Time and Meaning in Alfred Schütz

Muzzetto, Luigi

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Luigi Muzzetto

ABSTRACT. The essay analyses some aspects of the relationship
between time and experience in Alfred Schütz. The first part high-
lights the role of time in the construction of the significant lived
experience and of the subject's identity. It shows how the temporal
structure determines the uniqueness of meaning: the latter is a
function of lived-through time, of each individual's life-story. The
structure of temporality seems to condemn the lived present to being
excluded from the possibility of possessing meaning. In fact, the
present is the privileged time frame for the construction of funda-
mental reality, of action, and of identity. The second part of the study
investigates the ways in which time contributes to the constitution of
sociality. The essay concludes by examining the main limitations
of Schütz's theory. KEY WORDS • cosmic time • inner time • inter-
subjectivity • meaning • social time • vivid present

Time and Subjectivity

Perhaps no other sociological thinker has given time such a prominent place as
Alfred Schütz[1]: in his thought, the various dimensions of both subjectivity and
sociality are immediately, structurally and radically connected to time; time is a
constitutive part of meaning and of the molecular dimension of the social world,
as it is part of the material of which subjectivity and the social world are woven.

All of this is well known to Schütz's scholars. And yet, in the many studies of
his works, the problem of time, although always present, remains largely in the

background (with the partial exception of the analyses that compare Schütz's theory and Weber's action theory[2]). The aim of this study is to investigate the complex relationship between time and experience by focusing on two crucial aspects: the subjective and the social dimensions. These two dimensions are treated separately by Schütz for the purely analytical purpose of examining their constitution from a phenomenological perspective. As regards the subjective dimension, the investigation will concentrate on the connection between the temporal structure and constitution of the meaning of lived experience. As regards the social dimension, the focus will be on the ways in which the temporal structure contributes to the constitution of intersubjectivity, and in particular of its core nucleus, the We-relation, starting with the encounter with the Other, the Thou-orientation. It should be stressed that constitution of significant lived experience and constitution of sociality form the axis of Schütz's theoretical framework.

Schütz's effort to provide a foundation for Weber's interpretative sociology has given rise, as is well known, to a protosociology: a sociology, that is, which analyses the basic eidetic structures of the life-world, the world in which human experience takes shape.

Essentially, Schütz adopts the phenomenology of the natural standpoint, which he regards as an adequate epistemological framework for the social sciences.[3] His is a constructionist outlook[4] which sets aside the ontology of reality and suspends judgement on what reality *per se* may be. What emerges from the phenomenological *epoché*[5] is the subject's *experience* of reality, the *meaning* of reality: 'it is the meaning of our experiences and not the ontological structure of the objects, which constitutes reality' (Schutz, 1962b: 341). 'As a phenomenologist he follows the thesis of Husserl that "all real unities are unities of meaning"' (Nasu, 1999: 74). Ontological reality dissolves into an infinite series of finite provinces of meaning made up of different cognitive styles.[6]

One feature of a cognitive style is the manner in which time is experienced. Even more radically, Schütz (1967: 12) stresses, 'the problem of meaning is a time problem'. But this is a time that is not 'given to consciousness': it is 'consciousness that unfolds time' (Prato, 1982: 94). Thus, the theory of the finite provinces of meaning forms the framework within which Schütz situates the problem of time. This theory will be taken for granted here. Only examined will be those aspects of it that are essential for the analysis, and in particular the structure, of time in the everyday life-world.

The Two Basic Levels of Consciousness and Their Temporal Structure

Schütz's analysis starts with the constitution of the lived experience and its meaning in the consciousness of the single isolated subject. It then considers the

meeting with the Other, and finally examines the construction of the social world. After the fundamental features of the picture have been analysed, it is then recomposed. Schütz's analysis is phenomenological-constitutive rather than historical-sociological. The separating-out of the elements of the process is purely analytical: there is, for instance, no sequence by which the subject comes first and the social world follows.[7] The subject is social from the outset, and it is entirely so: there is no experience that is not in some way social.[8] In the same way, also the idea of time is already given to the subject in the 'natural standpoint'.

Following Schütz, I shall take as the starting point for my analysis the 'subjective' structure of time. This is connected with the structure of consciousness, a structure that Schütz (through an original combination of Bergson's and Husserl's ideas, as well as under significant influence from James's thought[9]), regards as organized into two basic levels characterized by two distinct attitudes and by two distinct time forms. This organization, and especially the 'deeper' level of consciousness, constitutes the basic structure from which all other articulations of time and experience originate.

First, for Bergson, consciousness is composed of an infinite number of levels characterized by different degrees of *tension* within consciousness itself, of greater or lesser attention to the external world (*attention à la vie*); when this attention is greatest, we are concerned with the external world; when, on the contrary, it slackens, we are able to plunge into our internal world, and live within it in unreflective mode.

In the *durée*, the concrete or real duration, experiences flow incessantly, realizing a succession of indistinct elements, a continuous change of conscious states produced by the interpenetration of heterogeneous, purely qualitative moments. These elements structure themselves and interpenetrate like the notes of a melody where every note extends into the next in an organic, unbroken whole. At this level, the field of consciousness is not yet structured. The time of the *durée,* it must be emphasized, is merely qualitative, constituting a sort of 'qualitative multiplicity'. Of this qualitative changing, however, we know nothing as long as we are immersed in the stream of experience.

At the second level of consciousness, the flow of lived experiences is first broken down into discrete moments and subsequently recomposed through multiple connections. Duration is replaced by extension, succession by simultaneity, quality by quantity. Time, like space, is perceived as a homogeneous uniform medium that can be divided *ad libitum*: this is the result of the projection of time into space. Thus we have the universal form of objective time, time as measured by clocks and watches. This second level of consciousness can be related to the intellectual functions, which are essentially concerned with action and therefore pragmatically oriented. Science, language, homogeneous space-time, the notion of causality – all these belong to the conceptual spatio-temporal sphere, to reflective consciousness (Bergson, 1889, 1896, 1922).

Second, Husserl affirms the presence of a 'double intentionality of the stream of consciousness': a 'longitudinal intentionality' and a 'transverse intentionality'. Prephenomenal experiences and prephenomenal time are constituted through the former. Lived experiences flow from one *now* to another *now*, from a present time to another present time, and they are only partly differentiated. This embryonic form of the structure of lived experiences is established in the form of typicality through passive syntheses (identity, equality, etc.).

Time, on this level of consciousness, is 'the form of lived experiences' (Schutz and Luckmann, 1973: 52). 'Pre-phenomenal, pre-immanent temporality is constituted intentionally as the form of temporally constitutive consciousness' (Husserl, cited in Schutz, 1967: 46), although it is a product of consciousness itself. Intentional units, differentiated phenomenal experiences and objective time are instituted through 'transverse intentionality'.

What makes possible – through transverse intentionality – the flow of lived experiences from one *now* to another *now* as a continuum, rather than a juxtaposition of separate elements, is first of all the presence of retention and protention. Every experience (the experience of a perception, for instance) is accompanied by a retention, a primary remembrance. In the transition from one *now* to another *now*, I retain the memory of the experience just lived. It is a continuous process: one has retentions of retentions, and so on; memories tend to weaken until they fade away. Retentions, Husserl said, form the tail of a comet whose nucleus is made up of the original experience. Each *now* is also accompanied by a protention, a tension towards the following instant, a prolongation of the current moment into the following instant.

