

# Values in Contexts: An Ontological Theory<sup>1</sup>

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Values exist not in isolation, but in complex wholes. Values are what they are because of the complex wholes in which they are situated. To do justice to this thesis will require a holistic ontology, a theory according to which many types of entities exist only as inseparable parts or moments of wider contexts or environments. An ontological theory of environment—with roots in Gestalt psychology and the ecological psychology of J. J. Gibson and Roger Barker, and which is related also to the theory of motivation sketched by Edmund Husserl as part of his theory of the lifeworld or *Lebenswelt*—will help us to understand the ontology of values. It will help us to understand what values are. It will not, however, tell us what is good or bad. From facts of ontology, no value-propositions themselves can be inferred.

## 2. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT

Wholes are prior to parts. In contrast to the many philosophers who have sought to reconstruct the world out of simples—sense-data, substances, properties, tropes—I will defend a modestly holistic ontology, according to which not only values but also certain other sorts of entities exist not in isolation but only as inseparable parts or moments of the wider contexts or environments within which they are situated. Attempts to construct the world out of elementary parts are doomed to fail in the attempt to nail down theoretically the sort of integrity that contexts or environments represent, since such wholes are not the results of any logical—or physical or psychological—compounding. Rather, the very elements to which such compounding is applied are themselves the results of cognitive abstraction from the wholes in question.

This is not to say that additive constructions do not exist. Many of the most impressive achievements of human creativity consist in finding new ways or patterns in which relatively simple events and processes can become compounded together to form more complex phenomena. Complex occurments, such as opera performances, enjoy a complexity which embraces constituents drawn from widely diverse material domains. An act of promising manifests a complexity of this sort, embracing constituents of a linguistic, psychological, quasi-legal and quasi-ethical sort, as well as more narrowly physical constituents of different types, including vibrations in the air and ear and associated electrical and chemical events in the brain.

The modest holism here defended is inspired first of all by the ontological views of the Berlin Gestalt psychologists, above all of Wolfgang Köhler and Kurt Koffka. Psychologists in the nineteenth century had seen their task as one of explaining how the appearance of complexity in the external environment could arise on the basis of mental simples, called ideas or elements or sense data. The Gestaltists, in contrast, turned their attentions more resolutely outward, to the physical world, and in terms which recognized a genuine, autonomous complexity of structure on the side of physical reality. Patterns and processes in the brain serve as the foundation for the psychological processes which make up our mental experience. As concerns the objects of such experience, however, the Gestaltists still embraced a confused understanding of the relations between the psychological environment and the world of physics. A passage from Koffka, in which the Gestaltist distinction between the behavioral or mental and the geographic or physical environments is introduced, illustrates the problem at issue:

On a winter evening amidst a driving snowstorm a man on horseback arrived at an inn, happy to have reached shelter after hours of riding over the wind-swept plain on which the blanket of snow had covered all paths and landmarks. The landlord who came to the door viewed the stranger with surprise and asked him whence he came. The man pointed in the direction straight away from the inn, whereupon the landlord, in a tone of awe and wonder, said: "Do you know that you have ridden across the Lake of Constance"? At which the rider dropped stone dead at his feet.<sup>2</sup>

In what environment did the behavior of the stranger take place? Lake Constance, certainly—but according to Koffka, it is interesting for the geographer that this behavior took place in this particular locality, not however, for the psychologist, as student of behavior. The latter, Koffka insisted, would have to say:

There is a second sense to the word environment according to which our horseman did not ride across the lake at all, but across an ordinary snow-swept plain. His behaviour was a riding-over-a-plain, but not a riding-over-a-lake.<sup>3</sup>

For all their concern with the physical side of psychological experience, Gestaltists such as Koffka resorted to a view according to which the objects of experience were not objects in physical reality at all. Rather, the objects experienced were the creatures or products of our mental activity. Like their predecessors before them, and like the idealist philosophers, the Gestaltists were not able to come to any coherent account of the relationship between this environment and the world of physical things.<sup>4</sup>

Similar confusions can be found in Husserl, whose later writings otherwise offer a series of masterly descriptions of the features of the commonsense reality that is given in experience.<sup>5</sup> And the same confusions are present in the writings of the phenomenologist Max Scheler, whose theory of the milieu of practical life influenced Martin Heidegger's writings on being-in-the-world:

The "things" which are relevant to our acting, what we always refer to when, for example, we trace certain deeds of human beings (or dispositions towards such deeds) to their "*milieu*," have of course not the slightest to do either with Kant's "thing in itself" or with the objects conceived by science (through the supposition of which science "explains" natural facts). The sun of the milieu of human beings is not the sun of astronomy. The meat that is stolen, bought, or what have you, is not a sum of cells and tissues with the chemico-physical processes which take place within them. The sun of the milieu is different at the North Pole, in moderate zones, and at the equator, and its beams are felt as different beams. . . . There is much that "effects" me objectively—for instance, electrical and magnetic currents, rays of many sorts that I do not sense, etc.—which certainly does not belong to my "*milieu*" . . . *Only that which I effectively experience belongs thereto.*<sup>6</sup>

The problem with this passage is clear. As schoolboys with microscopes know, meat that is stolen and bought does most certainly possess cells and tissues which undergo chemico-physical processes. The sun that is experienced at the North Pole is most certainly the same sun as the sun that is experienced at the Equator. It cannot, therefore, be the case that the things in our practical, commonsensical environment have not the slightest to do with the objects conceived by science.

### 3. ECOLOGICAL REALISM

The central difficulty with the work of Husserl, Scheler, and the Gestaltists as an account of our relations to our everyday environment is that it seems to rule out the possibility of any shared physical environment altogether. The ecological psychologists J. J. Gibson and Roger Barker, in contrast, who followed in the wake of the Gestaltists and who were influenced by the latter after their emigration to America, offer the beginnings of a correct framework for a contextualist ontology of a sort that would do justice to the physical nature of the shared environments in which human behavior takes place.

In both perception and action, from the Gibson-Barker point of view, we are embrangled with the very things themselves in the surrounding world to which our activities are directed, not with sense data or representations or noemata. To a much greater degree than is manifest in even the most radical Gestaltist writings, Gibson and Barker emphasize the fact that psychological experience is to be understood not in terms of a succession of two-term relations between acts and more or less coherently integrated objects in some special psychological realm, but rather in terms of a "situatedness" in the physical world, whereby the sentient, mobile organism is housed within a surrounding environment in such a way that its perceptions and actions along with associated values and motivations are to be understood theoretically only as occurring within this surrounding framework. At the same time, the latter is understood not in psychological terms but as something that falls squarely within the realm of physics. Our successive environments contain lakes, chairs, tables, salamanders, sandy beaches, and X-ray tomography machines, even independently of specific beliefs about these environments that we might hold on given occasions.

Perceptions, like actions, are for the ecological psychologists achievements of purposeful creatures. Perception is not a matter of the processing of meaningless sensations. Rather it is a direct acquisition of complex information about objects in the environment, information which is acquired because the perceiver, in his or her active looking, touching, tasting, feeling, is bound up with the very objects—the crumpled shirt, the empty glass, the broken spear—which are relevant to his or her life and tasks of the moment.

Gibson and Barker thus embrace a radically externalistic view of mind and action. We have not a Cartesian mind or soul, with its interior theater of contents or representations, or beliefs and desires and a consequent problem of explaining how this mind or soul can succeed, via intentionality, in grasping objects external to itself. Rather, we have a perceiving, acting organism, whose perceptions and actions are always already inextricably intertwined with the parts and moments, the things and surfaces, of its external environment.

#### 4. COMPLEX WHOLE

Things, too, may be complex. Indeed, we are surrounded in our day-to-day activities by a huge variety of more or less integrated wholes which are genuine constituents of the furniture of the world. Thus we have artefactual assemblies, such as Meinong's typewriter or Theseus's ship. We have quasi-unitary collectives which are easily decomposed but not easily translocated, such as sandy beaches, river deltas, clumps of trees, and mountain ranges. And we have social wholes, a category that includes not only families and tribes, nations and empires, but also orchestras and chess clubs, battalions and football teams, as well as those more or less short-lived social groupings that arise when strangers are formally introduced, or pair up on the dance floor.<sup>7</sup>

Such social wholes constitute a new dimension of being within the commonsense world, analogous to the level of persons proper. Institutions have their own lives; they endure through time, despite acquiring or losing members; they have their own qualities and states, and their own ways of functioning in collaboration or in interaction with each other. And like things on lower levels, they are through and through dependent on circumstances and are subject to more and less regular and intelligible patterns of change. Social wholes are thus to be distinguished from sets, as the mathematician conceives them, as also from arbitrary aggregates or pluralities. This is, above all, because sets are examples of unities that are to a degree able to survive changes in the stock of their members or participants. Quasi-organic unities of this type demand a new sort of ontological theory.

