

# On the reiterability of *pragmata*. A Schutzian «alternate» to the sociological concept of «practice»

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*My aim is to depict Schutz's concept of *pragma* as a phenomenological «alternate» to the sociological concept of «practice». I will argue that Schutz offers a description of the ego ipse pragmatically constituted. This means that he is dealing with a particular kind of phenomenon – not with a mere idea but with an actual experience – . Nevertheless, it is a kind of experience which ethnomethodology cannot account for since it seeks to describe «the body's ways» while Schutz observes not just the body's but the ego's *pragma*, which only in part can be externally observed since it not only has an objective but also a subjective aspect. Accordingly, *pragmata* are always *pragmata* of a self at work. They are the product of the ego working on its *pragma*. So the ego agens is the substratum and the origo of all *pragmata* and, through them, of social personalities. Finally, what makes Schutz's conception of *pragma* so refreshing is that it takes into account what most sociologists emphasize nowadays – that practices are objective, blind, unconscious processes – and at the same time what those sociologists let aside – which they call «subject» with a derogative nuance – . Moreover, it articulates the subjective and the objective long before that contemporary sociology had claimed that it had overcome «dualism». To that purpose, the key concept is «reiterability». *Pragmata* are reiterable not only by the same ego agens that once started them but also by others. That's why Schutz speaks of the «transferability» of *pragmata*, which makes possible the development of social habitus that play an important role in the constitution and stabilization of the system of our social attitudes.*

The aim of this paper is to depict Schutz's concept of *pragma* as a phenomenological «alternate» to the sociological concept of «practice». I am drawn to the fact that Schutz provided an early alternate to the concept of practice – which nowadays has become mainstream (and in fact a real fad) in social theory.

Just as Gad and Jensen: «Practice has become a topic of increasing empirical and conceptual concern within sociology and neighbouring fields» with «a very wide range of connotations» (Gad and Jensen 2014: 1). For instance:

It can refer to a location, it can locate actors in a context, and it can refer to action, or to construction. It is possible to be 'in practice', to 'have a practice', or to be 'constituted by practice'. Practice can be a cause, an effect, or an explanation. Given the widespread use of practice terminologies with conflicting definitions and analytical tendencies, practice seems to beg for disentanglement (Gad and Jensen 2014: 1).

Accordingly, «practice» has become an unproblematic category and a slippery term. On the one hand, it is used as «an unproblematic empirical category» as if they were «simply that of which the world consists, so as a matter of course one can find them wherever one looks» (Gad and Jensen 2014: 2). On the other hand, they designate «an analytical approach the scope and meaning of which is rarely explicated. Thus, practice approaches are slippery: they can slide easily between empirical and conceptual registers, without at any point losing their aura of common sense» (Gad and Jensen 2014: 2). Thus, the notion of practice is «an elastic word, which can be stretched or tightened depending on interest and orientation» (Gad and Jensen 2014: 5). Its vocabulary is often «applied without much argument» and as an «empirico-conceptual ‘charm’», which is «more magic than real» (Gad and Jensen 2014: 8).

In the following, I will argue that, unlike the current ubiquitous and sloppy use of the term «practice», Schutz describes *pragma* with rigor and admirable precision and avoids the kind of flaws just mentioned by founding *pragmata* in the *ego agens* as its *subtratum*. That’s why my claim will be that he provided *avant la lettre* a phenomenological «alternate» to the sociological concept of practice.

### ***1. Ethnomethodological and phenomenological «alternates»***

It was Garfinkel who first spoke of «alternates» as «Lebenswelt pairs» (Garfinkel 2002: 73). By «alternates» he meant:

Any ordinary activity addressed in the fashion of its availability *in situ* as the *in vivo* work of living in and about and as and as of the activity as what anybody in the world knows consists of in its lived course of things will, if you use the certified methods of the established literatures, respecify that concreteness to exhibit it in terms that then no longer retain what’s so coherent about those activities in the first place (Garfinkel 2007: 21).

Accordingly, «the ‘ethnomethodological alternate’ to the constructivist literature consists in the study of the methodical accomplishment of the phenomena whose availability and intelligibility is otherwise taken for granted» (Hester and Francis 2007: 4). This taken-for-grantedness is the very possibility of its subject matters and «the topic of its inquiries» (Hester and Francis 2007: 5). Alternates are autochthonous, grounded practices «that spring up and exist alongside formal analytic inquiries whenever and wherever participants or members pursue investigations of any kind» which are «asymmetrical to formal analytic theorizing» (Maynard 2012: 7) in an «alternate way» (Roth 2009: 9).

