



# Comments on Sociology in a New Key by Helmut Staubmann

Victor Lidz<sup>1</sup>

Accepted: 3 January 2024  
© The Author(s) 2024

## Abstract

Helmut Staubmann argues in his new book that sociological theory should acknowledge its overemphasis on the normative regulation of social relationships and institutions and provide appropriate attention to the expressive and aesthetic aspects of social life. With many illustrations, he demonstrates that the expressive aspect is present in almost all interaction and, moreover, important institutions, such as museums and concert venues, operate to give popular access to highly salient aesthetic experiences. Staubmann also provides an unparalleled overview of past literature addressing the expressive/aesthetic aspect of social life. The present comments add suggestions about how, given the complexity of the problem, the expressive/aesthetic elements of interaction.

**Keywords** Symbolism · Expressive · Aesthetic · Emotions · Art · Institutions · Culture · Normative · Mind

In his new book, *Sociology in a New Key; Essays in Social Theory and Aesthetics*,<sup>1</sup> Helmut Staubmann synthesizes his thought and writings, developed over some thirty years, to argue that “art may serve as a model for the understanding of human relationships” (p. 117). The book consists of sections of previously published essays combined with fresh passages linking them together to make a newly powerful argument. In sum, Staubmann proposes that sociological theory has been overly focused on a Durkheimian model of normative orders structuring social institutions and hence society as a whole. The Durkheimian emphasis on normative order has yielded disattention to the many ways that art, expressive symbolizations, and aesthetics also shape human experience. In Staubmann’s treatment, the expressive/aesthetic dimension of social life extends from manners in daily interaction—how we

<sup>1</sup> Staubmann (2022), *Sociology in a New Key; Essays in Social Theory and Aesthetics*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature.

✉ Victor Lidz  
lidzvic@gmail.com

<sup>1</sup> Department of Psychiatry, Drexel College of Medicine, 31 Independence Place, Chesterbrook, PA 19087, USA

dress as personal expression, how we greet and shake hands with one another, how we express our feelings politely to others—to our enjoyment of Rembrandt's paintings or Beethoven's late quartets, how we read and enjoy poetry, stories, and novels, and how such works of art move our emotions. On a deeper level are the matters of how we experience and express love, affection, and esteem for spouses and family members, close friends, and colleagues—or the opposite, how we experience and express anger toward those who arouse our ire. Of course, the range of emotions may be similar, whether directed to people close to us or to more distant “symbolic” figures, such as political leaders, cultural innovators, movie stars, or popular singers.

Staubmann makes his case. It is true that sociology has largely disattended the expressive and aesthetic dimensions of social life. To be sure, there have been many social scientists who have attended to that dimension of experience, but it has nevertheless remained outside the principal frames of reference within which research and teaching are generally conducted. Research generally focuses on the normative and seeks to grasp the stabilizing or “structural” components of social systems.<sup>2</sup> It rarely proceeds on the basis of the “new key” that Staubmann advocates.

A particular strength of Staubmann's discussion is the many prior theorists with whom he engages in the course of the volume. Georg Simmel and his many essays addressing the arts, and especially his monograph on Rembrandt,<sup>3</sup> is a principal figure. Talcott Parsons and his theory of social action are also central, as Parsons defined a place for expressive culture in his analysis of cultural systems and emphasized the importance of expressive/affectual elements in his treatment of motivation in personalities.<sup>4</sup> Yet, Parsons tended to underplay the expressive aspect of social interaction and relationships except in certain passages in his treatment of families.<sup>5</sup> Staubmann also discusses the contributions of Jean Marie Guyau, Max Weber, Siegfried Kracauer, Edmund Husserl, Norbert Elias, Sigmund Freud, Juergen Habermas, Clifford Geertz, Niklas Luhmann, John Dewey, David Frisby, Pierre Bourdieu, Jeffrey Alexander, Thorstein Veblen, Alfred Schutz, Thomas Scheff, and Ernst Kris, to cite only the more prominent figures. Geertz's *Interpretation of Cultures* (1973) has probably been the most influential work in the field over the past several decades. Staubmann also attends to the writings of Antonio Strati on the expressive aspects of social life; Strati contributes an insightful and creative Foreword to the volume. Thus, Staubmann engages a broader range of social scientists, psychologists, and philosophers than, I believe, has ever been mobilized to the problem of understanding the expressive/aesthetic dimension of social life. The range of his scholarship is remarkable, as is the underlying scope of thought he brings to bear on matters of the expressive and aesthetic.

