Christoph Horn

Husserl's Phenomenology of the Inner Time Consciousness: Achievements and Limits

Making our subjective experience of time a research topic is an important challenge both for psychologists and philosophers. Nevertheless, the interdisciplinary conversation between the two widely separated academic subjects is not so easy. This is because there are some significant differences in the way inner time consciousness is made a topic of study on the part of psychology and philosophy, respectively. The differences concern both how the phenomenon is described and how it is related to the physical time of the external world. Indeed, the ambiguity of the concept of time—the distinction between the ›physical time‹ of natural processes and the ›internal time‹ of our experience of time—forms a central problem of any systematic discussion of the concept of time. It was the philosopher John M.E. McTaggart who brought this difference to the point with his well-known differentiation between the so-called ›A-series‹ (the subjective conception of time) and the so-called ›B-series‹ (the objective notion of time). In McTaggart's view, our double concept of time is irrevocably contradictory: For while the description of time from the perspective of the A-series is indexical and operates with the terms ›earlier than,‹ ›simultaneously‹ and ›later than,‹ time from the perspective of the B-series appears from an objective distance and thus seems irrelevant for the truth value of events.

Now, in the philosophical tradition there are fundamentally different approaches to how the relation between objective external time and subjective internal time should be described. Two of them are of particular interest. First, one can advocate an empiricism or physicalism that makes external time the factual reference point for all analyses of the internal experience of time. Such a position has been held historically since Aristotle, who takes the real motion of the cosmos as his theoretical starting point; time is determined in Aristotle as »the

https://doi.org/10.5771/9783495994078-95 https://www.inlibra.com/de/page/agb - Open Access - CC BY

measure or number of motion according to the earlier and later«.[1] In the line of empiricism and physicalism, internal experiences of succession are understood as caused by external events; the internal is explained from the perspective of the external. On the other hand, there exists a type of view that interprets time in general as an activity of our consciousness, and in so doing also conceives of external time as subjectively constituted. This position is based on the subject philosophy of modern times since Descartes, but is often (not quite correctly, as we will see) already traced back to the later ancient philosopher Augustine. Augustine defines time as »expansion of the soul« (*distentio animi*).[2] In a philosophy of subjectivity, the external is explained as constituted by the internal.

In what follows, we are concerned with Edmund Husserl's (1859–1938) conception of time, which is usually assigned to the second tradition. In fact, it is correct to claim that since his book *Ideas*[3] he advocated a version of transcendental philosophy that sees time, and the entire world of experience in general, as constituted by a ›pure Ego‹. But strictly speaking, Husserl's analyses of time are independent of this transcendental turn in his thought. His form of analysis, for which he chose the term ›phenomenology,‹ basically formulates rather an intermediate position or bridge between physicalism and subject philosophy. I therefore begin with a brief account of Husserl's concept of phenomenology (I), then move on to his reference to Augustine (II), and finally attempt a survey of his overall position with its strengths and weaknesses (III).

I.

Husserl's theory of inner time-consciousness is a core component of his phenomenology as a whole.[4] This is because Husserl is fundamentally concerned with the description of our experience from the inner perspective of our experience—in which the the stream of consciousness naturally plays a prominent role. By ›phenomenology‹ Husserl meant a philosophical method of unprejudiced, accurate

[1] Aristotle 1957, IV 219b1–2.
[2] Augustine 2016, XI.23.30 and XI.26.33.
[3] *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie* (Husserl 1913).
[4] Römer 2010, 18.

https://doi.org/10.5771/9783495994078-95 https://www.inlibra.com/de/page/agb - Open Access -

description of mental processes or experiences of consciousness. ›Unprejudiced‹ and ›factually adequate‹ imply following Husserl that no theories which are not legitimized by the phenomena should be included in the respective description and no unjustified assumptions of existence should be made. Especially important in the phenomenological description of the mental is the object-relatedness of numerous ›acts‹: their intentionality. The crucial question here is how we are related in our consciousness to a world meant to be ›objective‹. With regard to the phenomenon of time, some relevant phenomenological questions are these: How can we relate to one and the same object across time? How do we experience ourselves in time? How is an awareness of processes, i.e. temporally structured events, possible? Are we ourselves in time, or do we constitute time?