Based on the above, what Schutz offers as a description of *pragma* can be understood as an alternate. Indeed, this is my claim. Although, an important distinction must be made here: that for Garfinkel, the study of alternates must not be pursued as a philosophical work. See, for instance, his comments on Merleau-Ponty:

he had this marvelous love affair with philosophy. It was philosophy's subject as embodied action that he needed to retain. The result is that he had to depend on the anecdotes and the textual accounts of others to specify what embodied reflexivity could possibly consist of [...] as he was so beautifully clear-headed about, it was not going to deal with simply the intentionalities of consciousness and the circular, endless, going-over-and-over-again reflections on just those affairs held before consciousness with texts, even the literatures of the gestalt experiments, and the rest (Garfinkel 2007: 22).

In this viewpoint, the phenomenological description of intentionality from the first person perspective does not suffice. Garfinkel demands that the ethnomethodologist rely on accounts accomplished from the second person perspective. Consequently, he would not think of what I will show in Schutz's manuscripts of 1936/37 of as being an ethnomethodological alternate.

Now, how can we access what Schutz is trying to reach – namely, the *ego agens* as the ultimate substratum of *pragmata* – within the limits of ethnomethodology as conceived by Garfinkel? Sure he would discard such an issue by considering it mere «generic representational theorizing» supported by the «analytic privileges of the transcendental analyst and universal observer»<sup>1</sup> (Garfinkel 2002: 127). Nevertheless that's not what Schutz is doing since the *ego* is not an abstract, general concept but a concrete, personal experience<sup>2</sup> which one should think of as a *singulare tantum* (Schutz 2010: 41). What he offers is not mere general theorizing but a rigorous description of the *ego ipse* pragmatically constituted as the ground for social personalities and the *pragmata* performed through them.

Consequently, he is not doing speculative metaphysics but a phenomenological description of different strata of human experience. He is not either taking for granted what mainstream sociology does but describing embodied

<sup>1</sup> Also Wes Sharrock, Bob Anderson, and Michael Lynch have opposed Husserl's subjectivism and transcendental idealism from an ethnomethodological perspective. For a reply to them, see Barber (2012: 84).

<sup>2</sup> This is also true of transcendental phenomenology, which – counter to what most ethnomethodologists might think – «does not involve leaving experience, whether commonsense or scientific, but attending more carefully to it» (Barber 2012: 83).

*pragmata*. So, in a way, he provides an «alternate» to Formal Analysis but it is a different alternate than that which ethnomethodology provides since he is observing what it cannot observe by being a mere empirical stance. Consequently, it is also an alternate to ethnomethodology.

When I say that Schutz offers a description of the *ego ipse* pragmatically constituted, I mean that he is dealing with a particular kind of phenomenon – not with a mere idea but with an actual experience. Nevertheless, it is a kind of experience which Garfinkel's ethnomethodology cannot account for since he states that «to define any phenomenon of human action is to describe the body's ways» (David Sudnow, quoted in Garfinkel 2007: 22). That's what Garfinkel called «the embodied reflexivity turn of affairs», which drove ethnomethodology to take «an interest in bodies » (Garfinkel 2007: 22). Even though Schutz *is* interested in «bodies», and while the *ego agens* he speaks of is an incarnated ego, what he observes is not just the body's but the ego's *pragma* which only in part can be externally observed since it not only has an objective but also a subjective aspect (as I will show latter, in Section 3).

Moreover, «the body's ways» and the «embodied reflexivity» are intentional themselves in many aspects. According to Garfinkel, any concern with intentionality leads to fantastic love-affairs with philosophy but not anywhere nearby sociology; contrarily, for Schutz, it is a precondition of any accurate description of many of sociology's heart matters – for instance, *pragmata* considered as the *origo* of the social persons. Off course sociology – even philosophy – must approach all practices as embodied but it's not the body who acts by itself but the incarnated ego. Just as Descartes have said: «It is the soul which sees, and not the eye» (Descartes 1985 [1637]: 172); meaning that the body expresses an element heterogeneous to the manifestation of bodily determinations (Henry 1985: 23).

Therefore, what phenomenology must account for is not just the body (like in biology and the like) but the *cogito*, which is not an «I think» but an «I can» (Henry 2006 [1965]: 75). Our body is the ensemble of our powers upon the world (Henry 2006 [1965]: 80) and it is that originary, invisible experience – the phenomenological being of the body, its real, absolute and subjective being (Henry 2006 [1965]: 79) – what must be accessed by the phenomenologist. That is precisely what ethnomethodology cannot account for; in other words, this is the phenomenological alternate that Schutz's phenomenology provides.

## 2. Pragma in egological perspective

Though Schutz approaches some main subjects of social phenomenology (such as the ones addressed here) in an egological perspective, he uses the

word «egology» only occasionally (Embree 2009a: 181). As a few respected scholars have pointed out in recent years, many of his «analyses of the modes of givenness of social phenomena proceeded in an egological perspective» (Eberle 2012: 288). In those cases, he seems to perform and assume something like an egological reduction (Embree 2009a: 204-205, 211) given that he actually operates within it (Embree 2009a: 206, 209). So, it is plausible to think that Schutz assumed that «the ego or I is something that accompanies the stream of consciousness in an inwardly transcendent way and that reflection discloses as always already and identically there » (Embree 2009b: 240).