The secondary remembrance and anticipation, characteristic of transverse intentionality, must be kept distinct from retention and protention.[10] However, they are made possible by the presence of the above-mentioned processes: only if an experience is retained can I turn a reflective eye to it. Secondary remembrance is a sort of reconstruction, a *making* of a past experience *present*. A past experience is reactivated and brought, so to speak, to the *now*. Anticipation has the same nature as secondary remembrance: it refers to a future experience conceived as having taken place. Retention and reproduction, however, apart from the analytical distinction between the levels of consciousness, are two inseparable aspects of remembering, just as protention and anticipation are two joint and inseparable aspects of expectation. Therefore, 'retentions and reproductions, protentions and anticipations are constitutive for the interconnectedness of the stream of consciousness' (Schutz, 1976a: 41; see also Husserl, 1948, 1950, 1966).

Third, Schütz regards the two forms of intentionality as characterizing the pre-predicative and the predicative spheres, respectively; two spheres practically equivalent to Bergson's two levels of consciousness. He writes: 'It is by virtue of retention that the multiplicity of the running-off of duration is consti-

tuted . . . on the other hand, the identity of the object and objective time itself is constituted in recollection (reproduction)' (Schutz, 1967: 49). The pre-predicative sphere is, for Schütz, essentially the sphere of passivity, of passive receptivity.

The objects of experience at this level are not yet well defined but they acquire a well-defined form in the predicative sphere, in accordance with the formula 'S is p'.[11] In other words, the experience becomes clearly delineated. This new manner of being of lived experiences is constitutively tied to the attention directed to them.

While the pre-predicative sphere is characterized by a pre-phenomenal time which can be likened to the *durée*, the predicative sphere is characterized by an objective, phenomenal time which Schütz tends to consider similar to Bergson's spatialized time. This constitutes the basis for Schütz's analyses of time in the diverse finite provinces of meaning, starting with time in the everyday life-world.

Subjective time in the everyday life-world is characterized by the encounter between *durée* and spatialized cosmic time. In the world of fundamental reality we act in the outside world through the movements of our bodies. We thus experience our kinaesthetic movements simultaneously as both events in the outside world and aspects of our own stream of consciousness. As events in the outside world, our bodily movements partake of the structure of objective, spatialized time, of cosmic time; that is, as aspects of our stream of consciousness they belong to the qualitative time of *durée*. These movements synthesize the two perspectives into a new temporal perspective born of the fusion of *durée* with cosmic time; a new flux which Schütz calls *the vivid present*. 'In and by our bodily movements we perform the transition from our *durée* to the spatial or cosmic time, and our working actions partake of both. In simultaneity we experience the working action as a series of events in outer and in inner time, unifying both dimensions into a single flux which shall be called the *vivid present*' (Schutz, 1962c: 216).[12]

In the many worlds of the imagination, time is not subject to the same constraints as in the everyday life-world. We can travel backwards and forwards in time; reverse the direction of its course; we can be in different places and times simultaneously.[13] It is doubtful whether daydreams can have a fixed place in time.[14] In the world of dreams the structure of time appears chaotic compared with that of the everyday life-world: present, past and future seemingly entangle: 'There are future events conceived in terms of the past, past and past-perfect events assumed as open and modifiable and, therefore, as having a strange character of futurity, successions are transformed into simultaneities and vice versa' (Schutz, 1962c: 243). What remains constant in those two finite provinces of meaning, as well, is the irreversibility of the *durée* 'which itself is constitutive for all activities of our mind' (p. 239).

Constitution of Meaning and Temporality

Clear 'definition' of a lived experience is fundamental for the concept of meaning in Schütz. Only a defined experience has meaning; and, given the temporal nature of experience, a defined experience is a past experience. Meaning is not an intrinsic feature of experiences, nor is it an additional experience. Meaning in its more general sense 'is merely an operation of intentionality, which . . . only becomes visible to the reflective glance'. An experience while occurring, that is, while we are living in it, Schütz (1976a) writes, does not have any meaning; only the past experiences towards which we may turn back are meaningful. 'Meaning' is nothing else but the attitude of the experiencing mind towards its past experiences' (pp. 61–2). Not only is an experience still undefined while it occurs, but as I turn my attention to a lived instant, while I grasp it in its being *thus* and not otherwise, it is already past:

> What we grasp by the *reflective* act is never the present of our stream of thought and also not its specious present; it is always its past. Just now the grasped experience pertained to my present, but in grasping it I know it is not present any more. And, even if it continues, I am aware only by an after-thought that my reflective turning towards its starting phases has been simultaneous with its continuation. The whole present, therefore, and also the vivid present of our Self, is inaccessible for the reflective attitude. We can only turn to the stream of our thought as if it had stopped with the last grasped experience. In other words, self-consciousness can only be experienced *modo praeterito*, in the past tense. (Schutz, 1962d: 173)

I shall return to the notion of 'the vivid present' shortly.

For Schütz, then, meaning does not merely entail the lived experience; it entails awareness of the experience. Its constitution, therefore, implies a connection between the two fundamental levels of conscience which involves two different attitudes and two distinct time structures. In the *durée* I live 'in my acts' following the flux of my experiences; I live in the present, intentionally looking at the object of my experience, and therefore turning to the future. To grasp the experience I must change my attitude; I must, in Dewey's words, 'stop and think', I must, so to speak, leave off the stream of the *durée* and turn my attention in the opposite direction. 'Then we are no longer living in our acts directed toward their objects; we make our acts themselves objects of our reflective thinking' (Schutz, 1976a: 39).

The change in attitude implies a change in the temporal structure. From the present, from my present *now*, I must turn towards the past. 'To stop and think', 'leaving the stream of *durée*' are metaphors that should not be misunderstood, for they derive from Bergson's description of the projection of time into space. In fact, the stream of *durée* is ceaseless, and reflection too has its temporal course.[15] But apart from the limitations of language (which in Bergson's view

belongs to the conceptual, spatio-temporal world) the problem persists of a time gap between living and the acquisition of awareness. Of that gap, however, I have no awareness, because the accumulation of interpretative schemata produces an 'automatic stipulation of meaning', even though the accumulation 'always has its genesis in a spontaneous bestowal of meaning by the ego' (Parsons, 1977: 55).

A further element in the complex relationship between time and meaning is the structure of the intentional units. Intentional units belong, strictly speaking, to transverse intentionality, to the predicative sphere, and thus entail the temporal dimension of the latter. Nevertheless, they are constituted on the basis of the structure of the *durée*. And it is the *durée* which ultimately constitutes the 'temporal structure (given in inner duration) of the meaning of experiences' (Schutz and Luckmann, 1973: 52). In these quantitatively non-homogeneous internal traits, every experience is connected to a context that 'presupposes the temporal relation between actual experience, past experience, and anticipated experience' (p. 55). Or, in other words, 'the 'quanta' of inner duration are dependent upon retention, impression, and anticipation' (p. 56). The units of meaning are relational units.[16] Belonging to this temporal meaning context are Husserl's idealizations 'and so forth and so on' and 'I can do it again', which are tied to the assumption of continuity in the world, a fundamental trait of the natural standpoint.

