inkstand, pen, ink, paper, blotting pad, table lamp, furniture, windows, doors, room. These 'Things' never show themselves proximally as they are for themselves, so as to add up to a sum of realia and fill up a room. What we encounter as closest to us (thought not as something taken as a theme) is the room; and we encounter it not as something 'between four walls in a geometrical spacial sense, but as equipment for residing. Out of this the 'arrangement' emerges, and it is in this that any 'individual' item of equipment shows itself. Before it does so, a totality of equipment has already been discovered. (BT, pp. 97-98)

.... The kind of Being which equipment possesses—in which it manifests itself in its own right—we call "readiness-to-hand". .... Dealings with equipment subordinate themselves to the manifold assignments of the 'in-order-to'. And the sight with which they thus accommodate themselves is circumspection. (BT, pp. 98)

Men are engaged in practical dealings, which are productive activities. Hence, entities in the vision of equipmentality are not the only things we encounter. We also encounter the world in which we do our work, and other people working along-side and the users of the product live, that is, the public world, and even more, the environing Nature, which is accessible to everyone, all as ready-to-hand. Practical engagement is, therefore, the source of the discovery or the encounter, of the things, the World, and the Nature, under the sight of circumspection. Heidegger writes:

The work produced refers not only to the "towards-which" of its usability and the "whereof" of which it consists: under simple craft conditions it also has an assignment to the person who is to use it or wear it. The work is cut to his figure: he 'is' there along with it as the work emerges. Even when goods are produced by the dozen, this constitutive assignment is by no means lacking: it is merely indefinite, and points to the random, the average. Thus along with the work, we encounter not only entities ready-to-hand but also entities with Dasein’s kind of Being—entities for which, in their concern, the product becomes ready-to-hand; and together with these we encounter the world in which wearers and users live, which is at the same time ours. Any work with which one concerns oneself is ready-to-hand not only in the domestic world of the workshop but also in the public world. Along with the public world, the environing Nature is discovered and is accessible to everyone. In roads, streets, bridges, buildings, our concern discovers Nature as having some definite direction. A covered railway platform takes account of bad weather; an installation for public lighting takes account of the darkness, or rather of specific changes in the presence or absence of daylight—'the position of the sun'. In a clock, account is taken of some definite constellation in the world-system. When we look at the clock, we tacitly make use of the 'sun's position', in ac-
cordance with which the measurement of time gets regulated in the official astronomical manner. When we make use of the clock-equipment, which is proximally and inconspicuously ready-to-hand, the environing Nature is ready-to-hand along with it. Our concernful absorption in whatever work-world lies closest to us, has a function of discovering; and it is essential to this function that, depending upon the way in which we are absorbed, those entities within-the-world which are brought along in the work and with it (that is to say, in the assignments or references which are constitutive for it) remain discoverable in varying degrees of explicitness and with a varying circumspective penetration. (BT, pp. 100–101).

Heidegger’s insight on how Dasein discovers entities, the world, and the environing Nature reminds us of how connected man’s practical dealings are to the World and the Nature. The Being of Dasein is in unity with the Being of entities encountered, the World, and the Nature. When Dasein understands a totality of the involvements in unity through a prior understanding of the relationships binding all assignments, it becomes significance. Thus, the world emerges as the world of this significance, a unity of all practical dealings in which Dasein is involved. Heidegger says:

Circumspective concern includes the understanding of a totality of the involvements, and this understanding is based upon a prior understanding of the relationships of the “in-order-to”, and the “towards-which”, the “towards-this”, and “for-the-sake-of”. The interconnection of these relationships has been exhibited earlier as “significance”. Their unity makes up what we call the “world”. (BT, p. 415)

What if the world man is thrown into, which is discovered as the world of all practical dealings and significance, is always already invested with a culture of symbolism? Then, the world of encountered entities will include the cultural symbols as another category of entities as ready-to-hand, although they are not visible but quite as real as other physical entities. But, just as to each item of equipment, a totality of equipment belongs, to each symbol belongs a totality of symbols that makes it a symbol. We might, therefore, be allowed to take the world Dasein discovers as a world based on a totality of cultural symbols that are guiding man’s practical dealings as well as the appreciation of the products coming out of such dealings. Whatever man does, either for consumption or production, is, therefore, always invested with its cultural meaning regardless whether the cognition of this meaning is a mis-cognition or something else. In this view, consumption is not just a consuming act to feed a hungry stomach or to clothe a naked body; it has a manifold of its assignments including the in-order-to-express-it as a symbol of some value other than the sheer utility. It is not even independent of production, since the product is produced with its customers in mind who seek it for their end, whatever it may be.