I would like to add to this consensus that Schutz's manuscripts of 1936/37 on "The Problem of Personality in the Social World" are one of the most outstanding examples of egology as they are based on a description of the *ego ipse* as an *ego agens*. For example, Schutz speaks overtly of «a transcendental or phenomenologizing ego» in reference to the self (Schutz 1936 [2013]: 211) and to «the transcendental Ego» reached through «Husserl's transcendental reduction » (Schutz 1936 [2013]: 233), and he situates this analysis within «the ego after exercise of the phenomenological reduction » (Schutz 1936 [2013]: 252).

Within this framework, Schutz establishes «the general positing of the *ego agens* as *origo* of pure *pragma* » (Schutz 1936 [2013]: 210). More precisely, he states that the origin of the pure *pragma* lies in «a general positing 'of my acting self' [which] corresponds to the general positing of the *alter ego* (which is a general positing of the *alter ego cogitans*)» (Schutz 1936 [2013]: 209).

However, it is not easy to find a clear cut definition of *pragma* in these manuscripts. One thing to notice is that for some reason we have two different versions of the same piece, which indicates that it is a work in progress. It also means that Schutz left these considerations unfinished, which compels us to complete the task of giving an explicit definition of *pragma*. Schutz's manuscripts pay more attention to a classification of *pragma* and its relation to the *ego agens* than to an explicit definition of *pragma* as such. Although it furnishes insights and fragments that suffice for whoever want to work on an explicit definition. With that aim, I will briefly depict a number of features of *pragma* in order to systematize a unified concept.

### 3. *Pragma and action*

In his manuscripts of 1936/37, «Schutz moved beyond *The Phenomenology of the Social World* (1932) »<sup>3</sup> (Barber 2013: 4). He developed «a theory of the complete

<sup>3</sup> See Schutz (1937 [2013]: 276-277).

pragma»<sup>4</sup>; which can be systematized as a set of four features.

The first essential note of *pragma* is that it relies on a general positing act. Secondly, note that this positing is related to duration since *pragmata* are acts of a self. Therefore, *pragma* is an experiencing in our *durée* (Schutz 1936 [2013]: 209). Yet, *pragma* is not just any act in our *durée* but one in which the self is «founded in duration *acts* in the external world and accordingly gears into world-time » (Schutz 1936 [2013]: 209). So, the third feature of *pragma* is that it must gear into the world. Finally, we should think of *pragma* as a «sedimented experience [...] accomplished by *me*» (Schutz 1936 [2013]: 226). Concisely, *pragma* is a sedimented experience accomplished by the *ego* as a positing act of its *durée* geared into the external world.

This fresh perspective on *pragma* shows Schutz's theory of action contained in *The Phenomenology of the Social World* as «insufficient » (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 277). In his own words:

This is because the course of thought in the *Sinnhafte Aufbau*, and its specific theme of the 'meaning which binds the acting to its action,' does not go far enough even though here differentiation of behavior [*Verhalten*] from action [*Handeln*] has already introduces difficulties (*sic*). However, our present theme, simply establishing the pragmatic motives in the constitution of the self and its partial aspects, requires the full development of the *pragma* as *pragma* (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 277).

Although action is a kind of *pragma*, not any kind of *pragma* is rational, projected action. Schutz himself makes this very clear:

We do not speak of 'acting' [*Handeln*], because the term is also involved with an inner attitude [*Einstellung*]. Instead we explicitly speak of 'working,' accordingly of the execution of the *pragma* in bodily movement itself, of the engagement of the self in world-space and in world-time by the changing of places by the body or its parts (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 276-277).

Indeed, bodily movements in space are clear-cut examples of *pragma* – for instance, a «change of place» (Schutz 1936 [2013]: 227) «by virtue of which an *illic* becomes a *hic* » (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 286). Accordingly reflective, theorizing acts are «*pragma*-free actions» because «they are not bound to working in

<sup>4</sup> Barber (2013: 4) also observes that Schutz's interest in *pragma* «reveal that even before his encounter with pragmatism on American soil after 1939, he was already thoroughly aware of and interested in the pragmatic dimensions of everyday experience».

the external world » (Schutz 1936 [2013]: 231). So, there can be *pragmata* which are not action as well as *pragmata*-free actions. Moreover, only one out of four types of *pragmata* is related to action, as it can be seen by taking a closer look to Schutz's stratification of *pragmata*.