Aside from just two or three brief passages, Staubmann tends to place the normative and aesthetic in opposition. Attention to the normative is thus presented as detracting from attention to the aesthetic. Historically, he is correct; for many works,

<sup>2</sup> Compare, Parsons, *The Social System* (1951). New York: The Free Press.

<sup>3</sup> Gerg Simmel, *Rembrandt; An Essay in the Philosophy of Art* (2005:1916), translated, edited, and introduced by Alan Scott and Helmut Staubmann. New York: Routledge.

<sup>4</sup> Parsons and Shils, “Values, Motives, and Systems of Action” in Parsons and Shils, editors, *Toward A General Theory of Action* (1951) Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Parsons, “Introduction” to “Part Four: Culture and the Social System” in Talcott Parsons, Edward A. Shils, Kaspar D. Naegele, and Jesse R. Pitts, editors, *Theories of Society*, volume two. (1961) New York: Free Press.

<sup>5</sup> Parsons and Bales, *Family, Socialization and Interaction Process* (1953) New York: Free Press.

I would not dispute this argument. Moreover, it is essential that at the level of culture the expressive/aesthetic dimension and the normative dimension have long been sharply differentiated in Western civilization and substantially in other civilizations and traditions as well. However, I suggest that in many settings of social interaction the two aspects of social action are closely linked. When we greet one another on the street, in professional settings, or on purely social occasions, such as a dinner party, there are norms of propriety regulating the expressive qualities of our conduct and varying significantly by the type of situation. Acting too effusively will often strike others as inappropriate, especially in professional settings. But when encountering an old and close friend not seen for some period, one is expected to convey warmth—not doing so may be interpreted as undervaluing the old relationship.

Let me illustrate the point about greetings by recounting a few occasions from my own experience. On an occasion in the late 1970s or perhaps early 1980s, I was invited to be an outside evaluator of graduating seniors' honors theses in sociology at Swarthmore College. When I was introduced at the orientation meeting in the morning to the other evaluators, I learned that the other reader for theses in sociological theory was a well-known, highly respected, senior scholar whose prominent works included rather sweeping critiques of the works of Talcott Parsons, my principal teacher, for whom I had been a research assistant, with whom I taught classes at the University of Chicago and the University of Pennsylvania, and with whom I had published a couple of papers and co-edited a book. The senior scholar and I shook hands and greeted each other politely, but I perceived that he was uncomfortable in making small talk with me and I think he likely perceived discomfort on my part. I surmised that he must be concerned about the differences of opinion we might have of the theses we had read and were to discuss with the students and, later, in the evaluators group, then submit our evaluations of the individual works. We were each polite and professional in the initial exchanges, yet both concerned about possibly unpleasant disagreements in the course of the day. It turned out, however, that we were entirely in agreement in evaluating the theses. We were more completely in agreement than either of us agreed with the several other evaluators when the group sought to rank the theses of all graduating honors students in sociology. We ended the day with warm expressions of shared judgment between the two of us.

A few years later, I had a very confusing first meeting with another senior sociologist who was one of the independent visitor/evaluators of the Department of Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania when I was an Assistant Professor there. At the end of the first day of the evaluators' visit to the department, there was a social occasion where I was introduced to her. I knew her to have been a good friend of Talcott Parsons' late daughter, Anne, and someone with whom the chair of our department, Renee Fox, had collaborated. As soon as we were introduced, she immediately said that she had known my wife as an excellent social worker at a Harvard Medical School-affiliated hospital where she had done research. I politely explained that the social worker was my brother's former wife and that I was sure she was a fine social worker. I explained that my wife was a lawyer. She replied, rather insistently, that she was sure that the social worker was my wife; she had talked about me as a sociologist. I explained that my brother was also a sociologist and was better known in the field of medical research than I. She replied that,

no, she was sure that it was my wife and she had been talking about me. I was quite confused at the implication that I didn't know my wife's profession or where she had worked, even in the years since we were married and had been living in cities distant from the hospital concerned! Fortunately, there was an opportunity to leave the conversation and join other people in exchanges.