For Husserl, the starting point of phenomenology lies in the change of attitude of the researcher: he or she should refrain from accepting the external world of objects and events as well as the internal world of thoughts, ideas or emotions as given and should instead describe the way of their being given. Husserl calls this retreat from the contents (Husserl speaks of ›bracketing:‹ *Einklammerung*) to the contemplation of their mode of appearance *epochê*, using an expression from ancient skepticism. Instead of being absorbed in the given phenomena, in *epochê* one considers the phenomena without preconceptions. Thus, according to Husserl, it is not the real existence of this or that object that is the topic of phenomenology, but only the intentional act directed towards it, in which the object appears. While empirical psychology presupposes the external world as real and thus explains phenomena of consciousness psychophysically, phenomenology leaves it at reproducing the claim to validity of an appearing phenomenon, that is, at describing the reference of an act of consciousness (*noesis*) to an object (*noema*). Husserl calls this ›phenomenological reduction‹. In a further step, the ›eidetic reduction,‹ he wants to filter out certain invariant structures from the innumerable observations resulting from the *epochê*, which he characterizes as ›laws of essence‹ (*Wesensgesetze*).

From this sketch of the program of phenomenology, it is clear that Husserl is an anti-representationalist; he denies that the perception of spatiotemporal things is mediated by images or ideas. Rather, using the tools of phenomenology, the ›sense of direction‹ of perceptions can be described as directly object-related. Empirical objects and events (e.g., I see a car passing me) are accessible to me in immediate

https://doi.org/10.5771/9783495994078-95 https://www.inlibra.com/de/page/agb - Open Access - (cc) BY

presence (›self-givenness‹), not as a synthesis of singular impressions. Already in his early days Husserl—very much like Gottlob Frege at about the same time—developed a critique of contemporary psychologism. As both thinkers claim, logical laws are not reducible to empirical regularities of thought as identified by psychology.

The previous characterization of Husserl's approach referred to it as ›pure phenomenology‹. In his later ›transcendental phenomenology‹ (beginning with the *Ideas* in 1913) that builds on it, Husserl's perspective shifts from describing the givenness of contents of consciousness to the constitution of the contents of consciousness by a pure Ego. Husserl now believes that the phenomenological and the eidetic reduction are leading to the conclusion that both *noesis* and *noema* and their regularities must go back to a unified principle of constitution. This, for Husserl, is the transcendental Ego, a resting pole which he understands as a completely content-less, spontaneous, a priori I. Husserl thus belongs to the transcendental tradition in philosophy established by Descartes and rich in egological considerations in Kant and especially Fichte. His transcendental idealism is based on the idea that we must describe reality indirectly—on the basis of its constitution in subjectivity.

Hence, the crucial point of Husserl's analysis of time is the idea that one must exclude all assumptions about the real (consciousness-transcendent) existence of temporal processes. Thus, the phenomenology of the inner experience of time does not assume the real duration of real things, but merely addresses their »appearing duration.« In this way, the phenomenological approach is limited to the perceived time as something given by an ›original time consciousness‹. Husserl addressed the phenomenology of inner time consciousness in three phases of his work.[5] First, there are his lectures from 1905–11, which Heidegger published in 1928 under the title *Vorlesungen zum inneren Zeitbewusstsein*. Second, there are the so-called *Bernau Manuscripts on Time Consciousness* from 1917–18 (published in 2001); Husserl seems to have attached particular importance to them. Finally, thirdly, we possess some hitherto unpublished manuscripts from 1930–34. That there exist unpublished manuscripts should, of course, make us cautious. On the other hand, the texts of the first two phases are basically in continuity with each other. However, the *Analyses on Passive*