The structure of *quanta* is consistent with the notion of flux. Thus, the *now* of the stream of consciousness, the present of human experience, is not an instant experienced as separate from the preceding and the following instants: it is a 'vivid present' which, like James's 'specious present',[17] is tied to the past and to the future.[18]

This structure affects both the constitution of lived experiences and our reflection on them. To simplify a very complex process, we may say that experiences take shape polythetically, step by step, in the *durée* (this is certainly the case of actions; other notions are acquired in synthetic form). They can be reflectively reconstructed in two ways: synthetically, or 'monothetically', to use Husserl's expression (for example, I can remember the contents of Pythagoras' theorem without going through all the steps in its proof); or analytically, 'polythetically', by retracing the experience step by step. There is, however, a limit to the reconstruction of experience, a limit imposed by the inner time *quanta* referred to above. Any further fractioning is simply not possible. Moreover, it is important to note that there are experiences whose meanings cannot be grasped monothetically. The clearest instance of this is music, where meaning is tied in a special way to the form of inner time.

First of all, a piece of music 'is an entity made of time' (Pedone, 1996: 21): 'the specific existence of the ideal object, the "work of music", is its extension in time' (Schutz, 1976a: 29). 'There is no doubt – writes Schütz – that the

dimension of time in which the musical work exists is the inner time of our stream of consciousness – in Bergson's terminology, the *durée*' (p. 31).

The meaning of music is not of a conceptual nature: while natural language and many other languages, including the language of science, use a semantic system, a conceptual framework, a grammar, this is not the case of music. Whence it follows that while Pythagoras' theorem, or a short story, can be recalled to mind not only polythetically but monothetically as well, this is impossible with music.

'The musical work itself . . . can only be recollected and grasped by reconstituting the polythetic steps in which it has been built up, by reproducing mentally or actually its development from the first to the last bar as it goes on in time' (p. 29). Which introduces another temporal dimension: the *simultaneity* of the flux of music and stream of consciousness:

> The listener lives in his acts of listening, he is directed toward the ongoing flux of music as it flows. The stream of his inner time (of his consciousness) and the stream of music are simultaneous within the precise meaning given by Bergson to this term. He calls two fluxes simultaneous if I am able to look, at my discretion, at both of them as a unit or at either of them distinctly. (p. 59)

In Mathematics, on the other hand, or in similar experiences, this simultaneity is entirely unnecessary (Mendoza de Arce, 1976: 53).

In order to relive the flux of a piece of music in one's inner time, it is necessary to grasp its meaning, but in this case, too, a reflective change on the experience of listening is necessary. So we are again confronted with the time gap between lived experience and reflection, between experience and consciousness of the experience, between experience and meaning.

The Paradox of Meaning

As we have seen thus far, Schütz assigns meaning to past experiences and seems to deny meaning to present lived experiences. All this points to the presence of a problematic element vis-à-vis the relation between meaning and temporality.

Cox (1978) seeks to deal with the difficulty by reading Schütz's position simply as a mistaken interpretation of a series of theoretical nodes in Husserl's thought, among which is the time structure of reflection. The error, according to Cox, resides in the fact that Schütz reads Husserl via Bergson. This induces Schütz to conceive reflectiveness as a process where time is Bergson's spatialized time. The consequence is that in Schütz 'the turning back is literally back, against the flow, and the stepping out takes time to do, so that by the time one steps out, that which he wanted to observe has gone past in the flow' (p. 163).

It is therefore only possible to reflect on a past lived experience. Reflection

and recollection coincide. Thus, for Cox, 'Schütz's methodological stance that reflection is only a mode of recollection' constitutes 'the focal point of the difficulties' of his analyses (p. 162). Husserl's view is different, according to Cox. The reflective stance is certainly the opposite of living in one's acts. But even though it '*includes* recollection and anticipation . . . *is not limited to these*, and includes the apprehension of the mental extent simultaneous with the reflecting itself' (p. 122).

In his endeavour to re-establish the orthodoxy of Husserl's vision, Cox fails to discern the originality of Schütz's position.[19] (Although it is certainly true that in his use of Husserl and Bergson, Schütz is not greatly concerned with proving the compatibility of their theoretical approaches, nor with providing an analytical demonstration of his own stance.)[20]

The way in which Schütz conceives action provides the main answer to the problem of meaning. Although Schütz's general concern is with the meaning of lived experience, action occupies a central place in his theoretical framework as regards both the individual and the social dimension. His theory is an action theory, though he extends it far beyond the point to which Weber had taken it (especially through the theory of the finite provinces of meaning).

To be pointed out first is that the nature and the time structure of reflection comprise both the problem and its 'solution'. It should be borne in mind that reflection does not solely entail turning one's attention towards lived experiences; it can also be focused on future experiences imagined as already lived. There is thus a symmetry between secondary remembrance and anticipation. Moreover, secondary remembrance and anticipation both have the same reconstructive nature of an original experience. Consequently, the basic idea that only a defined past experience is meaningful can be extended to those lived experiences whose occurrence is only imagined. All this is essential to Schütz's idea of action.

As is well known, Weber drew a distinction between *behaviour* and *action*: action is meaningful behaviour. But the absence of a reference to time as a constitutive aspect of action prevents him from distinguishing 'between the *action*, considered as something in progress, and the completed *act*, between the meaning of the producer of a cultural object, and the meaning of the object produced' (Schutz, 1967: 8). Schütz defines action as 'human conduct devised by the actor in advance, that is, conduct based upon a preconceived project' (Schütz, 1962e: 19). What distinguishes it from mere behaviour is the presence of a project 'more or less implicitly preconceived' (Schutz, 1967: 59).

Action is 'the act of taking a stance oriented towards the future' (Williame, 1973: 34). It is an act that involves the active presence of the Self, an act of the Self directed at transforming the existing situation, directed towards a future outcome, an outcome that is anticipated, albeit in an empty form. But what exactly is anticipated in the project? Is it the acting while it occurs (action) or the

accomplished action (act)? 'That which is planned [is not] the future action, but the future act, and it is anticipated in the Future Perfect Tense, *modo futuri exacti'* (Schutz, 1962f: 69). 'Indeed, this follows from the nature of projection. The action itself could hardly be projected were not the completed act projected with it' (Schutz, 1967: 60). Therefore, since meaning has so far been considered to be the product of the intentionality inherent in the reflective act, Schütz can state that 'the meaning of any action is its corresponding projected act' (p. 61). This, then, is the kernel of the solution to the problematic node in the relationship between time and meaning: the project makes *both the act and the acting* meaningful. Only my ability to imagine a completed action allows me to plan and then actually realize the successive steps in the action: these depend on the final goal that has been set.

Action can be seen as composed of partial actions, each of which is a step towards the final result, and this solves the problem of the unitary character of the action and of its structure. It should be added that the meaning of the performed action will be different from that of the anticipated action, also because of the elapsing of time.

