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Datum: February 10, 1986

Dear Anselm:

I never had the intention to write a recommendation letter which you should read afterwards. But when it was finished, I thought it might be of interest for you to have in a written form what I mentioned to you many times. I tormented my mind how to put Fran into this letter, but then I thought it would be counterproductive for such a letter. (Of course, Fran is most important for all the many metamorphoses!)

Love,



P.S. As you know, I was insured, that my reference letter would not be presented to you. It is the first time that I show such a letter to the person whom the letter is all about.

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Datum: February 5, 198

Dear Professor Estes:

It's a pleasure for me to answer your letter regarding Professor Anselm Strauss's work. I feel entitled to write about Anselm Strauss's achievements, because I started to know his work in 1970, and in the meantime I became very familiar with most of his writings. I met Anselm Strauss in vivid the first time - as far as I can remember - during a conference on qualitative research in Konstanz, West Germany, in 1975, and since this (for me very important) day I maintained my personal contact with him regarding his research activities. My professorship at Kassel University was the first (and maybe still is the only one) on qualitative social research in West Germany, and therefore I might be knowledgeable enough to assess important aspects of Anselm Strauss's work.

Anselm Strauss is one of the outstanding sociologists of the second half of the Twentieth Century. His pre-eminence is grounded on achievements in theory, in research style and method as well as in the practical impact of his research on the health care professions. In addition, he developed an unique style of teaching how to do research. His model of "research workshop" starts to be a blueprint for teaching the art of qualitative research all over Europe. What is almost miraculous is that Anselm Strauss could again broaden and intensify his research activities (which indeed, were very impressive already!) during the last years - at an age, where other scholars start to slow down. Within the last seven years Anselm Strauss wrote three substantial books (partly together with his co-workers) on

medical technology and professional work, on research method and teaching, and on biographical work, which the chronically ill patient and her or his spouse do. And in addition (partly together with his co-workers), Anselm Strauss wrote numerous important articles on basic theoretical issues (e.g. on medical technology and health care work). With these impressive achievements in publishing in my mind, let me just focus on the last seven years of his work.

a) The research activities of Anselm Strauss

It was always Anselm Strauss's work style to embark on empirical research projects dealing with very practical issues. His projects were always intended to look at precarious sorts of professional work (mostly in the health care professions, but he could do the same for industrial work and art work, and partly he did), ^{managed} ~~He~~ to look at it from a "strange" analytical viewpoint; to detect, see and explore phenomena unknown or unnoticed hitherto; to come to new conclusions regarding the inter-relatedness of up to now known, unknown or unnoticed social phenomena; and to write down the research in an elegant prose which is perfectly understandable not only for professional sociologists but also for the professionals in the work fields under study and for the interested general audience. On top of this "basic service" which in his view empirical research projects should deliver to society he tried to use the action impetus and the intellectual resources of the concrete research endeavor in order to deepen the insights ~~is~~ into basic theoretical phenomena. One could then read these insights in special chapters of the general research publication, or they were contextually alluded to throughout the general research report, or they were more densely formulated in special books and articles addressed only to the professional sociological audience. - During the last years Anselm Strauss conducted one large research project on the impact of medical technology on professional work in the hospitals (together with Shizuko Fagerhaugh, Barbara Sucek and Carolyn Wiener) and one smaller research project on the biographical work, which the chronically ill patient and her or his spouse do at home (together with Juliet Corbin). Both are very important for the understanding of the social world of health care work. After reading the reports, health care professionals and the general audience have to think more closely about the relationship between the impact of modern technology on the humanity and the

paradoxies of professional work (e.g. the chapter on the ICN in SOMW - "Social Organization of Medical Work"), they have to realize more than before the importance and nature of the work the patient her- or himself and her or his spouse are doing (e.g. chapters 6 and 8 of SOMW), they have to understand how the management of the illness trajectory is shaped by biographical processes and biographical work (to get a comeback, to get closure etc., cf. manuscript parts of the book and the articles with J. Corbin), and they have to look more meticulously at the social sources, the social construction and the social control of mistakes at work and the related safety work (cf. the chapter on safety in SOMW).