In Heidegger’s thought, the fact that Dasein encounters the entities in the world as equipment (ready-to-hand) is grounded in Dasein’s existence as a Fact. The factuality of this Fact is the facticity, which means that Dasein has always already spread itself over many ways of Being-in-the-world. What does this mean? Heidegger says:

... Whenever Dasein is, it is as a Fact; and the factuality of such a fact is what we shall call Dasein’s “facticity”. This is a definite way of Being, and it has a complicated structure which
cannot even be grasped as a problem until Dasein’s basic existential states have been worked out. The concept of “facticity” implies that an entity ‘within-the-world’ has Being-in-the-world in such a way that it can understand itself as bound up in its ‘destiny’ with the Being of those entities which it encounters with its own world. (BT, p. 82)

Dasein’s facticity is such that its Being-in-the-world has always dispersed itself or even split itself up into definite ways of Being-in. The multiplicity of these is indicated by the following examples: having to do with something, producing something, attending to something and looking after it, making use of something, giving something up and letting it go, undertaking, accomplishing, evincing, interrogating, considering, discussing, determining . . . . All these ways of Being-in have concern as their kind of Being which we have yet to characterize in detail. Leaving undone, neglecting, renouncing, taking a rest—these too are ways of concern; but these are all deficient modes, in which the possibilities of concern are kept to a ‘bare minimum’. (BT, p. 83)

Thus, it is seen that Dasein is always already in the world with many ways of engaging and involving with the world. The primary ways of this engagement are practical and economic. It is this facticity that underlies the logic of man’s practice in practical dealings and economics in this paper. Man’s behavior is made possible by encountering entities as equipment and discovering the public world and the environing Nature. But, the world discovered is always the world invested with cultural symbols. We always communicate with people in the public world using the same language, wearing and eating what is appropriate, and following the manners that conform with norms. Cultural symbols are just as real as the practical value that physical objects yield. Therefore, it is essential that in apprehending the logic of practice, culture be recognized as the source of certain assignments of man’s behavior. What to consume, how to consume, for what end to consume, etc. is all part of the facticity of man’s existence, including demonstrating the quality and the propriety of consumption in the eyes of the public.

4. Husserl: Consciousness and transcendence

Recall that Bourdieu saw a correspondence between the social structure of divisions and the mental principles of division, which makes it possible for the relations of social order to be accepted as self-evident and conserved. This logical conformity raises a question as to how it may be disturbed by innovations, i.e., new information that cannot be assimilated easily into the conformity structure. Adam Smith and Veblen thematized innovations as the creating principle that can make refined styles of living possible as something genteel and magnificent. Innovations are brought about by man’s industry and diligence, but they are screened for their serviceability to refined and novel styles of living. But this screening is made possible only if man’s tastes and aesthetic sense are habituated as the sense of novelty. Bourdieu’s theory of distinction, likewise, relies on the principle of habituation he named the habitus, where this principle is viewed as the source of the active and passive principles of construction, active as the habitus constructs in accordance with a logic of construction, passive as the habitus has an internal structure that receives what is constructed. In all of these theories, habituation is the key principle, not as habituation in the static sense of having been habituated to like certain things but also in the dy-
amic sense of being habituated to seek. Such habitation never keeps the state of man’s mind and tastes fixed but evolving for the better and novel. Thus, culture evolves by the interaction of the two principles: the principle of habituation, i.e., by a structured structuring structure in Bourdieu’s words, which turns into an attitude of seeking, on the one hand, and the principle of creation that turns out innovations that are absorbed into what already is but changes it slowly or drastically.