The belief that meaning does not pertain to the immediacy of living in the stream of consciousness, therefore, does not imply that meaning operates as a sort of Paretian 'derivation' or, generally speaking, as a rationalization. That would be the inevitable conclusion if meaning were regarded as a mere *ex post* reflection on lived experience. In fact, we can anticipate our steps reflectively. The possibility of the meaning of the *now* therefore resides in our capacity to anticipate it, to reflect beforehand on the (imagined) consequences of our endeavours. Acting too, as well as lived experience, is endowed with meaning. The present, therefore, acquires meaningfulness from anticipation of the future. Only behaviour is devoid of meaning, and this is because it has not been the object of attention. This is by no means the result of chance: as will be shown later, attention has a selective nature, being closely related to the frame of relevancies. 'What determines the "unawareness" of conduct is nothing but . . . the quasi-automatic character of its development', in contrast to action, which entails reference to an 'imaginary transcendence' (Blin, 1999: 64). In Schütz's writings, then, the tension between life and reflection, between living and the awareness of living, persists.[21]

The Temporal Structure of Action

As regards the temporal structure of action and of the act, one should bear in mind that an act will be conceived by the actor in the present, yet projected in his imagination into a future time when it will have been performed. Thus, 'in projecting I look at my act in the Future Perfect Tense, I think of it *modo futuri*

exacti' (Schutz, 1962c: 215). Whereas I look 'by a reflective glance at the acts performed in previous processes of acting in the Past Tense or Present Perfect Tense *(modo praeterito)*' (p. 214). Temporal structure also explains the relation between the project and the motives for it. For Weber, action is motivated behaviour. But Weber does not resolve the ambivalence of meaning inherent in the common usage of the term 'motive', which can be understood as the goal of a planned action (e.g. planning a robbery in order to get a sum of money) but also as whatever induced me to undertake that particular action rather than another one (an unsatisfactory socialization process, for instance, or bad company, and so on). Schütz calls the former, the 'in-order-to motive' and the latter, the 'because motive'.

From the actor's point of view, 'in-order-to motives' concern the future: it is the planned action itself 'that is the pre-phantasied state of affairs to be brought about by the future action which constitutes the in-order-to motive of the latter' (Schutz, 1962f: 70). In short, the aim motivates the project. 'Because motives' instead refer to the past and represent the motivation of the aim itself of the action. In other words, in-order-to motives 'emanate from the already established paramount project', because motives 'deal with the motivation for the establishment of the paramount project itself' (Schutz, 1970: 50). The nature of this type of motive is complex: it is rooted in the actor's personality, in his unconscious. It is sufficient here to recall that Schütz affirms the quasi-causal nature of such motives, given that they operate behind the actor's back, so to speak.

Furthermore, while I am living the course of the action, I am also turned towards the future. I am therefore driven by in-order-to motives. To grasp the 'because motives' the actor must turn to his past. The fact that the distinction between motivating and motivated factors is largely connected with the time perspective is an aspect, as Carr (1986) notes, of the 'narrative structure of individual life and action', a structure that 'has a prospective-retrospective form' (p. 172).

The Relevance System and the Uniqueness of Meaning

So far, we have taken some necessary steps towards the constitution of meaning: we have stressed the essentially selective function of attention, going not further than a very broad definition of meaning ('meaning is a product of intentionality that becomes visible to the reflective glance'). We must now not only complete the journey but also explain why the actor turns his or her attention to one particular lived experience rather that another. I start with this latter point.

First, instant after instant, lived experiences accumulate in the individual's consciousness forming a sort of sedimentation, 'a stock of knowledge at hand'.

Past experiences are not stored in this 'stock' at random. Nor are there isolated experiences. Experiences are, on the contrary, interconnected through manifold types of relationship: symbolic relations, for instance, or relations born of an experience pertaining to a particular *Gestalt* or to a particular finite province of meaning. There are, moreover, time relationships: every lived experience refers back to a previous one (although a primordial experience cannot be envisaged), and every experience takes its meaning from all the past experiences that relate to it and from the future experiences that it anticipates. The chronology itself of the sedimentation has a constitutive character: the 'same' experiences deposited in different sequences form different stocks of knowledge.

Second, in regard to the problem of meaning, the most significant form of relation or aggregation of experiences is the system of relevances. Each finite province of meaning is characterized by a particular system of relevances. This is the engine that drives the selective activity of consciousness: it turns the attention towards one point or another of the lived experience and interprets them according to the cognitive interest existing at the moment of the attentional modification. This interest, or more precisely the system of relevances of which it is part, derives in its turn from each individual life-course. The system operates in unitary manner, but Schütz draws an analytical distinction between thematic, interpretive, and motivational relevances, between relevances which can be imposed (i.e. which are not voluntary) and intrinsic relevances. The building-up of relevances is complex. One could briefly say that their foundation in the everyday life-world is to be recognized in the 'fundamental anxiety', in our awareness of our finitude. (On the relation between Schütz's position and those of Heidegger and Kierkegaard on this point, see Natanson, 1986: 81–92.) I know that 'I was born, I am ageing, and I must die'. 'This relevance is imposed upon us in virtue of our human condition, as is the awareness of the irreversibility and irretrievability of time as such imposed upon us' (Schutz, 1970: 180). From this ultimately descends the organization of my existence, my plans: 'all our interest in life, our building up of plans, our attempts to understand the world and our condition in it, in brief, the whole system of our topical, interpretational, and motivational relevances, can be conceived of as being intrinsic to these imposed relevances' (p. 181).

Third, we are now able to describe precisely how Schütz conceives meaning, and of what its relational nature consists: meaning is the relationship, born from the act of turning the attention, between one lived experience and the whole life-experience of the individual, an experience configured into the system of relevances. It must be added, and this is a key factor, that the system of relevances is a function of each individual's biography, of his or her lived time. It is therefore necessarily unique to each individual. Furthermore, it changes with every successive lived moment. At every instant, the system of relevances interprets the event to which it turns its attention, and that interpretation modifies the

system itself in a continuous circular process. Not only is the meaning of each experience fundamentally unique, but the 'same' experience does not have a meaning established once for all. Whenever I bring an experience to mind, it takes on a different meaning, a meaning that will depend on the temporal moment in which attention is again focused on the experience. By consequence, meaning is *radically a function of time*. (This does not imply that the systems of relevances are solipsistic configurations: they are socially constituted and pertain to the culture handed down through socialization. This on the one hand explains the similarity of the visions of the world characteristic of any individual social group; on the other, it does not eliminate the subjective dimension.)

Schütz thus codifies the uniqueness of human experiences as bound to the unique and unrepeatable nature of each single subjectivity. Subjectivity is fundamentally a stream of consciousness before it is a Self. Its uniqueness, like that of the meaning of human experience, is connected with the uniqueness of lived time and its irreversibility.