[5] Cf. Römer 2010, 5–7 and Seel 2010, 43–44.

https://doi.org/10.5771/9783495994078-95 https://www.inlibra.com/de/page/agb - Open Access -

Synthesis (1918–26) and the *Cartesian Meditations* (1931) are also important.[6]

Husserl's starting point is not based on the contrast of ›subjective‹ and ›objective‹ time; it does not consist in an attempt to interpret the A-series against the background of the B-series. Rather, Husserl believes that one must start from the subjective appearance of time in order to correctly grasp the time phenomenon as a whole (including the B-series). As seen in Husserl's successor positions (Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, and Ricoeur), his real achievement has been seen in understanding the objective time of Newtonian physics as a derived, theoretical construct by science. On the other hand, a critique also refers precisely to the fact that Husserl—ignoring Einstein's theory of relativity—stops at Newton's absolute world time.[7]

Husserl was interested in how we perceive physical or objective time on the one hand and how inner experiences of time take place on the other. Inner time is a rather neglected topic in the history of philosophy; for Husserl it is therefore the merit of Augustine to have drawn attention to inner time and its constituting role.[8]

II.

There is a historical role model for Husserl's phenomenology of inner time consciousness, namely Augustine, *Confessions* XI.14 – 28. The interesting point in Augustine's theory of time is that he was the first who described it from a subjective perspective. Augustine ›psychologizes‹ time. In doing so, he starts from various paradoxes to which he offers solutions throughout the text. The paradoxes developed by Augustine are:

(a) How can a now-point which is constantly experienced by a subject be always another one in the very next moment? What exactly is it that passes when a now-point vanishes, and what is it that remains? How can one speak of the present as something existing, if it passes away almost immediately? So how can there be time and why isn't there eternity instead?

---

6 Orig. *Analysen zur passiven Synthesis* (1918–26) und *Cartesianische Meditationen* (1931).

7 Cf. Römer 2010, 54.

8 On this in more detail: Herrmann 1992.

https://doi.org/10.5771/9783495994078-95 https://www.inlibra.com/de/page/agb - Open Access -

(b) How can a given now-point pass into the past, and how can future become the present of a given now-point? How can thereby something existing, the present, come from something non-existing, the future, and immediately pass again into something non-existing, the past?
(c) If only the present now is available to us, how can we know about the past and the present?
(d) Since we can obviously speak of so-and-so long periods of time, does this mean that the present in each case is not a now-point at all, but something extended? But how big is then the extended present?

Augustine devotes much space to the question of what we mean by a ›present period‹. Augustine's treatise impressively demonstrates the difficulty by describing a kind of interval nesting:

> Behold, thus the present, which, as we thought, could alone be called long, is hardly extended to the duration of a day. But let us also still dissect this itself, since not even one day is present in its entirety. It is filled by twenty-four hours of day and night; for the first of these all others are future, for the last all others past, but for each of the intervening hours those before it past, those after it future. And even the one hour passes in fleeting moments; what has flown away from it is past, what is left of it is future. If any time could be conceived which could no longer be divided into any, even the smallest particles, it alone could be called the present; and yet even this particle of time passes so quickly from the future into the past that it cannot be extended even a moment beyond its duration. [...][9]

Since, in a thought-experiment, we can do an infinitesimal interval nesting, Augustine concludes that the time cannot consist of extended parts. What actually exists at the time is only the extensionless moment. But if time consists in a succession of pure now-points, how can it simultaneously be extended? On which basis can we speak of ›short‹ or ›long‹ periods of time, as we actually do? Obviously, the past and the future must somehow exist and be connected to the present. Augustine solves the problem by assuming an existence of past and future which is mediated by the present. At this point, one sees especially the ›psychological‹ character of Augustine's theory of time: past, present, and future exist respectively in the presenting con-

[9] Augustine 2016, XI.20.

https://doi.org/10.5771/9783495994078-95 https://www.inlibra.com/de/page/agb - Open Access - (cc) BY

sciousness as *praesens de praeteritis*, *praesens de praesentibus*, *praesens de futuris*.[10] Augustine concludes that time exists nowhere else than in the soul (*anima*), namely in the form of memory (*memoria*), current perception (*contuitus)* and anticipation (*expectatio*).