Just as Tibbles gains and loses molecules, so social wholes may gain and lose members, and they may undergo other sorts of changes through time while still retaining their identity. Towns, cities, universities, and corporate bodies generally, manifest the ability to sustain themselves through time even though they are subject to a certain turnover of their constituent continuants. They can continue to exist even while some of their participants are removed and others take their places. In addition, there are dependent objects that have social wholes as their bearers or carriers but which may survive replacement of these bearers. Languages, religions, legal systems, and many other sorts of institutions do not depend for their existence upon specific individuals or groups; rather, they depend generically on the existence of individuals or groups fulfilling certain necessary roles. This sort of generic dependence is characteristic also of contexts or environments of many different types, and of the values which exist within them.

## 5. THE THEORY OF PHYSICAL-BEHAVIORAL UNITS

The commonsense world of streets and rivers, football teams and religious festivals, falls outside the purview of physics as narrowly understood, and this is so even if its ultimate constituents are all of them physical in nature. For the commonsense world is not a quantitative order of physical magnitudes, but instead, a qualitatively structured world in which people work, converse, judge, evaluate. It is a world of things that we put to use for various practical purposes, things that exist *in situ*, which is to say, in an environment of other real things. The commonsense world is further organized into overlapping social and institutional zones or contexts within which human beings figure as participants. Thus, we do not have persons, monads, or egos on one side and things on the other, with a gulf between them that is bridged via intentionality. Persons and things are both equally caught up within the practical contexts of everyday life, within entities of a new, over-arching type, for which Barker coined the technical terms "behavior setting" or "physical-behavioral unit."

Examples of physical-behavioral units are: Wendy's Friday afternoon class, Jim's meeting with his teacher, your Thursday lunch, Frank's early morning swim, the 8 o'clock train to Long Island. Such physical-behavioral units may repeat themselves that is, may exist in many copies. They

are common phenomenal entities, and they are natural units in no way imposed by an investigator. To laymen they are as objective as rivers and forests—they are parts of the objective environment that are experienced directly as rain and sandy beaches are experienced.<sup>8</sup>

Barker insists that physical-behavioral units are parts of reality. They are of inestimable importance for an understanding of human cognition and action, since almost all human behavior occurs within one. All roles are played within behavior settings. All organizations are composed of them. All biographies are ordered in terms of them. All values are realized within them. Human beings are determined through and through by the behavior settings in which they participate, exactly as nonhuman animals are determined through and through by the ecological niches into which they have evolved. Even our journeys from site to site, and our loungings in daydream mode between quests, are recognizable as physical-behavioral units in Barker's terms. Even our more or less unsuccessful attempts to engage in standard activities can be understood for what they are only in terms of an independent prevalence of physical-behavioral units of the corresponding, full-fledged type, for it is only in relation to the latter that our attempts are determined as attempts and our successes distinguished from our failures. The behavior settings in which we constantly find ourselves are to a degree porous, in virtue of the fact that we may sometimes switch effective context from moment to moment as our attention is distracted now by one thing or person, now by another. This does not, however, detract either from the reality of behavior settings or from their salience and their virtual all-pervasiveness in our lives as human beings. Only in rare moments of total disorientation do we seem to be set free of all behavior settings, but this is just to imply that in normal cases we are oriented in relation to settings.

Each physical-behavioral unit has at least two sorts of components: human beings behaving in certain ways—lecturing, sitting, listening, eating—and nonpsychological objects with which behavior is transacted—chairs, walls, paper, forks, scalpels. Each physical-behavioral unit has a boundary that separates an organized internal, or foreground, pattern from an external, or background, pattern, like Husserl's horizon. This boundary, too, though it is far from simple, is an objective part of nature, though it may change according to the participants involved or according to the circumstances from moment to moment. Each unit is circumjacent to its components, which means that the former surrounds, encloses, or encompasses the latter without a break: the pupils and equipment are in the class; the shop opens at 8 A.M. and closes at 6 P.M. The surrounding portion of reality is, to be sure, not distinguished physically from its neighbors. The significance of this demarcated portion of reality is

exclusively psychological in nature—it pertains, indeed, to the psychology of common sense; but it exists as part of physical reality nonetheless.