Fourth, according to the most simplified interpretation of conscious life, the turning of the attention to a lived experience, on the basis of a system of relevances, determines the usual configuration of consciousness as for theme, field and horizon. This means that each of us lives in a particular province characterized by its own special cognitive style comprising, among its defining traits, a particular temporal dimension. Other provinces remain in the background. It is obviously possible to move from one province to another in an instant, because provinces are not permanent ontological structures but merely the results of diverse tensions in the same consciousness. The life of this latter, however, is infinitely more complex. I live simultaneously in various 'realms of reality', or even on different layers of the same province, where different levels of my personality, of greater or lesser depth, are involved. The various themes present each become the horizon of the other; each of them receives 'a specific tinge from the other' (Schutz, 1970: 12). Schütz metaphorically refers to a 'counterpointal structure of our personality and our stream of consciousness' (p. 15), a structure that implies the simultaneous involvement of different levels of personality, of 'various tensions of consciousness' (p. 15), of various systems of relevance, and therefore, necessarily, of diverse dimensions of time (on the diverse temporal dimensions, see Flaherty, 1987, 1991).

The Time of the Working Self

To conclude the discussion of the subjective dimension, it will be useful to refer briefly to the relationship between temporality and identity. In Schütz's view, the Self is a whole Self only in the everyday life-world; in the other provinces of meaning, it is always a partial Self – a me, according to Schütz's reading of

Mead. The whole or total Self is then the *ego agens,* the *working Self.* This is so primarily because it is able to unify the various time perspectives, inner time and external time experiences, as well as the experience of the unfolding of time into present, past and future time. I have already mentioned that performing kin-aesthetic movements in the external world unifies inner and external time. The structure is more complex, in fact, because it includes the social dimension of time and its ramifications.

Let us see how the working Self unifies past, present and future. The core unifying aspect is the present. It is from the present, the '*here* and *now'* that I can think of the past and of the future; it is from the present that action is planned for performance in the external world through kinaesthetic movements; it is from the present that the chain of retentions, remembrances, protentions and anticipations that characterize the life of consciousness originates; it is to the present that the 'essentially actual' experiences are tied; and, finally, it is in the present that the relevance systems are successively activated.

One cannot act in the future, nor can one perform movements in the external world in the future, nor does the decision to act, the *fiat*, pertain to the future. The future is a world of empty anticipations. Action is equally impossible in the past; nor do 'essentially actual' experiences belong in this time sphere. Thus, the various images of myself that I project into the future always represent partial Selves. And likewise the various 'I that I was' are partial Selves. The present is therefore the unifying dimension of time for the working Self that binds the past and the future to itself through action. As Wagner (1983b) puts it: 'working belongs to the I–Now; the because motive of the project ties it to the I–Before, and the in-order-to motive links it to the I–After' (p. 57).

It is important to remember the meaning that Schütz attributes to the experience of the continuous loss of what one has been, to the death of the partial Selves due to the passing of time. On the one hand, these deaths announce the death of the total Self, as they participate of the existential experience from which the 'fundamental anxiety' arises. On the other hand, these deaths are connected to the experience of the survival of the Self, 'thanks to the . . . ability' of the ego 'of being again present as *ego agens*' (Schütz, cited in Barber, 2004: 65). Related to this latter experience is the hope of immortality, which marks many religious faiths (Schütz, 1936–7).

Time and Sociality

The Thou-orientation

We have thus far focused on the constitution of the experience of the subject. This second part, devoted to the relationship between time and sociality, first examines the constitution of intersubjectivity (whose basic processes operate at

a pre-predicative level) and the function of time in the constitutive processes. Only later will it set out Schütz's analysis of the ways in which the social world invests subjectivity, and his view on time.

As said, for Schütz the world is social, entirely and 'from the start'. When a person comes into the world, the latter is already pre-given as cultural and inter-subjective: a world built, shared, and handed down by others. The natural atti-tude itself, as a basic aspect of the everyday life-world, is social. I assume as given the objective, real, nature of the world and presume that my certainty is socially shared. Schütz explains the constitution of the natural standpoint on the basis of some deep pre-predicative assumptions: *the thesis of the reciprocity of perspectives*, *the general thesis of the existence of the alter ego*. Although the two assumptions refer to each other, we can bypass the former since it is ulti-mately the thesis of the existence of the *alter ego* that constitutes the foundation of the social world. 'All experience of social reality is founded on the funda-mental axiom positing the existence of other beings "like me"' (Schutz and Luckmann, 1973: 61). I know – all of us who live in the natural attitude 'know' – with absolute certainty that the Other is similar to me and is endowed with a body and a consciousness like I am. And yet, even in the sphere of the everyday world within my actual reach and representing my centre of reality, I can direct-ly assure myself only of the existence of the Other's body, not of his conscious-ness, to which I have no direct access. Nevertheless, I assume with absolute certainty that the Other is a psychophysical unit. I interpret the changes I see in the Other's body as signs of a conscious experience. I 'know' that the lived experience is 'co-present'. 'Obviously, a transference of meaning from my-self to something else is at work here' (p. 111). Therefore, as Zaner (1961) remarks, 'by means of the automatic synthesis Husserl calls "associative transfer of sense", the Other's organism is automatically constituted for me as an organism similar to mine' (p. 79). This is neither a predicative judgement nor an analogi-cal inference; it is a deep pre-predicative assumption, a blind belief. Through the turning towards the O*ther* which Schütz calls Thou-orientation, I apprehend the Other directly, as a person, as a being like me. The Thou-orientation 'is a universal form in which an Other is experienced "in person"' (Schutz and Luckmann, 1973: 62). This is how I apprehend the Other's *subjectivity*.

It should be stressed that Schütz distinguishes the concrete Thou-orientation – which is a true relationship where I apprehend a particular thou, the specific stream of consciousness – from the pure Thou-orientation, which is mere turn-ing to the Other independently of any content. This latter is not, therefore, a concrete relationship; rather, it is an eidetic concept representing the pure form, the invariant structure of all concrete Thou-orientation.

Once again, the time structure performs a decisive role in the basic process whereby I apprehend the Other's subjectivity. We have seen that while I am living 'in my acts', I cannot have my experience before my eyes: to grasp it I

must take a reflective attitude. It must now be added, and this is a decisive factor, that I can instead apprehend the Other's lived experience at the same time as I am going through my own experience. In this case, 'we need not fictitiously stop the Other's stream of thought nor need we transform its "Nows" into "Just past Now"' (Schutz, 1962d: 174). Given the temporal structure, we can say that the apperception of the Other somehow precedes auto-perception. The fundamental datum, however, is that I can grasp the Other's lived experiences in the vivid present simultaneously with my stream of consciousness. For instance, while the Other is speaking and structuring his experience in his inner time, I listen to the words step by step, following my own stream of consciousness.

Schütz (1967) can thus affirm that the Other is 'that consciousness whose intentional acts I can see occurring as other than, yet simultaneous with, my own' (p. 104). Simultaneity is not a concept that refers merely to external time; it is especially connected to inner time. Schütz draws on Bergson to envisage two streams that my consciousness can perceive either as a single one, when attention is undivided, or as two joined streams if attention splits in following them, without, however, separating them into two distinct entities (p. 103). Simultaneity thus signifies *structural equality of the streams of consciousness*. This is why this is the fundamental experience through which we assume that the Other is an *alter ego*. 'This experience of the Other's stream of consciousness in vivid simultaneity I propose to call the *general thesis of the alter ego's existence*' (Schutz, 1962d: 174). This experience is connected with direct living, and consequently with the form of its temporality. If I adopt a reflective attitude (which is necessary to gain clear understanding of the Other's lived experience), I shall not be able to perceive a thou in its flow but a thou in its having-been: I comprehend the meanings of its lived experience in a reflective mode, not as events occurring, but as ones that have occurred.