If the social world is a product of man’s intentional act of synthesis in accordance with the laws of construction, and if this world is always reconstructed as innovations inject new information into it, this intentional act of synthesis must be habituated into an attitude of transcendence. Husserl introduced the method of the transcendental phenomenological reduction (by an all-embracing epoche or bracketing) to base philosophy on a rigorous scientific foundation [e.g., Ideen, Britannica Article, The Crisis of European Sciences and the Transcendental Phenomenology]. This reduction is a method of uncovering an eidetic science, a science of essences. In the introduction to Ideen I, Husserl lays out his plan of investigation:

Let us draw the preliminarily indicative lines yet a little more definitely; and let us start from psychology as demanded not only by the prejudices of the times but also by the internal communities of the matter in question.

_Psychology_ is an experiential science. Two things are implied in the usual sense of the world “experience:”

1. It is a science of facts, of matters of fact in David Hume’s sense.
2. It is a science of realities. The “phenomena” that it, as psychological “phenomenology,” deals with are real occurrences which, as such occurrences, if they have actual existence, find their place with the real subjects to whom they belong in the one spatiotemporal world as the _omnitudo realitatis._

In contradiction to that, _pure or transcendental phenomenology will become established, not as science of matters of fact, but as a science of essences_ (as an “eidetic” science); it will become established as a science which exclusively seeks to ascertain “cognitions of essences” and _no “matters of facts” whatever._ The relevant reduction which leads over from the psychological phenomena to the pure “essence” or, in the case of judgmental thinking, from matter-of-fact (“empirical”) universality to “eidetic” universality, is the _eidetic reduction._

_Secundo, the phenomena of transcendental phenomenology will become characterized as ir-real._ Other reductions, the specifically transcendental ones, “purify” psychological phenomena from what confers on them reality and, with that, their place in the real “world.” Our phenomenology is to be eidetic doctrine, not of phenomena that are real, but of phenomena that are transcendentally reduced. (_Ideen I, Introduction xx._

And, on the doctrine of phenomenological reductions which are required to reach transcendentally purified consciousness, Husserl has this to say:

We now turn our thoughts back again to the first chapter, to our observations concerning the phenomenological reduction. It now becomes clear that, in contrast to the natural theoretical attitude, the correlate of which is the world, a new attitude must in fact be possible which, in spite of the “exclusion” of this psy-
chophysical universe of Nature, leaves us something: the whole field of absolute consciousness. Instead, then, of living naively in experience and theoretically exploring what is experienced, transcendent Nature, we effect the “phenomenological reduction.” In other words, instead of naively effecting the acts pertaining to our Nature — constituting consciousness with their positing of something transcendent, and letting ourselves be induced, by motives implicit in them, to affect ever new posittings of something transcendent — instead of that, we put all those posgings “out of actions,” we do not “participate in them;” we direct our seizing and theoretically inquiring regard to pure consciousness in its own absolute being. That, then, is what is left as the sought-for “phenomenological residuum,” though we have “excluded” the whole world with all physical things, living beings, and humans, ourselves included. Strictly speaking, we have not lost anything but rather have gained the whole of absolute being which, rightly understood, contains within itself, “constitutes” within itself, all worldly transcendencies. (Ideen I, p. 113)

Husserl’s idea is clear: Ascending from psychology as a science of facts to the transcendental phenomenology as a science of essences is made possible with a new attitude of bracketing all posings posited by the constituting consciousness which takes the psychophysical universe of Nature for granted. This attitude generates an unceasing ascending movement in consciousness toward an unlimited region of pure essences as a phenomenological residuum. Such an attitude requires that the practice of bracketing all posings be habituated firmly, that is, that the natural theoretical attitude that takes for granted the existence of the transcendent Nature be outmoded by a new one that relativizes all posited products of theoretical thinking. Sciences aim at their ultimate rational foundations that establish them as exact sciences, and since they are a product of the mind, the phenomenology of such foundations could be static and self-enclosing in that it aims at a rigorous foundation only within the same attitude or mindset taken for granted. The transcendental phenomenology that Husserl aims at, on the other hand, frees our mind toward a transcendent philosophy of pure essences by questioning any positing by consciousness, even the existence of nature that this positing takes for granted. Since all sciences originate in the mind, this movement from static to dynamic phenomenology is accomplished in steps, first from psychology to transcendental psychology, and then from this psychology to the transcendental philosophy. This philosophy is not a final stage, since it is a continuing inquiry into an ever higher region of pure consciousness and pure essences. On the way to the transcendental phenomenology, the construction of a phenomenological pure psychology will serve as a propaedeutic to it. On the systematic construction of a phenomenological pure psychology, Husserl has this to say in his Britannica article.