## **6. THE FITTINGNESS OF BEHAVIOR AND ECOLOGICAL SETTING**

The behavior and the physical objects that together constitute the totality of a given physical-behavioral unit are intertwined in such a way as to form a pattern that is not random. There is a harmonious fit between the standard patterns of behavior occurring within the unit and the pattern of its physical components. For example, the seats in a lecture hall face the speaker. The speaker addresses his remarks out towards the audience. The boundary of the football field is, leaving aside certain predetermined exceptions, the boundary of the game. The beginning and end of the school music period mark the limits of the pattern of music behavior. This mutual fittingness of behavior and physical environment extends to the fine, interior structure of behavior in a way that implies a radical nontransposability of standing patterns of behavior from one environment to another. The physical or historical or ceremonial conditions obtaining in particular settings are as essential for some kinds of behavior as are persons with the requisite authority, motives, and skills.<sup>9</sup>

There are various forces which help to bring about and sustain this mutual fittingness and thus to constitute the unity of the physical-behavioral unit through time.<sup>10</sup> Forces which flow in the direction from setting to behavior include physical constraints such as hedges, walls or corridors, or by persons with sticks. They include social forces manifested in the authority of the teacher, in threats, promises, warnings. Also listed among constraints are physiological effects of climate, the need for food and water, and the effects of perceived physiognomic features of the environment. Open spaces seduce children; a businesslike atmosphere encourages businesslike behavior. Mutual fittingness can be reinforced by learning, and by a process of selection of the persons involved, whether this be one of self-selection or of externally imposed mental or physical entrance tests. Influences which flow in the opposite direction, from behavior to setting, include all those ways in which a succession of separate and uncoordinated actions can have unintended consequences. These may be new types of actions and new, modified types of settings in the future. Consider how a passage of many feet causes pathways to form in the hillside. Finally, in the case of physical-behavioral units which involve a multiplicity of persons as participants, there are influences which flow from the exercise of the controlling power which different members exercise to different degrees over the unit's functioning.

Physical-behavioral units manifest a capacity for self-sustenance which is like what we find in the biological realm. They are self-regulating, and are such as to guide their components to characteristic states and to maintain those states within limited ranges of values in the face of disturbances.<sup>11</sup> Slight modifications within given dimensions of the unit can be sustained without

detriment to its continued existence as a unit of this type. The total behavior making up the unit, for example a Rotary Club meeting, cannot be greatly changed without its being destroyed. The meeting must contain an introduction; there must be a speech, there must be listening and discussion. Within the meeting, there are the subparts: chairman, speaker, discussant, audience, as within the sentence there are the subparts: subject, verb, noun, rising inflection, and so on.

## 7. MOTIVATION

When Barker talks of behavior settings, Gibson talks of the ecological niche. Each type of organism, as Gibson sees it, is tuned in its perception and actions to objects on a specific level within the complex hierarchy of the surrounding physical reality which together form the organism's niche. A niche is that into which an animal fits; it is that in relation to which the animal is habituated in its behavior.<sup>12</sup> A niche embraces not only things of different sorts, but also shapes, textures, tendencies, boundaries, whether surfaces or edges, all of which are organized via what Gibson calls their affordance-character for the animal in question. Gibson coined the word affordance "as a substitute for *values*, a term which carries an old burden of philosophical meaning. [By *affordance*] I mean simply what things furnish for us, for good or for ill."<sup>13</sup>

The *affordances* of the environment are what it *offers* the animal, what it *provides* or *furnishes*, whether for good or ill. – I mean by [affordance] something that refers to both the environment and the animal in a way that no existing term does. It implies the complementarity of the animal and the environment.<sup>14</sup>

Affordances are what motivate the organism; they are such as to intrude upon its life, to stimulate the organism in a range of different ways. Scheler, too, saw the need to come to terms with the fact that we are in a certain sense tuned to our environment, so that we can pick up information from our surroundings even in the absence of conscious, reflective calculation:

There belongs to the momentary "milieu" not only the series of objects that I perceive . . . while I am walking in the street or sitting in my room, but also everything with whose existence or non-existence, with whose being so or other than so, I practically "reckon," e.g. the cars and people that I avoid (when I am lost in thought or when my gaze is fixed on someone far away). A sailor, for example, is able to "reckon" with an oncoming storm from changes in his milieu without being able to say which specific change (e.g., in the formation of the clouds, in the temperature, etc.) serves as a sign.<sup>15</sup>

But the most detailed descriptions of the surrounding environment of everyday practical activity are provided by Husserl in his discussions, in *Ideas*



Book II and in the *Crisis*, of what he calls the ontology of the lifeworld. As Husserl points out, there is, in addition to the strictly physical interactions of persons and things within the common-sense world, a second sense in which persons and things are bound together dynamically in everyday practical activities. It is here that the locus of value is to be found. The objects of this world exist almost always in determinate environments, in physical-behavioral settings. They exert subtle but compelling positive and negative forces upon participant human beings, forces of attraction and repulsion, forces which belong not to the sphere of causality but to that of human salience and of requiredness.