Schutz's concept of *pragmata* is articulated into four *strata*: a) the *pragmata* without the purpose and project; b) the *pragmata* with the purpose but without the project; c) the *pragmata* with the project and purpose; and d) the *pragmata* with the project but without the purpose.

In this perspective, only the *pragmata* with the project and purpose is rational acting. So, *pragmata* is both more and less than rational action: it is more because it covers a wider range than action, and it is less because – with the exception of the *pragmata* with the project and purpose – it has fewer requirements – it does not need to be consciously aware of the end (purpose) and it does not pursue it nor does it need to know about the adequate means to achieve it. What's more, Schutz believes that the first kind of *pragmata* (without the purpose and the project) does not even need to be intentional.

Schutz developed these ideas further, explicitly distinguishing «conscious *pragmata*» from «unconscious *pragmata*». The conscious *pragmata* is not only intentional but also directed to a purpose, whereas the unconscious *pragmata* «lacks purpose as well as project». Based on such distinction, Schutz renames the first type of *pragmata* – which he formerly called «mere reaction» or «mere behavior» – as «unconscious *pragmata*». Of course, «unconscious *pragmata*» is what he meant by «mere behavior», except we know now that it lacks the specific feature of conscious *pragmata*: the intended purpose. Afterward, Schutz speaks of habitual behaving as the second type of *pragmata*, i.e., the «empirical behavior». Although we don't have here a new name for this, it is enlightening to know that this kind of *pragmata* refers to habitualities since they play a role in the genesis of the social person. It is even more interesting to note that Schutz calls the third kind of *pragmata* «action in the full sense», confirming what he had said about the *pragmata* with the project and purpose.

Yet, the specification of *actio* as a kind of *pragmata* poses one question. If the subject of social actions is the actor: Which is the subject of *pragmata*? To address this question we need to retrieve egology since Schutz's (1937 [2013], 265) answer is that the subject who performs the *pragmata* is the concrete *ego* or monad as a «subjective experiencing of temporality» – i.e. as a «constituted immanence» – and, in turn, as «a constituting moment for the stratification of the self» through a series of modifications of the «pure *pragmata* of the self at work».

As the pure *pragmata* is constituent of the self at work, the *ego agens* is always the self «working on its *pragmata*». This is what Schutz calls «the *ego ipse* in its totality and fullness» (Schutz 1937 [2013], 270). As such, it is a present self, actually working, and only this «self at work [...]» is the core of reality of the

surrounding world, the actual world within reach » (Schutz 1937 [2013], 284).

So, the *ego agens* as «the *ego ipse* in its totality and fullness» is the self now that operates and «creates its public time while operating » (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 270). All the other «basic attitudes of the self, comprised under the headings of ‘interest’ and ‘attention,’ [...] are themselves pragmatically conditioned, i.e., are modifications of that *attention à la vie* originating in the pure pragma of the self at work » (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 265).

Such kinds of attitudes – which are modifications of the pure pragma – «modify the experiences of expectation and of memory that arise from reflection on the course of duration» and «these ramifications can be traced back to the frames of spatio-temporality constituted in the ‘daily life’ [..., where] no self is simply given but always given in need of a temporal index. It is the self now, the self before now, and the self later on,» which Schutz calls the «tempora of the self» (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 265).

In this perspective, the *ego agens* (while «*ego ipse* in its totality and fullness») operates as my self now by constituting its *actiones* as *pragmata* and simultaneously co-constituting public time as «split up into a piece of world-time in which the *acta* have taken place in a sequential order of succession and in flowing duration and which my *acta* have constituted » (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 270). Briefly said, public time «is created by my pragma in the process of execution » (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 270).

All this occurs in the present. Even though «my self before» has operated in the past, it does not operate now. That is why I think about its *actiones* «only as its *acta* »:

As *actiones* these *pragmata* are co-constituting of public time which was the complete Now for the previously operating self, but to me, as reflecting self, appear as ‘then’ emergent within the frame of public time. For detached from the *actiones* constituting it, public time is split up into a piece of world-time in which the *acta* have taken place in a sequential order of succession and in flowing duration and which my *acta* have constituted (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 270).

Consequently, every *actio* is made up of two different but related phenomena: on one hand, it is «a series of experiencings in duration»; on the other, it is a «working (*pragma*) in world-time» (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 209).

#### 4. Ego ipse and the social persons

Only *pragmata* accomplished by «my self now» can be said to be actual and real. On the contrary, *pragmata* accomplished by «my self before» are char-



acterized as potential and, consequently, as a «reality in the mode of probability» derived from an «earlier core of reality» (Schutz, 1936 [2013]: 226). Accordingly, the «reiterableness of the same *pragma*» and of «an analogous *pragma*» by my self later on is «contained in the idealization of ‘I always can again’» (Schutz, 1936 [2013]: 226). One could think that this reiterability not only makes possible the development of personal habits but also the establishing of social habitus since *pragmata* are reiterable not only by the *ego agens* that once started them but also by other *egos*.<sup>5</sup> That’s why Schutz depicts them as reiterable *and* analogous.