Two or three years later, I encountered the same person again at meetings of the American Sociological Association. She acknowledged, again in a friendly manner, that we had met before. She seemed unapologetic about the evaluation of the Department of Sociology that the Visiting Committee had submitted, which, in my view, had done the department a lot of harm. However, she immediately renewed the former conversation, saying that she had known my wife as a social worker at the hospital. I replied in pretty much the same way as at our previous meeting and, again, she insisted that it was my wife she had previously known. I again took in her insistence that she knew my wife's profession and work despite my demurrals to be a normative violation, despite her expressive warmth. At any rate, it prevented further discussion and exchange. The normative violation of expressive standards blocked what might have been a valuable professional and personal exchange. She was an accomplished member of the profession and I might have learned things from her, but the breakdown in the elementary expressive aspects of "meet and greet" blocked it.

The same principle of close connection between expressive and normative elements of action applies to such structured settings as concerts. At a classical music concert, quiet is expected during the performance. (Concerts my wife and I attend have in recent years been preceded by announcements requesting that all members of the audience make sure their cell phones are turned off or muted to prevent disturbing noise during the performances.) At the conclusion of a piece, applause is expected, and with intensity from the audience that should be proportioned roughly to the quality of the performance and to the music just played. "Bravos" may be shouted by some members of the audience for an exceptional performance or from the claque of the performers. (In some of the concerts my wife and I attend, music school students of a teacher or a precocious fellow student performer tend to be loud with "Bravos"). Members of the audience new to formal concerts sometimes give themselves away by clapping at the end of a movement, not waiting for the full composition to end. By contrast with concerts, at operas, members of the audience may clap and even cheer after a particular aria or duet if especially well sung, even in the middle of an act. Typically, the conductor will briefly interrupt the flow of the music to accommodate an enthusiastic response from the audience. Another set of norms applies to large concerts by popular music stars. There, members of the audience may sing along with the performers. The performers' music is heavily amplified to reach the audience in such huge settings as basketball arenas or even football stadiums but also to carry over the voices of many<sup>6</sup> thousands of fans singing, and

---

<sup>6</sup> Memorably, my wife and I once attended a summer festival outdoor performance of Verdi's *Rigoletto* and a gentleman sitting next to us was quietly singing along with the tenor parts, both the part of the Duke of Mantua and the chorus parts. In conversation during the intermission, we learned that he was a recently retired member of the chorus.

often dancing, along to music with which they may be familiar from recordings. The highly active audience participates in the concert in a manner strictly forbidden at classical music concerts, and the audience participation creates a highly expressive solidarity that is an essential aspect of the experience. (A physical therapist of mine attended one of the concerts by Taylor Swift in her recent tour among stadiums of large cities, including Philadelphia. The therapist told me one day the next week that the concert had been one of the most meaningful experiences of her life! It is notable that Swift's tour reportedly earned than \$1.04 billion in total admission fees—with a documentary film of it following in movie theaters.) My point is that the different types of musical performances and relations of audience to performers are both highly expressive/aesthetic experiences and regulated by different norms.

Staudmann presents an interesting analysis of the fifty-year longevity of the popularity of the Rolling Stones, emphasizing the surprising start in the late 1960s when the group's songs, modes of public conduct, and occasional ideological statements fit, expressively, in with the youth culture of reaction to the Vietnam War, criticism of stressed educational institutions, rising Civil Rights movement, and open non-conformity of the period. The response of audiences to performances by the Rolling Stones involved an appreciation of their songs conditioned by a broad range of social and cultural changes of the time and, in recent years, has entailed fresh identification with the cultural flux that originated in decades past. It is likely that the present culture, highly expressive but also normative, of active participation of audiences in popular music concerts was just emerging at the time of the early Rolling Stones performances. Of special note in Staubmann's discussion is that the Rolling Stones have retained the engagement of some fans for fifty years, based, in considerable part, on shared identification with the cultural movements of the period of the group's founding and first large concerts. The expressive ties both with the band and among its active fans have been important.

Staubmann seems to present his rich treatment of the expressive/aesthetic dimension of social life as demonstrating a need for a next stage of theoretical work. Having shown that social science must decenter to some extent from its normative emphasis and attend more thoroughly to the expressive qualities of social action, he looks forward to a theoretical synthesis that will integrate these changes into social scientific theory. I suggest that only the Parsonian theory of social action provides a conceptual context in which a fully adequate rebalancing of the normative and expressive aspects of social action can be developed. Although Staubmann concentrates heavily on the social system level of analysis, the natural tendency for a sociologist, a resolution to the problem will require a multi-level analysis, treating the social system, the cultural system, and also what Parsons called the general action level, which deals with the relations among cultural systems, social systems, affectual/motivational personalities, and cognitive minds.