The systematic construction of a phenomenological pure psychology demands:

1) The description of the peculiarities universally belonging to the essence of intentional mental process, which includes the most general law of synthesis: every connection of consciousness with consciousness gives rise to a consciousness.

2) The exploration of single forms of intentional mental process which in essential necessity generally must or can present themselves in the mind; in unity with this, also
the exploration of the syntheses they are members of for a typology of their essences: both those that are discrete and those continuous with others, both the finitely closed and those continuing into open infinity.

(3) The showing and eidetic description [Wesensdeskription] of the total structure [Gesamttgestalt] of mental life as such; in other words, a description of the essential character [Wesensart] of a universal “stream of consciousness.”

(4) The term “I” designates a new direction for investigation (still in abstraction from the social sense of this word) in reference to the essence-forms of “habituality”; in other words, the “I” as subject of lasting beliefs or thought-tendencies – “persuasions” — (convictions about being, value-convictions, volitional decisions, and so on), as the personal subject of habits, of trained knowing, of certain character qualities.

(Husserl, Britannica article, section 1.5)

Once the pure psychology is established by way of the psychological reduction, it serves as a propaedeutic to the transcendental phenomenology by transcendental reduction as built on the psychological reduction. This reduction brings about a new and absolute consciousness which forms the absolute basis of the intersubjectivity. The absolute consciousness is capable of grasping the psychological objectivation as a self-objectivation of the transcendental I, and the psychic intersubjectivity (the community of minds as psychic entities) as an actualization of the transcendental intersubjectivity, from which every transcendent being derives its sense of being. In the same Britannica article, Husserl describes what the ascendance from the psychological to the transcendental phenomenology achieves as follows:

We would like to proceed here by introducing the transcendental reduction as built on the psychological reduction — as an additional part of the purification which can be performed on it any time, a purification that is once more by means of a certain epoché. This is merely a consequence of the all-embracing epoché which belongs to the transcendental question. If the transcendental relativity of every possible world demands an all-embracing bracketing, it also postulates the bracketing of pure psyches and the pure phenomenological psychology related to them. Through this bracketing they are transformed into transcendental phenomena. Thus, while the psychologist, operating within what for him is the naturally accepted world, reduces to pure psychic subjectivity the subjectivity occurring there (but still within the world), the transcendental phenomenologist, through his absolutely all-embracing epoché reduces this psychologically pure element to transcendental pure subjectivity, [i.e.,] to that which performs and posits within itself theapperception of the world and therein the objectivating apperception of a “psyche [belonging to] animal realities.” For example, my actual current mental processes of pure perception, fantasy, and so forth, are, in the attitude of positivity, psychological givens [or data] of psychological inner experience. They are transmuted into my transcendental mental processes if through a radical epoché I posit as mere phenomena the world, including my own human existence, and now follow up the intentional life-process wherein the entire apperception “of” the world, and in particular the apperception of my mind, my psychologically real perception-processes, and so forth, are formed.
The content of these processes, what is included in their own essences, remains in this fully preserved, although it is now visible as the core of an apperception practiced again and again psychologically but not previously considered. For the transcendental philosopher, who through a previous all-inclusive resolve of his will has instituted in himself the firm habituality of the transcendental “bracketing”, even this “mundanization” [Verweltlichung, treating everything as part of the world] of consciousness which is omnipresent in the natural attitude is inhibited once and for all. Accordingly, the consistent reflection on consciousness yields him time after time transcendently pure data, and more particularly it is intuitive in the mode of a new kind of experience, transcendental “inner” experience. Arisen out of the methodical transcendental epoché, this new kind of “inner” experience opens up the limitless transcendental field of being. This field of being is the parallel to the limitless psychological fields, and the method of access [to its data] is the parallel to the purely psychological one, i.e., to the psychological-phenomenological reduction. And again, the transcendental I [or ego] and the transcendental community of egos, conceived in the full concretion of transcendental life are the transcendental parallel to the I and we in the customary and psychological sense, concretely conceived as mind and community of minds, with the psychological life of consciousness that pertains to them. My transcendental ego is thus evidently “different” from the natural ego, but no means as a second, as one separated from it in the natural sense of the word, just as on the contrary it is by no means bound up with it or intertwined with it, in the usual sense of these worlds. It is just the field of transcen-