Schutz not only distinguishes actual from potential *pragma* but also two different levels of potentiality. The first level is the one of «the previously actual *pragma* that potentially is reiterable» (Schutz, 1936 [2013]: 228). It is «the world of ‘phenomena of probability’,» which corresponds to «the full reality of the surrounding world in the extent of its reach » (Schutz, 1936 [2013]: 228). Although, these «phenomena of probability which previously stood in the surrounding world of the core of reality» refer not only to the actual world of my self now: they also «refer back to my prior self for which it was the core of reality» (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 284).

In so far as the level of the first potentiality lies within the range of the actual projects of the self at work, the phenomena attributed to the self belong to my self now. But that is also to say that the reiterability of working under the pragmatic ideality of ‘one can always again’ bears in this case the character of greatest probability. For this level of first potentiality it is characteristic that the protentions directed to the reactualization of the *pragma* obtain their intentionalities from reproductions and retentions of their own receding *pragmas* (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 284-285).

Accordingly, the *attention à la vie*, which in the purely actual *pragma* is «limited to my self now», here is «extended to my self later on, however always related back to my previous self» (Schutz, 1936 [2013]: 228). This sort of extension makes possible that «protentions procure their intentionalities from reproductions and retentions of *pragmas* that have receded into the past»

<sup>5</sup> Even though Schutz does not mention it, his description of how the reiterability of analogous *pragma* works is quiet similar to Husserl’s argument on intersubjectivity as based on the past experiences of my own transcendental *ego* (see San Martín 2008: 8-9). Schutz argument is that: «the sedimented experience is a *pragma* (e.g., kinaesthesias) accomplished by *me*, in the memory of which this potentiality (reality in the mode of probability) proves to be an earlier core of reality: Once this *hinc*, now a ‘phenomenon of probability,’ was a reality for me, but a reality *illinc*. For by my *pragma* my earlier *hinc* has now become an *illinc* » (Schutz 1936 [2013]: 226).

(Schutz, 1936 [2013]: 228) and thus it is a *sine qua non* condition for the reiterability of *pragmata*.

The second level of potentiality is the one of the «potential *pragma*», which is «always stemming from the level of the *ego ipse*» and whose boundaries «lie only in the compatibility and compossibility of the in-order-to motives, of the projects, of specific relations of ends or means with the whole experience, especially with respect to the experience of one's own *pragma*, its practicability and «its own powers» (Schutz, 1936 [2013]: 228). Schutz describes it as «the level of the world in reachability» and as being «quite different in structure» in comparison with the first level: it is «a level of the reality of future working» (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 285). As such, it «belongs to my later self, at the most to my self itself later on and is without an essential relation back to my prior self. It is then the case that, like all anticipations, it is founded in the actual stock of experience of my self now which, for its part, genetically refers back to my prior self» (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 285).

That the experience of one's own *ego's pragma* is related with the experience of one's own powers means that the self is a pragmatic unification since human powers are always, in the most radical sense, powers of an *ego*. Indeed:

The 'self *per se*' is a *pragmatic* unification: *ego agens et semper idem agens (volens)*. In this context, *agens* as *self* contains as well, to be sure, the relevant index to the social person (*ego qua pater familias, qua civis Romanus, (\iaphilosophus, etc.)*). As a consequence, all of these modifications are shown to be precisely modifications of the one *ego ipse agens (volens)* (appearing in the general positing of the *ego agens* as *origo* of pure *pragma*) (Schutz, 1936 [2013]: 209-210).

Around the *ego agens* there is a stratification of the social persons based on the «split of temporality» between *durée* and cosmic time originating from «the subjective experiencing of temporality as constituting immanence» (Schutz, 1936 [2013]: 220) which is stratified «into my self now, my self before now, my self later on...» (Schutz, 1936 [2013]: 221).

Thus, social persons are based on «the subjective experiencing of temporality as constituting immanence» (Schutz, 1936 [2013]: 220) which, in turn, is «the situation in its original fullness» and «the basic attitude of *attention à la vie* in the solitary self» (Schutz 1936 [2013], 238). My acting self, «the *ego ipse agens* is constituted at the same time as the center of working (the center of action) from which all habitualities and automaticities take their departure» (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 279). Thereafter, through habituality (as well as through will, sociality, education and culture), an interdependence and hierarchy of *attentions à la vie* is formed (Schutz 1936 [2013], 239). In accordance, the new levels of personality become «eccentric from the levels of personality that until

now were central» and also, in the reverse process, potentialities that have become eccentric «can become central again or devolve into ‘partial death’ » (Schutz 1936 [2013], 239).