Time, however, is experienced as a continuum; we do not experience the transition from one phase of time to the next. Augustine takes this point into account by describing the unity of our mental experience as the background of the unity of the experience of time. He illustrates this with the example of a song (*canticum*):[11] I reproduce a song known to me in such a way that my memory retrieves the section with the corresponding stored memories and then reproduces them step by step. Then my *memoria* has present at each moment what has already been reproduced on the one hand and what is yet to be reproduced on the other. At this point, one can see Husserl's theory of retention and protention anticipated (more on this in a moment). Augustine thus traces our temporal experience of duration and succession, i.e., of a constant awareness of the past and the future, to the unifying action of the soul:

> I want to recite a song which I know by heart; before I begin, my expectation is directed to the whole, but once I have begun, what I have already supplied to the past from the expectation extends within my memory. So this activity of mine is divided in its duration into memory, as far as I have said it, and into expectation, as far as I want to say it; present, on the other hand, is my attention, through which what was future passes to become past. Now the more this happens, the more the expectation decreases and the memory increases, until the whole expectation is exhausted, because the whole action has ended and passed into memory. And what happens with the whole song, happens also with its individual sections and in its individual syllables, the same also in a longer action, of which the song is perhaps only a part, the same in the whole life of man, the parts of which are all the individual actions of man, the same finally with the being of the whole human race, which is composed of the lifetimes of the individual men.[12]

Manifestly, Husserl's inspiration from Augustine's *Confessions* is quite far-reaching. Nevertheless, one cannot claim that Husserl took the core of his phenomenological analysis of time from Augustine. The

10 Augustine 2016, XI.26.
11 Augustine 2016, XI.28.
12 Augustine 2016, XI.28.

https://doi.org/10.5771/9783495994078-95 https://www.inlibra.com/de/page/agb - Open Access - (cc) BY

phenomenological method is highly original; it cannot be dated back to late antiquity. Moreover, a contrast would be exaggerated to characterize Augustine's view of time exclusively as a psychological one, while Aristotle and the Stoics would have understood time merely as a process in nature. Rather, it must be said that Augustine takes the perspective of the psychic in *Confessions* XI because he is under the impression of the Platonic theory of the world-soul and relates it to the genesis of time.[13] The idea of a cosmic time, which is constituted by the world soul, implies precisely an objective, not a subjective description of the phenomenon of time.

III.

Four of the problems addressed by Husserl in his studies on the éxperience of time readily reveal the influence of Augustine's reading, namely:

(a) What is the structure and properties of our consciousness of temporally ordered entities?
(b) How do internal and external objects appear to us over time?
(c) How do we arrive at a coherent process consciousness that presents us with a unified process and a stable object? For example, in a piece of music, how do we get from the perception of each individual note to the unity of the melody?
(d) On which fundament does the unity of time consciousness arise? How does consciousness constitute its objects?

Husserl's considerations can be reconstructed as follows. What is revealed in the phenomenological attitude is, as we saw, the nature of the appearance of temporal objects. Here, physical, objective time is no longer accepted as a point of reference for explanations, but is described from the perspective of our experiencing consciousness. Even from this different point of view, some of the basic properties of objective time still remain, namely the properties two-dimensionality, infinity, successivity, and transitivity. But all assumptions of existence are left aside (Husserl speaks of an ›elimination‹ or ›*Ausklam-*

[13] Seen this way, not ›we,‹ i.e. the subjects of time perception, are constitutive for physical time, but rather the world-soul. Augustine, however, does not clearly profess this theory, because it seems to be dogmatically incorrect from a Christian perspective.