We-relation

Two reciprocal Thou-orientations form a We-relation, the nucleus of the social world, 'the systemic root of a shared world' (Natanson, 1977: 110). As in the cases of the Thou-orientation, Schütz distinguishes a concrete We-relationship and a pure We-relationship. The former refers to a specific relationship, actually lived by two real subjects, with its specific contents; the latter is an eidetic concept, the invariant form of all relations.

The We-relationship implies first a reciprocal attentional attitude; a reciprocal attention that sets in motion the constitutive process of *we*. The streams of consciousness coordinate and co-determine each other in a series of reciprocal mirrorings. Each individual's expectations are influenced by the Other's expectations. The in-order-to-motives of one intertwine with the because motives of the Other. All this determines the fact that the experience we share simultane-

ously in the vivid present is not felt as my or your personal experience, but as *our* common experience. And the time of the experience is not my or your vivid present, but *our vivid present*. Schütz expands the meaning of the word *sharing*, so that sharing, which originates primarily from simultaneity, implies an *inclusion* (Grinnel, 1983) or, even more radically, a *fusion* (Lachowska, 1980) of the streams of consciousness. Schütz then describes the We-relationship as the experience of the transcendence of I and Thou into a We that goes beyond the uniqueness and the finitude of both. This We is not the sum of I and Thou; it is a reality in some way autonomous, whose nature is symbolic (it does not belong to the everyday world), and which integrates and transcends both. Schütz sees this experience of fusion of the two streams of consciousness as the basic experience which generates the idea of *community*, of *collective person*, as an entity different from the persons who compose it, not reducible to them, and transcendent. The We-relationship is the relation in which all the other relationships are rooted, and to which all relations can be referred. Its pure, eidetic structure is constituted by the pure 'mutual tuning-in relationship', a sharing, in the vivid present, by each in the inner time of the other or, more precisely, in the constitution and sharing of a common time, the *common vivid present*. To be noted is that this is a pre-predicative experience: if I reflect on the We, if I try to focus on the meaning of common actions, the undivided flow dissolves, experiences split, the I becomes the centre of the We, the We exists in relation to the I. And the temporal structure changes too: there is no longer one single time, but the times of the I and of the Thou.

Furthermore, the temporal relation is more intricate in the everyday life-world, that is in the world of *working*. Here 'social relationship is founded upon the partaking in common of different dimensions of time simultaneously lived through by the participants' (Schutz, 1976b: 177). Since the subject's time results from the encounter of *durée* and cosmic time, the relation between two subjects involves an encounter and a fusion of *durée* and cosmic time. Thus, for example, in the performance of a piece of music, each player must follow the work in its internal time simultaneously with his or her movements in external time: the two times are coordinated. Furthermore, the player must synchronize his or her stream of consciousness and the movements that he or she makes in the external world with the internal and external time of his or her fellow performer, which implies the simultaneity of two complex time structures.[22]

Now let us summarize the basic features of the relationship between time and sociality. The constitution of the Other as *alter ego* can be connected to the basic experience of understanding the structural equality of the streams of consciousness: my *durée* and yours have the same form. This means that we recognize the Other's humanity, as a fundamental eidetic assumption, from the way in which the Other shapes experience. That shape is the structure of lived time. (Schütz refers to a basic phenomenological concept according to which *time is the*

form of experience.) This aspect structurally 'precedes' apprehension of the specific contents of the Other's lived experience and their meaning, even though, from an empirical point of view, the two phenomena necessarily appear to occur jointly (as we saw, the pure Thou-orientation is an abstraction, not a lived experience). While meanings always differ, that which is constant, and therefore decisive, in Schütz's view, is the form of experience, the lived-through time.

Sociality is likewise to be considered in connection with its fundamental, eidetic form, with the basic form of the shared experience, the intertwining, the sharing, the fusion, that is, of two streams of consciousness, of two internal times into a common time, a shared vivid present: 'this present, common to both of us is the pure sphere of the "We"' (Schutz, 1962d: 175). As in the case of the Thou-orientation, the sharing of the form structurally 'precedes' the sharing of the contents of experience.

The Limitations of Schütz's Theory

Schütz's analysis with regard to the social dimension of time practically stops at the constitution of our common vivid present. Once he has pointed out the fundamental temporal structure, Schütz does not go beyond the statement that that is the source of all the temporal perspectives related to social relationships. Very general examples are the quasi-present, that is, the time of reading a book (there is a quasi-simultaneity between the writer's and the reader's stream of consciousness), and historical time. Schütz's distinction of the social world – worked out on the basis of shared space–time parameters – into the surrounding world, the world of contemporaries, of successors and of predecessors, reveals the importance of the two times considered. The quasi-present is the time of utmost immediacy in which the social relationships of the worlds differ from the environment. The historical world is the dimension that allows us to encompass the whole of the social world.[23]

The mechanisms through which the constitution of forms of temporality descend from the vivid present should then be looked for in diverse 'forms of temporal diminution and augmentation . . . of overlapping and interpenetrating', of synthesis and combination or of isolation and separation (Schutz, 1962c: 221–2). All this is evident even if one only considers the nature of the *durée*, and the thousand factors that can influence the internal time of the lived experience. These forms will, however, all be integrated into a single homogeneous dimension, *common time* or *civic time*.

The most striking limitation, however, lies in Schütz's analysis of the relation between sociality and subjectivity. He examines in detail the way in which subjectivity constitutes social time, but then limits himself to very broad indications

on how the social world contributes to determining the subjective dimension of time. Let us follow now the two main tracks provided by Schütz.

First, the social dimension of time enters in all subjective experiences where time is lived as imposed relevance. These experiences are taken for granted; they pertain to the natural standpoint. The 'social' seems to present itself with various degrees of immediacy or mediation: (a) Social time *par excellence* is the time of calendars that marks the rhythms of the entire social organization (given that each element of the social world is socially constructed, the construction of this time dimension is subject to fewer constrictions than is the construction of other dimensions); (b) there are experiences of temporality where the social world enters in more mediate forms that recall the transcendence of time. I know I was born, even if I cannot situate this experience in my inner duration; I know I must die sometime; and also this experience derives from the social experience of the succession of generations. I know that the world existed before I was born and will continue after I am dead. I know I was born in a historical time that I did not choose. I know that the temporal shape of my life-story is socially determined. And this is true of both the biological course of my childhood, youth, adulthood and so on, and the shape of my day, and so on; (c) finally, there are time experiences in which the social world assumes even more mediate forms. These concern the experience of 'biological time', of the body rhythms, as well as the cosmic time experiences related to the phenomena of irreversibility, simultaneity and succession.