The «orientation of all other personalities around the *ego agens*» (Schutz, 1936 [2013]: 224) produce a stratification of the self (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 265) arranged in «a continuous transition from the absolutely intimate person to the highest anonymous behavior» (Schutz, 1936 [2013]: 236). While «only *actio* creates a unity of relations» and is «ascribed to the unitary *ego ipse*», *acta* are to be ascribed «to partial social persons» which are constituted in the sedimentation of these *acta* (Schutz, 1936 [2013]: 221).

### 5. All of my selves and the reiterability of pragmata

The different *tempora* of the self that were mentioned in Section 3, open the horizons (past, present and future) of all possible *pragma*. As we already know, personalities are created around the *ego ipse* which is a pragmatic unification. As such, the *ego ipse* is produced in the Now, which provides for it the opportunity

to come into view in its fullness and totality as an operative [*wirkendes*] self in its *action*, while my self before now is already split up into its partial aspects and can never be visible in its fullness and totality but always only in its partial aspect. For only the *action* creates the relationship of unity [*Einheitsbezug*] of the *ego ipse* [...] Only the self now operates so as to be able to achieve this production [*Leistung*] of the relationship of unity (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 271).

Unlike my self now, my self before now does not operate but has already operated. That is why it does not create the unification of my *ego ipse*, although its *acta* are constitutive of my past, partial self. This is Schutz's exact wording:

My self before now does not operate, it *has operated and its acta do not become allotted to the unitary* *ego ipse*. Rather they are already revealed as *acta* of a partial self. Indeed, we can say right away that each of the partial selves which, in retrospect, make up my self before now, are nothing else than my *acta* constituting each of the partial selves such that I allot them specific attitudes of my self (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 271).

For Schutz, «to allot» means that the reproduction of my partial selves' *acta* «results in specific attentional, and, for their part, new pragmatically conditioned modifications, thus sedimented [*geschichtet*] according to hypsographi-

cal contour lines of relevance the center of density of which likewise lies in my self now » (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 271).

So, my self now is the center of all my partial social persons, constituted through the sedimentation of my *pragmata*. Some of these «partial persons of my self are referred to as belonging to my self now », while others, whose aspects «belong just to Now, bear the marks of the self later on—all of this to be sure only when in its totality the *ego ipse* does not presentively realize them in an actual *pragma* » (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 273-274).

Besides, actual *pragmata* performed by my self now are phenomenologically real, while past and future *pragmata* remain or await in the horizons for my actual working self. This means that each *tempora* of the self has its own peculiar features. While it is essential to my self now and my self later on to constitute public time – along with its postestativity, its possibility, and «its possibility of freely calculation probability and freely choosing among probabilities» (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 271) – , it is proper of my self before now to be complete, i.e., unchangeable and irrecoverable because it «is no longer postestative and no long allows for a choice» since «I no longer have the choice of what I will have done » (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 271).

As far as I find my *pragmata* in the Before – which «is free of protentions and anticipations» – , «they are reproducible or retainable as experiences of duration» and «carry their horizons open with them because they belong to my actual duration» though, «in so far as my self before now belongs to world-time, there no longer are no protentions and anticipations in a genuine and original sense because my previous protentions and anticipations have either been fulfilled or unfulfilled» (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 271). This is why «the acts which have entered into my world-time are as they are, unique, unchangeable and can no longer be freely varied» (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 271).

On the contrary, my present *pragmata* – performed by my self now as «the completed synthesis in public time of the present *pragma*» – have their «open and undetermined, freely variable protentions and anticipations» which are «protentions and anticipations-now that carry with them a maximal probability of fulfillment » (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 271).

The later on, in its turn, «simply remains undecided and open» while in the «genuine past» there are «only completion and certainty » (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 271). Indeed, when it comes to the self later on, «the ideas of the future self accompanying protentions and anticipations are unfulfilled and remain essentially unfulfillable from the standpoint of Now» (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 274), as it is «universally the case of all expectations and also all phantasies whose transport into reality, whose realization, as we say, is not excluded beforehand » (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 274).

Schutz even draws up what could be thought of as a rule of proportionality: the further in the future, the more vague and unrealizable the protentions and anticipations of the self are. He puts it in these words:

the protentions and anticipations directed to the future self are the more vague the greater the distance at which the levels of the self-phenomenon are apprehended, until they are finally dissolved completely and, in fact, become also unrealizable [*unvollziehbar*], as soon as they are directed later on to the *ego ipse* in its totality. In fact, the future total self can barely be imagined as an empty form (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 274).

Yet, another rule of proportionality is proposed by Schutz: the vaguer and more distant the partial self is from the social person's representation of the self later on, the closer they lie to the intimate person. In Schutz's words:

even these partial selves later on are the more vaguely represented, are endowed with more and more empty places, the closer they lie next to the central, intimate person. Conversely, in the standardized and normative attitudes that constitute the relative periphery of the partial selves there are proportionately fewer empty places shown at least where the process of self-typification of the self has advanced the furthest (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 274).