dental self-experience (conceived in full concreteness) which in every case can, through mere alteration of attitude, be changed into psychological self-experience. In this transition, an identity of the I is necessarily brought about: in transcendental reflection on this transition the psychological Objectivation becomes visible as self-objectivation of the transcendental I, and so it is as if in every moment of the natural attitude the I finds itself with an apperception imposed upon it. If the parallelism of the transcendental and psychological experience-spheres has become comprehensible out of a mere alteration of attitude, as a kind of identity of the complex interpenetration of senses of being, then there also becomes intelligible the consequence that results from it, namely the same parallelism and the interpenetration of transcendental and psychological phenomenology implied in that interpenetration, whose whole theme is pure intersubjectivity, in its dual sense. Only that in this case it has to be taken into account that the purely psychic intersubjectivity, as soon as the it is subjected to the transcendental epoché, also leads to its parallel, that is, to transcendental intersubjectivity. Manifestly this parallelism spells nothing less than theoretical equivalence. Transcendental intersubjectivity is the concretely autonomous absolute existing basis [Seinsboden] out of which everything transcendent (and, with it, everything that belongs to the real world) obtains its existential sense as that of something which only in a relative and therewith incomplete sense is an existing thing, namely as being an intentional unity which in truth exists from out of transcendental bestowal of sense, of harmonious confirmation, and from an habituality of lasting conviction that belongs to it by essential necessity.
That is, the empirical psychical ego has to be overcome by the transcendental psychical ego, and this ego also has to be overcome of the transcendental ego. With this overcoming, consciousness rises from the level of the community of empirical psychical egos (the psychic intersubjectivity) to that of the community of purely psychical egos (the purely psychic intersubjectivity), and even to that of the community of transcendental egos (the transcendental intersubjectivity). Such ascending opens a new horizon that allows man to see anything below it as an incomplete objectivation of pure essences. The psychological-phenomenological-transcendental reduction is an act of ascending from the Cave to pure essences, that is made possible only with an unshaken attitude that brackets everything that constituting consciousness posits. The necessity of the incompleteness of everything apprehended intersubjectively in the shadows of the Cave is made evident when cast under the light of pure essences [Plato, Republic, Book VII].

Heidegger focused on the ontology of human existence and brought to light the priority of the practical over the theoretical. Dasein exists as care and as a Fact of its facticity with all its orientations, sensitivities, dealings, and what not, and it is Dasein's practical dealings as its facticity that make it possible for Dasein to encounter other beings (entities) through their equipmentality, the world as the public world of practical dealings, and even the environing Nature through its impact on Dasein's activities. Thus, Dasein's Being is always Being-in-the-world. If so, how Dasein exists cannot be separated from how it understands the world of its Being. Heidegger's philosophy shifts our attention, away from the theoretical understanding of the world and the behavior of man in it, to Dasein's practical dealings and the practical understanding of the world. That is, Dasein is engaged in its activities in the life-world of everydayness, and it lives its life of practical dealings. Therefore, Dasein's act of intentionality, rather than synthesizing various elements into an objective world as a theoretical unity and determining its acts in relation to this structure, apprehends the worldhood of the world in which to unveil its practical Being. If Dasein finds itself already thrown into the world through its practical dealings having their ends, the entities encountered are already invested with values of these ends, practical or symbolic. Dasein's acts, therefore, will be composed in accordance with them and rendered interpretable in terms of such values. Heidegger says that "Dasein 'is' essentially for the sake of Others" (p. 160). If so, all activities in which Dasein is engaged are mediated by the intersubjectivity, which cannot have its Being apart from the culture.