Second, the next track in Schütz's writings is set out in his short references to the determination of subjective time in the everyday life-world. This time is the product of the encounter among the *durée*, cosmic time and social time (in some brief writings he mentions also biological time, as an autonomous time independent of other times). In these references, the distinction among the various times is more sketchy than the preceding one. A literal interpretation might induce one to conclude that Schütz draws a sharp distinction between the social dimension and the ontological dimension. This interpretation would be wrong, however. Costelloe (1994) seems to come close to it when he argues that in Schütz there is a 'reification of time into Time', and a positing of 'its existence independent of human activities' (pp. 453–4). This depends directly, in Costelloe's view, on the acceptance of the internal–external duality not as a metaphor, but as a substantive fact. At the same time, the reification of time renders 'philosophically necessary' the separation between internal and external time in order to avoid that same reification: 'inner time is the response to that need' (p. 454).

Costelloe's critique, apart from the cultural points of view from which the analysis is carried out (Wittgenstein is his main reference), pertains to the school of thought that regards Schütz's failure to conduct exhaustive analysis of the social world as a choice on his part consistent with his theoretical model (see Gorman, 1977; O'Meara, 1987). It is not by chance that Costelloe sees Schütz's

Ego, as well as the dimension of consciousness, of time and so on, as strictly personal, inaccessible.

These interpretations, however, are misleading. To understand Schütz's social conception of time, one must interpret his general position correctly.

To start with, it should be remembered that the distinctions proposed by Schütz in a sharp, often dichotomic form – such as the imposed and voluntary relevances, for instance – are ideal-typical. Also his distinctions concerning temporality, for example between cosmic and social time, are essentially of an ideal-typical nature. The 'social' is always present, in fact: it is so also in the ways of experiencing cosmic time, in the mode of its codification. Cosmic time is not a datum that simply imposes itself on the subject from the external world. Costelloe's reference to Durkheim, and particularly to his *The Rules of the Sociological Method*, is entirely misplaced. 'My life history', wrote Schütz to Gurwitsch (in the supplement to his letter of 25 January 1951) touching on some problems concerning time, 'takes place in objective time only for the biographer, not for my autobiography' (Schutz and Gurwitsch, 1989: 155). Furthermore 'What is "objective" or "quasi-objective" to mean here other than "intersubjective"?' (p. 158). Schütz concludes with the remark that his analysis of time carried out in *On Multiple Realities* is insufficient, and particularly as regards the problem of its intersubjective nature: in fact, '*standard time* is nothing but an 'intersection' of individual durations and that its *irreversibility* is a result of this' (p. 158).

Also, Schütz's insistence that there is no human experience which is not in some way social is not a mere statement of principle. As Barber (1986, 1987) shows, sociality is the invariant, eidetic trait of all human experience.

I have emphasized Schütz's constructivist position from the outset. He does not, I would repeat, assume the existence of an ontological reality; rather, he assumes a series of finite provinces of meaning related to the actor's modes of experience. The mode of experiencing time is one of the constitutive traits. In the province of fundamental reality, the world is experienced as absolutely, ontologically given, and cosmic time, with the characteristics mentioned earlier, is part of it. But this is a modality of experience tied to the natural attitude of the subject, who lives ingenuously within the cognitive style of commonsense, and not to Schütz's epistemological position. One should also bear in mind that the natural attitude is social. This entails that the everyday life-world is experienced by any actor as 'reality' *tout court*, also because its being such and not otherwise is constantly confirmed by the other members of his social group. Reality and intersubjectivity are co-originated, and cannot exist separately. Time too is considered as objective, as its objectivity is shared by society.

From what has been said, we can conclude that the limitations in Schütz's work are not to be found in the direction indicated by Costelloe. It would, however, be simplistic to argue that those limitations can be entirely attributed to

Schütz's emphasizing one side of the relationship between the subject and the social world at the expense of the other, which he nevertheless considered indispensable. This is only part of the explanation. It should be added that the sides of the relationship are analysed using two different modes of discourse. The first is a constitutive analysis, the second a historical-sociological one: because they are situated on different levels, they cannot satisfactorily meet or merge. As Natanson (1978) observes, there is a structural difficulty intrinsic in Schütz's phenomenological perspective. And yet, both outlooks are essential for understanding the various dimensions of the social world.

Conclusions

The present study has highlighted the function of time in both the constitution of the subject's significant lived experiences and the constitution of sociality. These two strategic nodes are the foundation, the central core of Schütz's theory of action.

Time, which is present in more indirect forms in Max Weber's action theory (Segre, 2000), constitutes the weft of Schütz's action theory, the element that accompanies it through every step. Time enters directly, constitutively, in the construction of meaning. Meaning is a function of lived-through time, which changes at every instant, and at every instant assumes a meaning different from any other, necessarily unique, and unrepeatable. Thus Schütz gives scientific substance to the existential principle of the uniqueness and unrepeatability of all human life.

From the relationship between time and meaning arises the seeming paradox of a present that cannot be grasped in its immediacy and therefore remains obscure. Schütz clarifies the difficulty, emphasizing the ability of human beings to turn their attention to the following instant: anticipation and protention are both elements structurally essential for the continuity of the stream of consciousness.

The present truly remains the privileged time of human existence. Each actor constitutes the zero point in a system of spatio-temporal coordinates within which the world is experienced. The present is the time that plays a strategic role in the construction both of the reality of the everyday life-world and of the reality and identity of the Self. It is in the *working*, hence in the present, that one experiences the external world and its resistance. It is again in the present that the working Self experiences the unification of present, past and future. The experience of these multiple unifications is at the root of the 'general thesis of the *ego*' (Kassab, 1990: 151): although I experience myself in many partial selves tied to the social, temporal and other dimensions, I 'know' I am a single person that continues in time, an *ego ipse*.

The constitution of sociality is also connected with time. Indeed, Schütz sees time as an ingredient of the deep substance of the 'social'. The profound belief that the Other is an *alter ego* is rooted in the experience of our recognition of the structural equality of the streams of consciousness. By contrast, the basic element of the social world is the experience of 'sharing' the form of the experience, that is, of time. The construction of a common time is the construction of the 'social'; the We is the sharing in our common vivid present (and here too the present shows its strategic relevance).

Schütz reconstructs in detail the journey through which the subject reconstitutes the 'social' (this is the sphere where his theoretical endeavour is principally conducted), while he deals only briefly with the processes by which the 'social' influences the subject. His analysis of the problem of time suffers from this asymmetry and from the structural difficulties referred to in this article. Nevertheless, these shortcomings do not authorize us to maintain that Schütz undervalues the 'social'. His is an analytical choice, it does not *per se* privilege one aspect over the other. If for the subject, being is 'being in Time', and if the basis of the social world is shared lived-through time, this provides further confirmation that for Schütz the subject and the 'social' are truly and deeply two faces of a single problem.