When I perceive things and persons in their surrounding circumstances, I am determined automatically, which is to say, non-deliberatively, by what Husserl calls a "web of motivations."<sup>16</sup> These are first of all practical motivations. The noise of the cars out there makes me close the window. The glass of beer over here makes me reach out my arm to grasp it. But they extend out into aesthetics and other value-spheres. A skyscraper steers my regard onto itself through its special form. A butterfly draws attention to itself through its beautiful color or texture. As Husserl expresses it, "in my theoretical, emotional, and practical behaviour—in my theoretical experience and thinking, in my position-taking as to pleasure, enjoyment, hoping, wishing, desiring, wanting—I feel myself conditioned by the matter in question."<sup>17</sup> The object motivates the subject: it intrudes on the subject and stimulates him or her in a wide range of different though characteristically understandable and familiar ways.

While we can present to ourselves the objects of the commonsense world merely perceptually, as mere material targets of disinterested perception, as subjects of this world we are not merely perceiving but also acting beings and are constantly subject to corresponding motivations. This means that under normal circumstances we automatically effect evaluations of the objects by which we are confronted in a way which amounts, in Husserl's eyes, to a sort of value-perception: "the value-character itself is given in original intuition."<sup>18</sup>

## 8. PERSONS AND CONTEXTS

Many encompassing practical environments will contain other human beings as participants. Persons influence each other above all via those deliberately constructed edifices of motivation we call uses of language. Persons direct their activities toward one another. "They perform acts with the intention of being understood by the other and of determining the other, via his understanding grasp of these acts, . . . to certain personal modes of behavior."<sup>19</sup> There are, as Husserl tells us, social acts,

in which the ego turns to others and in which the ego is conscious of these others as ones toward which it is turning, . . . perhaps adjust their behaviour to it and reciprocate by turning toward that ego in acts of agreement or

disagreement, etc. It is these acts, between persons who already "know" each other, which foster a higher unity of consciousness and which include in this unity the surrounding world of things as the surrounding world common to the persons who take a position in regard to it.<sup>20</sup>

So there are not merely personal motivations in the narrow sense ensuing from this man who is my friend or from that man who strikes me as honest and reliable. There are also webs of motivation which pertain to communities of persons as such and which hold social institutions together. Among these is what we might call transcategorical motivations, patterns of motivation which link together not only our mental and bodily experiences but also social and especially linguistic acts, laws, contracts, and so forth.

From all of this it follows that the persons in the commonsense world are determined by the fact that they belong to different personal unities of a higher order. The human being, as creature of the commonsense world, is a being marked by his dealings with others in relation to, among other things, institutions, laws, morals, and customs.

The members of the community, of marriage and of the family, of the social class, of the union, of the borough, of the state, of the church, etc., "know" themselves as their members, find themselves dependent upon them in their consciousness and affect them in their consciousness in turn.<sup>21</sup>

The relation between person and environment is, to different degrees, one of reciprocal co-determination. Each participant has two positions within the unit. First, he is a component, and thus contributes to forming the unit. Second, he is an individual whose behavior, and whose very nature as participant social object, is itself partly formed by the unit of which he is at any given moment a part, but not in a manner that affects his continued existence as a human being. Schoggen summarizes Barker's views by describing physical-behavioral settings as consisting of "highly structured, improbable arrangements of objects and events that coerce behavior in accordance with their own dynamic patterning."<sup>22</sup> The person is determined through and through, by the behavioral context of the moment. Since this context is subject to change, it follows, as Schoggen points out, that

a person has many strengths, many intelligences, many social maturities, many speeds, many degrees of liberality and conservativeness, and many moralities, depending in large part on the particular contexts of the person's behavior. For example, the same person who displays marked obtrusiveness when confronted with a mechanical problem may show impressive skill and adroitness in dealing with social situations.<sup>23</sup>

Thus a society is composed of members of the community, of marriage and of the family, of the social class, of the union, of the borough, of the state, of the church, and others. To each of these there corresponds in the life of each one of

us different zones of salience and motivation, different strands of physical-behavioral units in which we are engaged, different networks of positive and negative values.