Husserl, focusing on man's consciousness awakened us on the phenomenological-transcendental reduction, which takes us from the world of the empirical psychical determination to the world of the transcendental psychical principles, and on to the world of pure consciousness. With this ascending, man's sense of ego rises from an empirically determined psychical ego, to a purely psychological ego, and to a truly transcendental ego free from any psychical and empirical determination. This way man reaches the absolute basis of intersubjectivity from which to understand an empirically determined ego as a self-objectivation of the transcendental psychical ego, and from which to understand the transcendental psychical ego as a possible instantiation of the truly transcendental ego. But, this transcendence has no ceasing point. It is an unceasing quest for a limitless field of pure essences, which would not
be possible unless transcendental bracketing is firmly habituated and established as an unshakable attitude.

Husserl says that the transcendental phenomenology is a science of true essences. In achieving this science, man’s consciousness must seek an ever higher ground on which such essences may be grasped. Anything man claims to have apprehended as an essence must be bracketed for a further search for a higher essence, and this bracketing turns into a ceaseless dialectic. This is why the transcendental phenomenology is not something that can be found by philosophical investigations once and for all. Rather it is an open science of a dialectic movement of reason. If man’s Being is the Being of the act of transcendence to a limitless field of essences, and if the consciousness is an act of intentionality (an act of synthesis), all objectivities in consciousness are made intelligible only if they are understood either as a self-objectivation of a principle or as an instantiation of the infinite possibilities. Since everything constituted in consciousness is an ideational objectivity, the act of transcendence and the mundane activities in this world cannot be separated. If the former aims at reaching higher essences, so do the latter, aiming at better activities through the discovery of such essences. Aristotle says that man’s action (or activities), determined by his internal rational principle, is always guided by the principle of aiming at better performance or by the principle of entelecheia [Metaphysics, Book IX; Nicomachean Ethics]. Practical dealings under circumspection that Heidegger focused on as the primary ground of Dasein are no exception to this rule as what is conceived in such dealings (all ideational objectivities) emanates from the intentional act of consciousness. Whether in practical dealings or scientific endeavors, man’s activities are made possible only by the power of consciousness, whose internal principle is to seek better performance.

5. Conclusion

Our primary concern in this paper was how to apprehend the meaning and the essence of consumption and production, or, more generally, all activities man is engaged in, from the perspectives of cultural evolution and phenomenology of man’s existence and consciousness. In the conventional view, economic activities are divided into two categories: production and consumption, and the two are kept independent, with consumption being dictated by preferences of individual agents and with production being determined by production technologies. The two activities are not apprehended in their conjoined roles in the dynamics of the cultural evolution. Consumption is better apprehended as an expression of man’s desire for a meaningful way of living in this world, as a creative art, in this dynamics. Man’s tastes should reflect this desire. Such desire must be rooted in man’s consciousness, which has its destiny in transcending itself.

With this view in mind, we have reviewed critically the three major theories of cultural evolution: Adam Smith, Veblen, and Bourdieu. Adam Smith’s theory is founded on man’s moral sentiments, which give rise to man’s ambition and industry and mobilize a race of competition for the applaud of the spectator. This race, mediated by wealth accumulation, splits the society into different classes with different virtues and tastes. The wealthy class sets a fashionable style of living with a refined code of decorum, which will be emulated by the poor as something genteel and magnificent. The wealthy try to distance themselves from the rest, while the poor busy themselves with catching up. Thus, man’s industry becomes a positive principle of producing innova-
tive goods acquired by the wealthy. The principle of custom and habit plays its part in this evolution by shaping man’s sense of beauty and propriety. Adam Smith’s theory is essentially a theory that explains the socio-economic and cultural evolution in terms of how man’s moral sentiments turn man’s nature into two virtues: industry serving as the productive principle and the habituated sense of beauty and propriety serving as an extensive principle of screening goods and manners for their serviceability to what is conceived to be a refined style of living. Our love for the beautiful, the elegant, the useful, and the applauded in the eyes of the public turns them into the sense of nobility and keeps the grand order of the economy extending without leaving any part of it unaccounted for. This love also is the source of man’s desire for better institutions for the public welfare. Adam Smith thought: A deception as it may be, this order evinces Providence.