Notes

1. The name is usually spelt either as Schütz, in the original Austrian spelling, or as 'Schutz' in the American spelling. This study uses the Austrian spelling when referring directly to the author, but all quoted material maintains the spelling as it appears in the works from which it was taken.
2. Of the substantial bibliography on the subject, mentioned here is only Williame (1973).
3. Schütz had in fact a long, complicated and troubled relation with the other level of phenomenology, that is, transcendental phenomenology. Since 1940 he has expressed increasingly serious doubts about it in many essays and letters to colleagues (see, for instance, Schutz, 1962a, 1962d, 1975a; Schutz, cited in Wagner, 1983b: 311, 316; Schutz and Gurwitsch, 1989: 180). The publication of *Die Krisis* (1954) represents the final demise of the hope that Husserl might be able to overcome the various theoretical difficulties that blighted it: Schütz indicates that the only possible course is the phenomenology of the natural standpoint (Schutz and Gurwitsch, 1989: 255). What is important, however, is that ever since his first work, Schütz (1967) has maintained that the phenomenology of the natural standpoint is sufficient and adequate as an epistemological base for the social sciences. On the complex relation between transcendental phenomenology and the phenomenology of the natural standpoint in Schütz, see Muzzetto (1997).
4. Schütz rejects both the positivist approach to the relationship between knowledge and reality and Husserl's transcendental phenomenology approach that followed his idealistic turn (on Schütz's critique of Husserl's turn towards idealism, see his letter to Voegelin in Wagner, 1983b: 311). Thomason (1982) defines Schütz's position as

methodological constructionism precisely because his rejection of positivism does not imply acceptance of the radical constructionism that he considers to be of idealistic stamp. On the nature of Schütz's constructionism, see Muzzetto (1999).

5. Schütz regards *epoché* as a purely methodological operation. He adheres to what Spiegelberg (1960b: 691–2) takes to be the 'original and basic meaning of the reduction', that is, the minimal, negative meaning connected to the suspension of belief in the pre-givenness of the world. Even since his essay on James, Schütz (1975b) has emphasized the different meaning assumed by reduction in the phenomenology of the natural standpoint and in transcendental phenomenology. It is on the latter level that in Husserl, as Spiegelberg also remarks, reduction takes on additional meanings relatively to the suspension of the natural standpoint. In this case, reduction 'is not merely a moving away, from the natural world, but a moving towards something' (Spiegelberg, 1960a: 136). Hence, neutrality between realism and idealism disappears.

6. Schütz (1962c) summarizes the features of the cognitive style thus: '(1) a specific tension of consciousness. . .; (2) a specific *epoché*. . .; (3) a prevalent form of spontaneity. . .; (4) a specific form of experiencing one's self. . .; (5) a specific form of sociality. . .; (6) a specific time-perspective' (p. 230).

7. I do not regard as correct the opinion of those who maintain that Schütz's analysis encounters the same difficulties as Husserl's, difficulties that arise first of all from Husserl's assumption of the transcendental subject as the starting point for his reflections (see Giddens, 1976). Nor do I agree with those who see Schütz as caught in a hybrid position in which he adds to the emphasis on the subject the pre-givenness of the social world (see Costelloe, 1996). The transcendental in Schütz can be seen as a final level of reflexivity (see the analyses of Natanson, 1962; Zaner, 1970; Luckmann, 1973).

8. Schütz repeatedly explains that the social element is always present, and does not appear at a later time. In a recent work, Yu (2005) stresses the presence 'since the start' of the cultural dimension.

9. On the contribution of the three authors to Schütz's vision of the phenomenology of consciousness, see especially Wagner's (1983a: 26–50) analyses.

10. Also Bergson (1896) refers to the phenomenon of memory. Schütz refers chiefly to Husserl because it is the latter who provides the most complete analysis.

11. Schütz considerably simplifies Husserl's analysis, which sees the pre-predicative sphere as characterized by a peculiar mixture of passivity and activity. In the predicative sphere, the presence of the will of the Self characterizes activity (see specially Husserl, 1948).

12. In 'On Multiple Realities' (1962c) Schütz specifies the concept of vivid present he had used earlier in a different sense. In his essay on Scheler (1962d) the vivid present appears to coincide with the time of direct living, seen as analytically distinct from the encounter with cosmic time. The theory of multiple realities allows Schütz to conduct more detailed analysis of the aspects of lived experiences.

13. On the problem of time in the world of the imagination, see Embree (1998).

14. In 'On Multiple Realities' Schütz (1962c) accepts the point of view of Husserl, who denies that possibility but in a letter to Gurwitsch, written on 25 January 1952, he expresses some doubts on the correctness of Husserl's position (Schutz and Gurwitsch, 1989: 155).

15. On the complexity of the structure of the stream of consciousness in relation to temporality, see Zaner (1970: 125–74).

16. In *The Structure of the Life-world*, Schütz explains the temporal structure of the stream of consciousness by recalling James's distinction between *places of flight* and *places of rest* (Schutz and Luckmann, 1973: 52, 54).

17. James (1950: 608) believes that the present as a separate moment is 'an altogether ideal abstraction, not only never realized in sense, but probably never even conceived of by those unaccustomed to philosophic meditation'. The lived-through present is a specious present tied to the past and to the future, like 'the knowledge of some other part of the stream, past or future, near or remote, is always mixed in with our knowledge of the present thing' (p. 606).

18. Schütz (1962g: 107; 1975b: 11) mentions on several occasions the convergence of these views with those of James.

19. First, Husserl's standpoint is not as unequivocal as Cox claims. Moreover, it is worth remembering that Husserl himself does not direct this criticism at Schütz after reading *The Phenomenology of the Social World*, a work that Husserl judged positively precisely on account of the author's correct interpretation of his phenomenology (Wagner, 1983b: 46–7).

20. It is well known that, after his essays of 1924–8, Schütz (1982) plays down the importance of Bergson, although he preserves some crucial features of his thought. On Bergson's influence on Schütz, see especially Wagner (1977) and also Wagner and Srubar (1984).

21. The problem could be raised of a gradual transition from the presence to the absence of meaning: for instance with regard to the 'high zone' of the pre-predicative sphere, the zone bordering on the predicative area, which for Husserl (1948) has an active character. Schütz says on several occasions that the distinction between active and passive aspects is gradual, and that its interpretation is ideal-typical. An interpretation in terms of graduality would give greater complexity to the analysis; also the function of time in the constitution of meaning would have to be reconsidered.

22. According to Zaner (2002), Schütz showed the simultaneity of external event and inner experience with regard to each partner's actions. But 'he has not shown that, or how, a simultaneity of Self and Other . . . is possible' (p. 8). Zaner's argument is based on his critique of the concept of appresentation: in his view, this may have a purely metaphoric character. If his interpretation is correct, then the entire analysis of intersubjectivity becomes problematic.

23. On the problem of time in the world of contemporaries, predecessors and successors, see Ricoeur (1985).

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LUIGI MUZZETTO is Associate Professor at the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Pisa, Italy. He teaches General Sociology, History and Theory of Sociology, and Sociology of Cultural Processes. He has published mainly in the field of the history and theory of sociology, with particular focus on phenomenology of action and ethnomethodology. ADDRESS: Dipartimento di Scienze Sociali, Facoltà di Scienze Politiche, Università di Pisa, via Serafini 3, Pisa, Italy. [email: muzzetto@dss.unipi.it]