Parsons's treatments of the general action system dealt with the interchange relations among the four systems. He focused on how the four systems, in their interrelations, maintained homeostasis or equilibrium over time by exchanging resources between each of the six pairs of the four systems. He understood that the equilibrium would be a so-called moving equilibrium in that all four systems change over time and, hence, the system of their relations must also be capable of flexibly adjusting

to changes, whether in culture, social systems, personalities, or minds. However, Parsons, in his general analyses of inter-system relations, overlooked another aspect of the relations among the four systems. That aspect is that every concrete action involves an input from each of the four systems. One cannot act in a meaningful way without cultural concepts, whether scientific, artistic-expressive, moral-ideological, or constitutive-religious; a situation that engages one or more social roles and regulative norms; personality-level motivation; and cognitive schemas actuating knowledge about the how the act can be performed and about its setting.

With respect to the present problem, an act, for example, of viewing and appreciating a painting, involves cultural concepts pertaining to the painting, such as the historical era and “school” of its creation, the social situation in which it is viewed, the motive in examining it, and cognition of the perception of it, perhaps including examination of the composition and colors involved in the work. As I am sitting in my wife’s and my living room typing on my laptop, when I pause to think and look up, I see across the room an Orozco lithograph of a cooked fish on a platter surrounded by slices of lemons. I know Orozco as a member of the early 20th-century Mexican muralist school, my motives are relatively casual as I know the lithograph well and I am in a situation where I am focused primarily on my writing, yet I do observe the composition, the colors, and the style of representation. My writing is periodically interspersed with an expressive act of appreciating the Orozco.

At the general action level, then, the questions for analysis concern the range of cultural frames for expressive/aesthetic appreciation, the social settings in which such action occurs, the motives for engaging with objects of expressive meaning, and the schemas that facilitate understanding of expressive objects. Obviously, in the setting of contemporary societies, there is a tremendous range in each of these elements. Aside from paintings, we encounter in our experiences sculptures, music of many kinds, dance, poetry, stories, novels, jokes, objects of daily living designed for aesthetic effects, public signs and posters, and encounters with other people for whom we have a range of feelings. Similarly, we engage such objects in many different settings, our furnished homes and the homes of kin and friends, classrooms, museums, concert halls, public streets and parks, shops and shopping malls, public buildings designed as works of art, and so forth. Our motives may vary, as when I view paintings at a great museum, such as the Louvre, I view them with greater concentration and seeking greater expressive satisfaction than when I look, as part of my routines, at the lithographs and wood-block prints in our home. Similarly, attending an opera performance generally involves greater motivational engagement than when I listen to opera recordings, and the motives tend to vary with the particular opera, its historical period, composer, and libretto—I listen to Verdi or Puccini with a level of interest and pleasure that I do not find in Wagner. In all of these cases, my mind engages specific schemas for understanding the objects or events from which I am seeking expressive satisfaction. However, I might note that my wife and I own a number of classic Japanese woodblock prints for which my appreciation is based on composition, the portrayal of movement, and color, despite my awareness that I lack more than a superficial understanding of their cultural contexts. (One of the prints my father bought at a gallery in Tokyo, admiring its composition, lines, and color, but failing to notice that the man portrayed in it, probably an actor in a

traditional play, was committing hara-kiri. He later said he would have bought a different print if he had perceived the hara-kiri.)

The distinction between cultural and social or institutional levels of analysis is not consistently observed in contemporary sociology, not even in works that present themselves as part of cultural studies. Yet, the distinction can be drawn clearly in the artistic/expressive domain. Beethoven's compositions, his symphonies, concertos, quartets, trios, songs, and his opera, *Fidelio*, are elements of the culture of Western civilization, even global civilization in the present century. How the works are performed, whether at home by a student musician, in music school practice, in public performance in a small venue, on a recording, or at Carnegie Hall, involve social action in an institutionalized setting or situation, hence are parts of social systems. Similarly, the imagery of Van Gogh's Cypresses or Cezanne's Mount St. Victoire are now part of our aesthetic culture, even for those who have not seen any of the original paintings. Poems or novels are also part of our culture, with varying degrees of centrality depending on their prominence or fame. And, how they are published, marketed, purchased, owned, and reads or even studied, whether in a class or a reading group or by an academic scholar, are matters of how the elements of culture are socially organized. Both the aggregate forms of our aesthetic/expressive culture and the modes of their institutionalization are extremely varied, and they are also interdependent. Yet, clear and specific analysis requires that we separate them.