For professional sociologists it might be even more important, that the first research project extends the basic theoretical insights into the structure of work processes, and the second adds to the anthropological knowledge of biographical processes considerably. The report on the machinery project first spells out the work tasks of the illness trajectory, and then it explicates a whole array of different dimensions and sorts of professional and non-professional health care work (machine work, safety work, comfort work, sentimental work, kin work; later Strauss adds information work, error work, body work). Such a differentiation of work dimensions has been never done before systematically, and it focusses attention on known but unnoticed aspects of work in general and not just on health care work. (E.g. Anselm Strauss reworked the chapter on sentimental work into a German article on "Gefühlsarbeit", published in the *Kolner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie*, one of the two leading West German sociological periodicals. This article then became a classical text in theoretical discussions on social work in West Germany). But even more important is, that Anselm Strauss arrived at a deeper understanding of the temporal order of work processes. This temporal order is always precarious, because the contingencies of, and the related sufferings within, the illness trajectory always produce "emergent", unplanned, non-expected phenomena. (In former days Anselm **Strauss** dealt with these phenomena in terms of "cumulative mess", e.g. cf. "Anguish"). The professional worker, who is the main processor of the illness trajectory and the contract partner of the patient, has to construct a plan for the arc of work steps she/he and the other professionals will execute regarding the patient. But this construction has always to be reconsidered

and recalibrated according to the unexpected exigencies emerging in the course of ^{the} unfolding trajectory and its treatment. This is the task of articulation work - the major theoretical innovation in Strauss's book on medical work, *Articulation* has to deal with the sequential order of work steps made necessary by the emergence of expected and unexpected events occurring within the course of the trajectory. It has to consider the biographical processes of the patient and the intricacies of the division of labor firstly between the health care professionals and secondly between them and the patient and his kin. Articulation has to take into account the time aspects of trajectory and work as well as the contractual base of the relationship between worker and patient (client) and between workers (in terms of negotiation).

The articulation concept (for focussing on the temporal order of work steps) will probably reshape the rationalistically oriented theoretical conceptions on social action, which have been prevalent up to now in sociology and analytical philosophy. In addition it opens new basic possibilities for looking at the computerization of work processes, for computerization basically means concentration of articulation work within one (relatively early) work step and within one central social unit. (E.g., Anselm Strauss's articulation concept will be used in a research project of the German Research Foundation on the computerization of savings banks.)

The second project on the biographical work which the patient and his/her spouse do spells out a theory of the impact of suffering (experienced within the course of the illness trajectory) on the biographical organization of the patient and her/his family. This step in theoretical thinking is pivotal for the unfolding course of Anselm Strauss's oeuvre. In his early theoretical treatise "Mirrors and Masks" Strauss dealt with biographical processes - especially those which are implied in status passages connected with career lines. After the publication of this great theoretical essay, Strauss concentrated on the structural processes of professional work and its organizational constraints for 25 years. Central for this important period of Strauss's work life are the concepts of awareness context, negotiated order, trajectory and social world. They were developed and used by Strauss in order to illuminate salient features of cooperative and conflictuous work processes directed to the diseases and the sufferings of patients.

But the biographical contexts of professional work and ^{of} the patients' sufferings were only alluded to. {Nevertheless : especially in "Anguish" the phenomenon of biographical contextualization is obvious.) Now, in his cooperation with J. Corbin Anselm Strauss resumes his earlier theoretical interest in biography. He spells out the biographical implications of comeback, stable and deteriorating illnesses trajectories. Central for the relationship between illness trajectory and biography are the biographical body concept (regarding body parts which do not fulfill their functions anymore and the traumatization of which cuts off biographical potentials, or which start to function again and open up new biographical potentials) and biographical time (e.g. suspended time, collapsed time, living in the immediate present, iceboxed future, past and future hovering over the present). The patient or biography incumbent can partly control the biographical impact of the illness trajectory by biographical work (e.g. contextualization, ideational processes, coming to terms, identity reconstitution, recasting, crystallization).