As mentioned before, the sedimentation of my *acta* constitutes my different partial selves allotted with specific attitudes (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 271). These attitudes are partial personalities orientated around the *ego agens* and constituted by «habitualities and their automatisms» (Schutz 1936 [2013], 224) by virtue of the transferability of one's own pragmata (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 285). Also, they do not exist disconnectedly but compose a system «defined by our attitudes toward the different phenomena of the social world » (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 247). It is «a system of interconnections of motivations» simply accepted «as habitual, traditional or affective givennesses » (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 247).

This system of attitudes is given in diverse ways, starting from standardized normative attitudes in the cultural world of daily life, moving on to «the ultimate goals of our bearing on the great systems of the state, of the law, of the economy – in short, all of those phenomena of social being that form the specific object of the social sciences» (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 248).

Accordingly, habitualities play an important role in the constitution and stabilization of the system of our social attitudes. The more habitualized and rationalized the different levels of the social person are, the more visible they become (Schutz 1936 [2013], 238) – here there is, by the way, another rule of proportionality – . In turn, this process of stabilization is based on common

knowledge since it retrieves apprehensions of the world which, as such, always refer back:

to the stock of experience which the self previously constructed out of multiple polythetic and monothetic concatenations of meaning already contained in previous experiences. And also belonging to this stock of experience in principle are the memories of modifications which the cores of reality of the previous surrounding world have undergone by *acts of genuine working* (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 282; Schutz's emphasis).

In addition, «what can be anticipated as the reality of future working must [...] be compossible with this actual stock of experience» (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 285) which involves «experiencings of my own pragma, of its 'transferability' (actualizableness) and thus the 'estimation of its own power' » (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 285).

Based on these estimations, I can work in the world within reach, which is related to my self later on and accordingly «remains subject to the double concurrence of probability which is universally characteristic for my self later on» (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 285). Once again, Schutz sketches out what seems to be a rule of proportionality: «The farther the world within reach is spatially and temporally at a distance from the actual center of the surrounding world, the less probability [*Wahrscheinlichkeit*] there is. For the more the protentions remain open the more they remain unfulfilled » (Schutz 1937 [2013]: 285).

Summarizing what has been shown in this Section we may say that Schutz thinks of social personalities as being constituted in a process going from the intimate person pragmatically constituted by the *ego agens*, to the partial social personalities articulated by the system of our attitudes toward the social world. This process is, in turn, ruled by the *four laws of proportionality* already mentioned, which we can now formulate as follows:

1. *Rule of the realizability of the future protentions and anticipations of the self.* The realizability and accuracy of the protentions and anticipations of the self are inversely proportional to their distance in time towards the future.

2. *Rule of the intimacy of the representations of the self latter on.* The distance from the representation of the self latter to the partial self of the social person is inversely proportional to the distance of these representations to the central, intimate person.

3. *Rule of the visibility of social persons.* The visibility of the different levels of the social persons is directly proportional to their habitualization and rationalization.

4. *Rule of the fulfillment of the protentions of the surrounding world in the world within reach.* The distance in time and space of the world within reach from the actu-

al center of the surrounding world is inversely proportional to the probability of fulfillment of its pretensions of the world within reach.

These laws can be ranked according to two interrelated criteria. On one hand, they follow an increasing order of constitution of higher ontological strata: the self now, the self latter on, social persons and the world within reach. On the other hand, they indicate a progressive expansion of our range of action: pretensions and anticipations, representations, visibility and potential reach. Finally, both articulated series show that the constitution of our being in the social world and our range of action in it is a gradual irreversible acquisition, giving the *ego agens* priority over the other elements of the set.

### 6. Egology as a way for Social Phenomenology (Final remarks)

So far, we have seen that Schutz conceives of *pragmata* as the *pragmata* of the *ego agens*, not as mere practices of social agents (like major contemporary social thinkers do<sup>6</sup>). *Pragmata* are always the *pragmata* of a self at work. It is not that social agents (for Schutz, social personalities) do not exist. They are the product of the *ego* working on its *pragma*. Moreover, social personalities are not persons constituted in full but partial personalities which rely on the *ego agens*. Consequently, they do not act on their own. It is the *ego agens* which acts through them. Therefore, Schutz's way of articulating the social personalities with the *pragmata* and the habitualities is quite different from the way in which contemporary sociology articulates social agents, practices and the *habitus* (cf. footnote 5) since it is not circular. According to Schutz, *pragmata* belong to the *ego agens* who constitutes the social personalities<sup>7</sup> which in turn only «act» in a secondary, metaphorical way and by no means can act back on practices. This indicates that practices (for Schutz, *pragmata*) have a substratum, namely the *ego agens*, which is the *origo* of *pragmata* and, through them, of all my dead selves and social personalities.