https://doi.org/10.5771/9783495994078-95 https://www.inlibra.com/de/page/agb - Open Access - cc by

merung‹). Further, he distinguishes between ›transcendent‹ and ›immanent‹ time objects; this distinction arises from the fact that we perceive temporal objects both outside or inside consciousness. External temporal objects are spatial things; according to Husserl's anti-representationalism, these are not mediated by internal images or conceptions. Rather, we are connected with these things in direct intentionality. Any theory of images is explicitly rejected by Husserl. For Husserl, inner objects are, e.g., tones and melodies; the perception of tones forms even Husserl's preferred example for the analysis of time consciousness.

Husserl now goes beyond Augustine in that he not only describes the objective and the subjective dimension of the experience of time, but also interprets both as constituted by the immanent time consciousness. In doing so, he does not understand the spatiotemporal things of the external world as phenomena of consciousness; rather, they appear as existing outside of consciousness. For Husserl, the pure Ego standing behind consciousness is that which generates the objects. Husserl assumes that consciousness is in permanent, immediate change, whereby it comes spontaneously (in the sense of a *genesis spontanea*), from a ›source point‹ (*Quellpunkt*), to the constitution of objects:

> The ›source point,‹ with which the ›generation‹ of the lasting object begins, is a primal impression. This consciousness is in constant transformation: constantly the bodily tone-now (scil. consciously, ›in‹ consciousness) changes into something past, constantly a new tone-now replaces the one that has passed over into modification. But when the consciousness passes from the tone-now, the primal impression, into retention, then this retention itself is again a now, an actual being. While it is itself actual (but not actual tone), it is retention of been tone. […] But every actual now of consciousness is subject to the law of modification. It changes into retention of retention, and that steadily. Accordingly, there is a steady continuum of retention in such a way that every later point is retention for every earlier one. And every retention is already continuum.[14]

[14] Husserl 1928, 390. »Der ›Quellpunkt‹, mit dem die ›Erzeugung‹ des dauernden Objektes einsetzt, ist eine Urimpression. Dies Bewusstsein ist in beständiger Wandlung begriffen: stetig wandelt sich das leibhafte Ton-Jetzt (scil. bewußtseinsmäßig, ›im‹ Bewußtsein) in ein Gewesen, stetig löst ein immer neues Ton-Jetzt das in die Modifikation übergegangene ab. Wenn aber das Bewußtsein vom Ton-Jetzt, die Urimpression, in Retention übergeht, so ist diese Retention selbst wieder ein Jetzt, ein

https://doi.org/10.5771/9783495994078-95 https://www.inlibra.com/de/page/agb - Open Access -

Husserl's analysis is opposed to Brentano's theory of ›original association,‹ according to which now-points are linked by consciousness, more precisely by the imagination. Brentano assumes that it is imagination that keeps just past tones present and thus generates the unity of the tone sequence. For Husserl, on the other hand, ›primordial impressions,‹ i.e., objects that change over time in a similar way as we know from the phenomena of spatial perspectivity, rather appear within a processual continuum. Continuity results from the fact that the primordial impressions, the retentions and the protentions merge into each other. Such an ›original time field‹ is what Husserl sees as his task to describe. Thereby a peculiar perspectival change of the objects occurs:

> While a movement is perceived, moment by moment an as-now apprehension takes place, therein the now current phase of the movement itself is constituted. But this now-perception is, as it were, the core to a comet's tail of retentions, related to the earlier now-points of the movement. But if perception no longer takes place, if we see no more movement, or—if it is a matter of a melody—if the melody is played and silence has occurred, then the last phase is not followed by a new phase of perception, but by a mere phase of fresh recollection, to this again such a phase, and so on.[15]