It is obvious, that (in the course of the second project) Strauss's thinking is now approaching basic anthropological relationships between self, body, time, action and suffering. It resurrects the legacy of reflection of Mead's "Philosophy of the Act" and "Philosophy of the Present". But the analysis is now put on empirical feet and deals with central life world phenomena, which are pivotal for the "history of the self" (and not remote for the self as the isolated acts of physicists are). In addition, it is informed by a special sensibility for suffering as a social and biographical phenomenon caused by the conditional relevancies of trajectory processes. I expect for the future, that Anselm Strauss will rework the interactionistic theory of action by coming to terms with the impact of trajectory processes of suffering on the course of social action. (Contrary to Strauss, modern action theories of all sorts do not deal seriously enough with suffering; they forgot the Aristotelian differentiation between "actio" and "passio".) In addition, Strauss will hopefully spell out in basic theoretical terms the relationship between action, trajectory, work and their biographical contextualizations. Indeed, the most important step for this enormous theoretical task is done already: to spell out the "inner", the "biographical" side of trajectory processes, which Strauss had approached before mainly in terms of work and organization.

In order to analyze the biographical implications of illness trajectories (and other sorts of trajectories as immigration, going to war etc.) it is pivotal to be able to show the biographical contexts of trajectory experiences; otherwise central conditions for the behavior, performance, attitude, decision, identity metamorphosis of the trajectory incumbent are not accounted for.

The theoretical concepts of Anselm Strauss are of utmost importance for German and European sociology. The concepts of social world and of awareness context are used in many research projects on social movements and professional work. The trajectory concept has been used in many researches conducted on the empirical base of biographical materials, e.g. in Ph.D. dissertations on the life courses of Turkish migrants and on the careers of psychiatric patients. New attempts are under way to extend the trajectory concept to collective historical phenomena like revolutions and wars. The analytical concepts of the dimensions of work start to be used in researches on social work, industrial work and computer technology.

b) The teaching of Anselm Strauss

During the last ten years numerous European sociologists - including myself - came to San Francisco in order to see Anselm Strauss at work in his research team and his research class. For the Europeans the dynamics of cooperative interaction of his research team and its "epistemic potential" for generating theoretical concepts and models were astounding. And the cooperative style of working together with students on bits of empirical materials in order to "socialize" them into the research steps of dimensionalizing, coding, developing core categories, theoretical sampling, comparison, theoretical saturation, constructing theoretical models ("writing memos") was totally new for us. Having read the chapters of "Discovery of Grounded theory", we could surmise some of the interactional work inevitable for constituting the steps of qualitative research, but in addition we had actually to see the master researcher and teacher at work. Most striking was the use of common communicative resources: Strauss let his co-researchers tell what they had explored, scrutinized, experienced, heard (when they were looking at text materials in front of them or just exploiting the sources of memory), then somebody else had to

describe the piece of empirical data step by step, and after that Strauss started to ask questions about remarkable features of the phenomena seen or heard. Then, usually without hesitation, the process of analytical abstraction started by making use of the intellectual power of the communicative scheme of argumentation. After the generation of some analytical concepts, Strauss redirected the focus and started the analysis of a new chunk of empirical data which seemed to be in contrast with the one discussed already, and then the group repeated the procedures of structural description and analytical abstraction dealing with the new material. Having in hand two sets of abstract concepts, Strauss started to compare, contrast and integrate the concepts into ordered schemes (of procedures, processes, structural conditions etc.), and encouraged his co-workers or students to develop new concepts and arrive at the overall order of the "constellation of concepts".