This is precisely what neither sociology nor ethnomethodology can see, for different reasons. Sociology, because it is reluctant to accept any kind of foundation, somehow following Durkheim's dictum of explaining the social through the social; ethnomethodology because – as shown in Section 1 – it

<sup>6</sup> Take for instance Pierre Bourdieu. As I argue elsewhere (Belvedere, 2012: 75; Belvedere 213: 1096ff), he considers that agents are constituted by practices and in turn constitute those practices, in a circularity which leaves ungrounded the whole set of actors, practices and *habitus*.

<sup>7</sup> This does not mean that the ego constitutes the social personalities freely and in absolute loneliness. As Schutz shows elsewhere (1955 [1964]: 253), they are the *result* of our participation in social circles constituted by «parts» of the personalities of the individuals integrating them, whose «total personalities» remain outside the «common area» of social circles.

rejects these kind of issues taking them as general, abstract and merely philosophical. Both perspectives, in turn, object to an alleged subjectivism implied in any sort of first person perspective (which is needed to access the *ego agens* as an immanent flux of experiences). Thus they both look at Schutz's stance as an unacceptable subjectivism.

But things are quite different since Schutz is not just a subjectivist. Of course he made an eloquent praise of the subjective point of view but, as seen in Sections 2 & 3, *pragmata* are a twofold reality: they have a subjective, immanent dimension but also an objective, transcendent one. The former has an identity and systemic properties, the latter is schizophrenic-like and multiple; one of them acts, the other is just a mask for acting. So, the point is not to deduce the actual, in vivo, autochthonous practices from generalizing procedures and formal analytic assumptions but to account for each dimension of the *pragma* for its own sake – including, of course, the one and only dimension which is accessed inwardly –. Accordingly, egology is not everything but *it is needed*; otherwise we would have a one-sided view of *pragma*, conceiving it as only external and self-organized.

Precisely what makes Schutz's conception of *pragma* so refreshing is that it takes into account what for many sociologists is nowadays like a mantra – that practices are objective, blind, unconscious processes self-organized that tend to reproduce themselves in a recurrent, naturalized, mechanistic way (see Giddens 1984: chapter 1, Giddens 1979: 66, ) – and at the same time it takes into consideration what those sociologists let aside – which they call «subject» with a derogative nuance (cf. Truc 2011: 158, and Swanson 2005: 5). Moreover, it articulates with admirable rigor and precision the subjective<sup>8</sup> with the objective, the active and productive with the passive and reproductive – shortly, it offers an alternate to dualistic perspectives long before that contemporary sociology claimed that it had overcome «dualism» (Giddens 1979: 4-5, Bourdieu 1979, 1980)<sup>9</sup>.

The key concept here – the one that allows to account for the subjective and the objective, the inner and the outer – is «reiterability». As seen in Section 4, *pragmata* are reiterable not only by the same *ego agens* that once

<sup>8</sup> Sure Bourdieu and, particularly, Giddens are aware of the importance of subjectivity; the problem here is not «subjectivity», «reflexivity» or anything like that but *the subject* which for Schutz is the very «substratum» of *pragmata* – i.e. the *ego agens* –. Instead, contemporary sociologists refuse to go further than just «practices», and take them as the ultimate field of their interests, missing its very substratum or *hypokeimenon* – which according to Schutz (1937: 252) is the *ego ipse* –.

<sup>9</sup> Elsewhere (Belvedere 2011) I discuss further the misreading of Schutz by contemporary sociologists.



started them but also by other *egos*. That's why Schutz speaks of the «transferability» of *pragma*, which makes possible the development of social habitus. Indeed (as shown in Section 5), habitualities play an important role in the constitution and stabilization of the system of our social attitudes. The more habitualized the different levels of the social persons are, the more we share experiencings of our own *pragma* and of its «transferability». This is what allows us to have a habitus—which, by the way, is a set of generalized schemes of comportment that can be transferred from one *ego agens* to another<sup>10</sup>. It is the reiterability of analogous *pragma*, facilitated by the stabilization of shared social attitudes, what constitutes the social personalities, which are an interplay of subjective and objective aspects, real and unreal, actual and potential.

That's why Schutz thinks of the *ego agens* as being split up and teared apart: because it has to mediate between *durée* and social time, inner and outer experiences, the individual and the social; briefly, the subjective and the objective. In accordance, Schutz's theory of *pragma* does not need to criticize and overcome dualism because it does not produce it in the first place since from the outset it takes into account both aspects of social practices, the subjective and the objective. And that's why it can provide for an alternate: because better than to have a solution is not to have a problem.

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<sup>10</sup> I address this issue more broadly in Belvedere (2013: 1105-1106).

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