We saw that Adam Smith’s theory was inherited by Veblen. His version starts with the instinct of workmanship as a socially acquired aptitude. This instinct habituates man’s proclivity to value the honorific reputability, causing the sense of beauty and usefulness and the honorific reputability to be blended or circumvented into that of novelty. The instinct of workmanship, setting off a race of wealth accumulation, again splits the society into the wealthy and the poor with their own virtues and tastes, where the wealthy take pride in being exempt from labor and regards labor as debasing to the spirit of man. The leisure class refines its code of decorum as a vicarious means of expressing their exemption from labor, and seizes consumption as another effective voucher of a life of leisure. The virtues of industry and thrift of the poor serve as the productive principle of the economy, whereas the virtues of the wealthy serve as the principle of surveillance to screen goods for their serviceability to refined styles of living. Emulation and avoidance between classes is motivated by the desire to attain the honorific reputability. As in the case of Adam Smith, the socio-economic and cultural evolution is viewed as a dialectic between these two principles. The principle of habituation is again crucial to Veblen’s theory. Man’s habits are a complex organization of various habits of thought and interests that are influencing one another as they affect the apperceptive activity: the canon of honorific waste traverses the canons of moral conduct, beauty, utility, fitness, and what not, even the sacredness of the institution of the private property.

Bourdieu returned to the site of habitus, man’s habituated state of mind called dispositions, in explaining why the society divides into different classes with different virtues. This division is sustained by the internalization of the conditions of existence with all its logic of division. The habitus, in this sense, has an active structuring principle and a passive structured principle that are in conformity. The class division, in Bourdieu’s view, is brought about by appropriation of two types of capital, economic and cultural. The former closes the distance to the material means of acquisition, and the latter is needed for life-styles of distinction. While the society is divided into different classes, this division is dynamic, since man’s life-styles themselves are defined not so much by what they have as what they lack vis-à-vis other life styles. Turning man’s conditions of existence into the virtues of liking what is affordable does not keep man from having a desire to move up the social ladder by appropriating economic and cultural capital. Although Bourdieu’s theory does not make this movement explicit because the habitus is regarded as the site of active and passive
principles of division and conformity, his insistence that all social classes, dwelling in their own
habitus, are homologous in structure should be taken to imply that a possible dialectic movement
of class division is already present in the actualized division and that this dialectic is mobilized
by the exposure to new information that disturbs the stability of the habitus. In his theory, the
habitus is the generative principle of not only the logic of practice in practical dealings but also all
the thoughts, perceptions, and actions; the habitus is also essential for the full realization of institu-
tions. Consumption is no exception; it expresses the conditions of existence mediated by
the taste that maps sheer objects into symbolic ones, depending on how much of economic and
cultural capital is appropriated.

The three theories converge on this logic: Through appropriation of wealth or capital, society spontaneously divides itself into different classes by turning the conditions of existence into virtues: the virtues of the wealthy and the virtues of the less wealthy. The first virtues are focused on freedom, independence, and generosity and on the cultivation of the styles of living along with a code of decorum, that culminates in a refined art of consumption, and the second virtues on industry, prudence, justice, parsimony, and observance of strict rules, which are responsible for the development of sciences and arts and for the activities of production and innovation. The two are held together by the habituation of the apperceptive activity of mind, in which the sense of aesthetic beauty is turned into circumvented tastes for noble and novel goods, that are met by innovations. Such circumvented tastes are shared commonly and become the source of aspiration and emulation. Thus, the society evolves by the virtues of freedom and independence on the one hand and industry and parsimony on the other, that is, by the virtues of consumption and production.

Parsons’ theory of social systems affirms that man’s actions are voluntarily determined with their cognitive, cathetic, and evaluative orientations correlated with the three systems of the culture: the cognitive reference system, the system of expressive symbolism, and the system of moral standards. If actions of individual agents are integrated with a social system, by way of the internalization of common normative values, man’s actions and a social system can constitute a stable co-movement. This theory, therefore, is supportive of the view that the meaning of man’s activities is closely related to the culture in which they are embedded. They are all founded on the need-dispositions in which common normative values are internalized. Parsons’ theory, however, alerts us on a possible dilemma between institutionalized dispositions and innovations that disturb them. How the need-dispositions open up to innovations and assimilate them is a matter that is not fully addressed in his theory.