The cultural level of analysis should then address the range of artistic and expressive styles in a particular culture, including the accumulation of different styles and schools with which an individual may be engaged. A model analysis is provided by Jeremy Tanner in *The Invention of Art History in Ancient Greece* (2006). In contemporary culture, the styles have both historical and cross-cultural depth. A visit to any of the comprehensive museums in major cities of Europe or the U.S. may engage with artworks from across Europe and in such different styles as Italian Renaissance, differing by works from Florence, Rome, or Venice, the Dutch and Belgian genre specialists and great masters such as Hals, Rembrandt, and Vermeer, the French Impressionists, and the American Abstract Impressionists, but also paintings and ceramics from ancient Greece, China, Japan, and Koreas, African "tribal" sculptures, and sculptures from various islands in Oceania. Similarly, concert halls and opera houses present a wide range of works. Although visitors to museums typically do not have deep knowledge of the cultural frameworks within which all of these works were created, they often do have enough knowledge of artistry in general to appreciate most of the styles. Similar considerations apply to the cultural frames for appreciating classical music, including knowledge of musical scores. (One of my college classmates was required from her early childhood by her father, a professor at a major music school, to study the scores of the music to be performed before she, then a serious violinist, attended concerts.) I was surprised when my children were in high school and college about how many different styles of rock music they and their friends differentiated, then selectively identified with certain ones.

At the social system level, there are a wide range of situations for engaging expressively with performances of many kinds. At one level, we all engage with aspects of self-presentation: posture, clothes, hair-dos, manner of greeting others, and so forth. We typically vary these factors in our daily lives, dressing for work differently from shopping, staying at home, or working in our gardens. Then there are

special occasions, large parties, public occasions, weddings, funerals, and so forth where we dress and present ourselves more formally and often at greater expense. (My wife has often bought special dresses to wear at New Year's Eve parties to which we have been invited.) We furnish our homes in ways that reflect our "taste" and which respond to our expressive interests, involving furniture, pictures on walls, and so forth. Many families display pictures of family members and esteemed relatives and ancestors in their homes. (My grandmother displayed pictures of her four children and twelve grandchildren—her "rogues gallery" as she called it—in her living room. My father enlisted as a physician in an army hospital the month after the Pearl Harbor attack, when I was less than a year old, and did not return home until a month and a day after my fourth birthday, so my earliest memory of him is the picture of him, as an army officer, in my grandmother's "rogues gallery".) Larger cities tend to have museums, sometimes museums of various kinds, for both educational and aesthetic engagement of the citizenry at large. Similarly, they tend to have concert halls or arenas where concerts and perhaps operas can be performed. Probably zoos should be included in the same category of public places for aesthetic engagement. Among the most intensely engaged expressive performances are professional sports, in the U.S., football, basketball, baseball, and, to a lesser extent, ice hockey and soccer, which engage vast audiences on television as well as fans at stadiums and arenas. (Football games involving leading college teams and professional teams are among the most widely viewed programs on television, hence most valuable for the networks to broadcast and the networks compete fiercely for the highly expensive rights.) Typically, a city attracts fans to one of the sports, many of whom enjoy the games against a background of considerable knowledge of the sport and its history in the city, while also demonstrating civic pride, often vociferously, while supporting the local team. The players too show the intense emotion involved in their competitive conduct, frequently shouting and making expansive gestures after a skilled and successful play or a play that changes the score of a game in their favor, or pouting with head down after a serious error harming their team's interests. In Philadelphia, it is striking that the civic solidarity expressed by fans typically involve people of diverse racial and economic backgrounds. While all of these settings involve expressive engagement, it is important that the norms of conduct they entail vary substantially by setting. At a football game, one can shout loud encouragement for one's team or at a baseball game shout imprecations against the umpire who has apparently made a bad call—"Kill the Umpire!" being traditional in my youth—but talk at a museum must be rather quiet and, at classical concerts, any noise must be timed between pieces.