Most important for us European visitors is Anselm Strauss's interactive openness for new impulses, new empirical data, new lines of thought, his ability to engage the co-researchers and his students within productive schemes of communication (narration, description, argumentation etc.) and to let them embark on searches for theoretical order. Of course this is only possible on the base of social and biographical sensitivity regarding life, work and career of students and co-workers. There is a stability and intensity of relationship between Strauss and his students and co-workers which is almost unknown within the European mass university. I.e., cooperative research work and teaching are not just technique and the transmittal of technique, but they start with a responsible biographical attitude regarding each of the co-workers and students. As a professional practice it is mainly an art which can be learned by following the example of the master in the social context of a permanent research workshop - but **of** course an art which is grounded on general epistemic principles and methodological steps which can be learned systematically. Whereas the first methodological book (with Barney Glaser) sketched a normative outline for doing qualitative research discussing central concepts as "theoretical sampling" and "saturation", Strauss's new book on the teaching of method attempts to demonstrate the art **of** concrete research work in all its social situatedness. It draws very close attention to the mini-steps of interactive, communicative and ostensive activities

(e.g. using diagrams), it discusses the social relationship between teacher and student in its various phases and it deals with the inner-psychic problems of learning (e.g. being flooded with data) and the biographical metamorphosis of becoming a researcher. The new book on teaching research methods is a very artistic, elegant piece of writing. It "composes", e.g. presents and discusses, chunks of transcripts of teaching and research sessions as well as products of the various steps of the arc of research work (e.g. pieces of the structural description or "microanalysis" of a text; pieces of theoretical memos etc.). The book will give scholars and students a solid idea of how to conduct qualitative social research in all its social and biographical situatedness and by exploiting the mechanisms of communicative interaction and ostensive demonstration. In this regard the book represents a qualitative leap towards a non-normative, operational step-by-step teaching of the arc of research work taking into account the necessities and contingencies of actual workshop interaction. The book will serve as an important de-mystifier of the "sacred nature" of research procedures: it demonstrates that research work is just an ordinary sort of professional work focussed on the production of scientific knowledge and exploiting the resources of interaction, social relations, articulation, organization and communication.

During the last twenty years Anselm Strauss's method of generating empirically grounded theory has penetrated many branches of the social sciences and the humanities. For example, one can find the idea of theoretical sampling in Angloamerican discourse analysis and German linguistic pragmatics, the idea of saturation as a criterion for assessing the "closure" or "maturity" of a research activity is operative in projects of American cultural anthropology and in French biography research; last December I found out ^{that} the "The Discovery of Grounded Theory" is not only widely read in Poland, but additionally; it became a methodological orientation for planning and conducting researches in industrial sociology and in biography research there. In West Germany numerous research groups attempt to orient their concrete interactive research work at the model **of** Strauss's research group and its team sessions. Parts of the method and teaching book are translated into German and published by the Fernuniversität Hagen (interacting with students by mail). - It is expectable that the published version of the method and teaching book will be widely read all over Europe

and will even enhance the deep impact of Strauss's research style and qualitative methodology, which is prevalent already in qualitatively oriented European social sciences. Germans start to discuss Strauss's procedures for generating theory as an empirical explication of Peirce's epistemological idea of abduction. But most important is Strauss's personal example of "maieusis", i.e. opening up new questions and new lines of thinking by his art of "epistemic" interaction and communication based on biographically deep relationships to his co-workers and students.

c) The public service function of Anselm Strauss's scholarly work:
his professional competence