We extended our investigation to a phenomenological inquiry into man’s consciousness and ontological existence. Heidegger’s analytic of Dasein and his insight that man exists primarily through practical dealings is particularly pertinent to our discussion. In Heidegger’s view, it is through practical dealings that man encounters various entities, the public World, and the en-
vironing Nature. Before man’s existence is thema-
tized, man already ‘is’ as Being-in-the-world encoun-
tering various entities through their equipment-
ality, where this equipmentality has its assign-
ments of the in-order-to’s. This spontaneity of man’s practical dealings is what constitutes man’s
Being in the lifeworld of everydayness. How to live one’s life, how to interpret the activities one is engaged in, is left to the deliberation of the indi-
vidual living his life of practical dealings. Man’s ontological existence, therefore, is prior to any formulation, and gazing it as it is reveals the truth of this existence. If Dasein is Being-in-the-world and if Dasein encounters entities as equipment through practical dealings, this Being is lived in the culture as well, in which Dasein unavoidably encounters many products of culture as ready-to-hand. The most prominent of such products is the language itself. When interpreting man’s activities, it should be kept in mind that the world of practical dealings is where their meanings are found.

Husserl’s phenomenology on man’s consciousness as an act of intentionality has much to say on the theme of this paper. All of man’s activities emanate from his consciousness. Consciousness, by its act of intentionality and by its power of intuition (perceptive and categorial), constructs the objectivities as irreal objects (ideational objects), and unifies them into some unity. Such objectivities have their Being as essences or ideas, hence the act of intentionality is an act of discovering ideas by the power of categorial intuition. But, ideas, no matter how pure, are unlimited. Man’s consciousness is, therefore, destined for an unlimited region of pure essences. Husserl awakened us on this destiny, that man’s consciousness is open to this limitless field of pure ideas. As long as man’s consciousness is bounded by his own experience under the laws of psychical phenomena, man’s ego will stay at the level of a psychical ego of empirical origin, but if the consciousness transcends it by the purifying act of bracketing, it will first discover a pure psychical ego, that is, the transcendental psychological ego, which can understand the former as a self-objectivation of the latter, and then the transcendental ego, which can understand the pure psychical ego as one of its possible instances. This ascending is not automatic as the history of thought amply reveals; it has not been easy for mankind to free himself from the shackles of the Cave. The ascending requires a new attitude, and this attitude has to be habituated firmly. Man’s activities are made possible by a synthesis of the ideational objectivities that are captured by his mind. If so, they should become better with innovations in science, mathematics, technology, and so forth. Such innovations are not given externally but must originate in man’s consciousness transcending to new ideas and principles. Also, it cannot be ignored that man’s activities, both in sciences and in practical dealings, are based on the rules of conduct, whose laws will not become fully visible unless man’s ego reaches the transcendental ego as the true basis of the intersubjectivity. Husserl’s ascendance to the transcendental ego as this basis is consistent with Kant’s view that man is a rational being capable of constituting a moral law as a universal law and of acting autonomously in accordance with this law [Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals: Critique of Practical Reason]. To be sure, this transcendence is a spontaneous movement from within with a new attitude and is achieved only by the free spirit of man. This brings us back to the view expressed at the outset, that the socio-economic order is a universe, not an artificial arrangement, that evolves by its internal principles, the noblest of which is man’s will to transcend to an unlimited region of new ideas and pure essences. The theories of Adam Smith, Veblen, and Bourdieu make more sense when their generative principles, positive or regulative, are viewed from the standpoint of man’s desire for this transcendence, be it for a better art of living or for the development of scientific knowledge and technology. Culture evolves with a habituated attitude and refined virtues, which direct man’s endeavors in all areas
of his activities, intellectual or practical. Man’s progress is thus founded on two principles: institutionalization of dispositions in accordance with the logic of division, and the transcending act of consciousness toward higher ideas and purer essences in search for the absolute basis of the intersubjectivity.

References