## 9. VALUES IN CONTEXTS

The situatedness of value within contexts is well brought out by Wolfgang Köhler, whose *Place of Value in a World of Facts* lists the following features of "requiredness," the Gestalt-theoretical equivalent of Husserl's "motivation":

*First:* A datum, an entity or an act is required *within a context* of other data, entities or acts. This holds both for negative and for positive requiredness.

*Secondly:* Within the context in question requiredness is a *dependent* characteristic that has no existence of its own, apart from the entities that fit or do not fit each other in these contexts.

*Thirdly:* All requiredness *transcends* from certain parts of a context to others of the same context. Like all other kinds of reference, it is in this sense a directed translocal trait, a vector, that cannot be split into bits which have a merely local existence.

*Fourthly:* Requiredness differs strikingly from other forms of reference by its *demanding* character. It involves acceptance or rejection of the present status of the context in question . . . This demanding character has degrees of intensity.<sup>24</sup>

Values, and their associated motivations and encompassing practical environments are of course not commonsensical objects in the way that apples, houses, mountains are. They constitute a new dimension of being within the commonsense world. That this dimension of being has still hardly been investigated by philosophers turns, I believe, on the fact that it belongs to the domain of mere opinion rather than of certain knowledge. Epistemic concerns have at least since Descartes, titled ontology in a solipsistic direction. Gibson and Barker have shown us how to tilt it back once more into the position where it can do justice not only to the inner life of human consciousness but also to the external environments in which human beings and human actions are situated.

## 10. CONCLUSION

The theory of environments helps us to understand the ontology of values. It tells us something about what values are, about their ontological shape and situation, the dependence relations in which they stand to other things. What it will not do is tell us what is good or bad. From facts of ontology no value-propositions can be inferred. From facts about the ontology of contexts, no value-propositions can be inferred. Persons in given contexts may indeed believe with absolute sincerity that they are acting morally, or in such a way as to realize values of other sorts. Yet their beliefs are false even though the contexts in question are outwardly indistinguishable from other contexts in

which similar beliefs are true. The ontology of values does not tell us what is valuable in any given case, any more than the ontology of truth can tell us what is true.

## Notes

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2. Kurt Koffka, *Principles of Gestalt Psychology* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1935), 26.

3. Koffka, *Principles*, 27.

4. Kevin Mulligan, "Perceptions," in eds. Barry Smith and David Woodruff Smith, *The Cambridge Companion to Husserl* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 189.

5. See Barry Smith, "Common Sense," in eds. Barry Smith and David Woodruff Smith, *The Cambridge Companion to Husserl* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 394–436, for an overview of Husserl's ontology of the commonsense world and of its problems.

6. Max Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 1954, p. 158, Bern: Francke; trans. M. S. Frings and Roger L. Funk as *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Value* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 139.

7. See Margaret Gilbert, *On Social Facts* (New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, 1989) and Margaret Gilbert, "Group Membership and Political Obligation," *The Monist*, 76 (1993): 119–131 (especially pp. 122f of the latter, on plural subjects).

8. Roger Barker, *Ecological Psychology, Concepts and Methods for Studying the Environment of Human Behaviour* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1968), 11. [Note: italics in quote added for emphasis]

9. Barker, *Ecological Psychology*, 32.

10. Barker, *Ecological Psychology*, 30f.

11. Barker, *Ecological Psychology*, 154f.

12. J. J. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1986), 129. For an ontological theory of niches in the spirit of the present paper, see also Barry Smith and Achille Varzi, "The Niche," *Noûs* 33, no. 2 (1995): 198–222.

13. J. J. Gibson, *The Senses Considered as Perceptual Systems* (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1966), 23

14. Gibson, *The Ecological Approach*, 127.

15. Scheler, *Der Formalismus*, 159, English translation p. 140.

16. Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. First Book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, trans. F. Kersten (The Hague, Nijhoff, 1982), 101.

17. Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenological Philosophy. Second Book: Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*, trans. R. Rojcewicz and A. Schuwer (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Press, 1989), 140.
18. Husserl, *Ideas, Second Book*, 186.
19. Husserl, *Ideas, Second Book*, 192.
20. Husserl, *Ideas, Second Book*, 194.
21. Husserl, *Ideas, Second Book*, 182.
22. P. Schoggen, *Behavior Settings: A Revision and Extension of Roger G. Barker's Ecological Psychology* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), 4.
23. Schoggen, *Behavior Settings*, 7.
24. Wolfgang Köhler, *The Place of Value in a World of Facts* (New York: Liveright, 1938), 255ff.