As shown already, typically Anselm Strauss's research projects are focussed on very practical issues of crucial importance for professional workers and their clients. By conducting these researches he quite often spirited and oriented social and political action which would change the landscape of professional work. Sometimes this change would grow into a social movement, the vigourousness and vitality of which would let us forget that at the beginning there was just the scientifically restraint research of Anselm Strauss and his co-workers (and partly of other researchers). This was especially the case with re-thinking and reorganizing psychiatric health care and reshaping the care for dying patients. Today it is almost forgotten that Strauss and his co-workers helped to open up the professional and public arenas for discussing these anguishing issues. In later years Strauss concentrated on the needs of chronically ill patients. He stressed that the health care for these patients cannot be modeled after the formula of treating acutely sick patients. Health care professionals have to step beyond the confines of the "professional world orientation" of the acute disease model in order to help chronically ill patients effectively. Probably the orientational impact of this approach on the nursing and the medical professions will be profound in the future as far as they have to take care of chronically ill patients. More practically, Anselm Strauss let his co-workers and students study the "everyday burden profile" of various chronic illnesses, because each of them has a different impact on the everyday **life** of patients and their biographies. In order to help the various types of chronically ill patients, one now has to step out of the hospitals **and** look

at their life at home and its specific difficulties (regarding transport, body care, preparing meals, biographical contingencies, unexpectabilities of the "disease 's behavior", chronical pain etc.). This will be of great importance for selfhelp groups, new para-medical occupations, general health care policies, and questions of social insurance. I could show similar practical impacts of Strauss's and Fagerhaugs research on pain management (perhaps the richest of Anselm Strauss's "practically minded" books) and could speculate on the expectable impact of the "Medical Work Book" on the responsibility, sensitivity and organization of health care work and policies. Although sometimes focussed on very minute phenomena of professional work or interactive phenomena, Anselm Strauss is also intensely interested in "macro phenomena" like health care policies, the ethical discourse of society regarding inextricable paradoxies of medical and nursing work (e.g. the chapter on the ICN in the "Social Organization of Medical Work") or the questions of moral and legal control of professional work (e.g. of biotechnological research; this was one of the researches he did not conducted personally, but which he supervised).

The professional competence of Anselm Strauss as scholar and academic teacher is outstanding. I could hopefully pinpoint to the saliency of Strauss's scholarly work for theory construction and method in the interpretive social sciences. This saliency is not confined to research endeavors within the tradition of the Chicago School of Sociology and of Symbolic Interactionism. His scholarly work is also pivotal for other interpretive research traditions, e.g. Polish biography research, German sociology of knowledge, the French and Dutch phenomenological reflections on the body as situs of the self in the tradition of Merleau-Ponty, etc. This again demonstrates Strauss's pre-eminent status as one of the leading sociologists of today. Perhaps Strauss's work may be even more cherished in European countries than in the U.S. If this impression would be true, the reason of this might be found in the special blend of two types of "moods" in Anselm Strauss's oeuvre: the attitude of American intellectual openness, "practical-mindedness", pragmatistic humanity and moral optimism, on the one hand, and a deep sensitivity for the interpretive ambiguity, multiperspectivity and the tragic fatefulness of human life and collective history which haunted Europe during the last hundred years, on the other. It has to be stressed that Anselm Strauss's impact as teacher is

by no means confined to the U.S., where he and his colleagues at the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences introduced so many able Ph.D. students into sociology and nursing science. His several teaching periods, talks and conference contributions at European universities had a strong impact on young researchers and students there. Impressive for all of us Europeans is not only Strauss's research style and method, but the sensitivity and solidarity he offers to us and our work, his stress on the practical responsibility of sociology, his demonstration of the importance of an attitude of pragmatic efficiency in organizing the research, his pinpointing to the components of art in professional research work and writing (which he nevertheless envisions as teachable), and his open and curious relationship to social reality (almost like a stranger, who arrives in a country he never saw before) in order to see, to imagine, to scrutinize.

Anselm Strauss is always fascinated by art production. (E.g. last summer he prepared a sensitive and thoughtful "ethnographic" paper on the creative work of a sculptor for the ISA research committee on the sociology of art which met in Marseille.) Throughout his life, and probably accelerating during the last decade and especially in present days, like an innovative artist, he underwent and still undergoes creative metamorphoses. These new developments of his identity always resulted, and will surely result in the future, in pieces of sociological research that enable us to see important realms and features of social life in a light, in which we had never seen them before.



(Fritz Schütze)