Personal motivation for expressive/aesthetic conduct obviously differs greatly by situation and thus social role. We have cultural patterns for greetings and for engaging in a meeting, and, thus, greetings and self-presentation vary greatly by whom we are meeting and the setting in which we meet them. Is it on the street, at a university class, in a restaurant, or at a concert? Is it a planned meeting or coincidental? Is the other a person of special importance? Is a casual or more formal personal presentation expected? Once, when applying for, and negotiating the terms of, a large grant from a federal agency, I bought a new and more conservative suit for meetings in Washington, thinking it important to fit in better with the officials who would be making the grant and their consultants, who included a retired, high-ranking



Navy admiral with very relevant expertise. Another time I bought a tuxedo for the retirement party of a neighbor whom I particularly esteemed, but also because I did research at one of the agencies affiliated with his non-profit corporation and anticipated meeting its executives. However, there are times when we visit museums or attend concerts with deep concentration on the aesthetic experience we are anticipating. If, in Philadelphia, one visits the Barnes Foundation with its hundreds of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings, one is typically activating expressive interests that are beyond the range of everyday concerns. Similarly, if one attends a performance of Verdi's *Rigoletto* or *Otello* at the Metropolitan Opera, one's expressive anticipations are sensitively activated.

The mind brings to expressive occasions the cognitive schemas for understanding the events at an artistic or aesthetic occasion. Even in the courtesies of everyday interaction, knowledge of customs are essential to appreciating the conduct of others and enjoying processes of engagement. When my wife and I were at the University of Chicago, she as a graduate student in Linguistics, I as an instructor in Sociology, when we encountered Edward Shils on the street, he always doffed his fedora to my wife. We were surprised at the formality, especially given the difference in status between my wife and Professor Shils, but we knew to appreciate the formal respect that he was communicating. Appreciating Beethoven's late quartets, Schubert's quartets, or one of Bartok's piano concertos requires an ability to parse what one is hearing and find the expressiveness in it. Similarly, "seeing" paintings or sculptures requires knowing something about the historical settings and styles within which they are created while also being able to "interpret" the colors and compositions involved. In the years after World War Two, when Abstract Expressionism became a prominent artistic movement, how to appreciate compositions that did not include recognizable objects confused many museum-goers. Similarly, attending a baseball or basketball game requires schematic knowledge of the games, their rules, their tactics, the skills of the players, and so forth. (Has one ever attended a baseball game with a European and tried to explain both the rules and the course of action?) These forms of knowledge are the contribution of our minds to expressive experiences of all kinds.

One point on which I disagree with Staubmann concerns the status of the senses and the body. It is certainly correct that one cannot appreciate a painting without the sense of vision or enjoy a piece of music without the sense of hearing. It is also the case that in everyday interaction, the individual actors present their bodies, again in terms of posture, facial expression, words of greeting, and other bodily means of conveying attitudes. However, my understanding is that the senses and bodily presence do not enter action until schematized by a mind. Neither the senses nor the body convey expressive meaning until captured in schemas by an observer. And, indeed, their presentations in themselves, by posture, clothing, tone of voice, words, and so forth are not produced except under planning and regulation by a mind. Thus, I would treat the mental schematizations and finding or conveying of meaning, whether expressive, cognitive, moral, or religious, as action of the mind. The body and senses do not in themselves have meaning to self or others; they are objects on which meaning, including expressiveness and the aesthetic, are projected. They are thus not elements of systems of action, but objects conditional to action, part of the immediate environment of action.

This disagreement concerns the boundaries of a theoretical system, not the importance of bodily perception and presentation in the course of expressive/aesthetic experience. All concrete action enters a situation through the senses and the body. However, the processes involved are ones that require theory of the relationship between action systems, especially the mind, and the brain and neurological structures of the body. Knowledge in this area is, indeed, scant—not yet helpful for our general understanding of expressive processes. One difficulty is that, although neuroscience has been developing rapidly in the last several decades, it has been created by scientists who view social action entirely reductively. They seek in neuroscience alone answers to problems that require analysis of the relationships between brain and mind.

**Open Access** This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this article are included in the article's Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

## References

- Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of Cultures*. Basic Books.
- Parsons, T. (1961). "Introduction" to "part four: culture and the social system." In T. Parsons, E. A. Shils, K. D. Naegle, & J. R. Pitts (Eds.), *Theories of society*. (Vol. 2). New York: Free Press.
- Parsons, T., & Bales, R. F. (1953). *Family, Socialization and Interaction Process*. New York: Free Press.
- Parsons, T., & Shils, E. A. (Eds.). (1951). *Toward A General Theory of Action*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Staubmann, H. (2022). *Sociology in a New Key; Essays in Social Theory and Aesthetics*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature.
- Tanner, J. (2006). *The Invention of Art History in Ancient Greece; Religion, Society and Artistic Rationalization*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press.

**Publisher's Note** Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.