In the experience of time we experience, as Husserl explains following Augustine (and Brentano) using the example of listening to a melody, a ›passive synthesis‹ that generates a temporal extension. The presence of the past is thereby precisely not attributed to a ›reifying‹ memory, but to a ›retention‹. Husserl distinguishes an active memory

---

aktuell Daseiendes. Während sie selbst aktuell ist (aber nicht aktueller Ton), ist sie Retention von gewesenem Ton. [.....] Jedes aktuelle Jetzt des Bewußtseins unterliegt aber dem Gesetz der Modifikation. Es wandelt sich in Retention von Retention, und das stetig. Es ergibt sich demnach ein stetiges Kontinuum der Retention derart, daß jeder spätere Punkt Retention ist für jeden früheren. Und jede Retention ist schon Kontinuum.«

15 Husserl 1928, 391. »Während eine Bewegung wahrgenommen wird, findet Moment für Moment ein Als-Jetzt-Erfassen statt, darin konstituiert sich die jetzt aktuelle Phase der Bewegung selbst. Aber diese Jetztauffassung ist gleichsam der Kern zu einem Kometenschweif von Retentionen, auf die früheren Jetztpunkte der Bewegung bezogen. Findet aber keine Wahrnehmung mehr statt, sehen wir keine Bewegung mehr, oder—wenn es sich um eine Melodie handelt—ist die Melodie abgespielt und Stille eingetreten, so schließt sich an die letzte Phase keine neue Phase der Wahrnehmung an, sondern eine bloße Phase frischer Erinnerung, an diese wiederum eine solche usf.«

https://doi.org/10.5771/9783495994078-95 https://www.inlibra.com/de/page/agb - Open Access - (cc) BY

of things past (secondary memory) from a lingering experience of what has just passed (such as the sound just heard) and calls this ›primary memory‹ or retention. Similarly, a presence of what is immediately forthcoming is to be explained by the notion of protention, which denotes a kind of ›anticipatory thinking‹ in which the experience of time continues into its immediate future. The retentional and protentional continuity and extension of the present cannot be traced back to the dimension of real time as a structure of experienced time, but requires a subjective constitutional analysis of the way in which time experience is ›temporalized‹ and thereby presents itself as temporal:

> It still remains to be discussed in more detail what kind of modification we called retentional. One speaks of fading away, subsiding etc. of the contents of sensation, when actual perception passes over into retention. Now it is already clear after the previous explanations that the rentential ›contents‹ are not contents at all in the original sense. When a tone subsides, it is itself at first perceived with a special fullness (intensity), and this is followed by a rapid decrease of intensity. The tone is still there, is still felt, but in mere reverberation.[16]

Thus, the diminishing of the intensity of a sound does not mean its complete disappearance, but its ›shadowing‹ (*Abschattung*). For Husserl, the retention of a sound that has just been perceived is an entirely different phenomenon from that of ›secondary memory‹. Unlike Augustine, who explains the presence of the complete song in consciousness by means of *memoria*, it is the case, according to Husserl, that the present experience relates to retention as a comet relates to a comet's tail.

The performance of a constitution of the time experience is attributed to the transcendental I, which, however, cannot itself be in time in this function. The pure I does not appear in the immanent time of the time experience. How does it constitute time? First, it is important

---

[16] Husserl 1928, 392. »Noch bleibt näher zu erörtern, welcher Art die Modifikation ist, die wir als retentionale bezeichneten. Man spricht von Abklingen, Verblassen usw. der Empfindungsinhalte, wenn eigentliche Wahrnehmung in Retention übergeht. Nun ist es aber schon nach den bisherigen Ausführungen klar, daß die rententionalen ›Inhalte‹ gar keine Inhalte im ursprünglichen Sinne sind. Wenn ein Ton abklingt, so ist er selbst zunächst mit besonderer Fülle (Intensität) empfunden, und daran schließt sich ein rasches Nachlassen der Intensität an. Der Ton ist noch da, ist noch empfunden, aber im bloßen Nachhall.«

https://doi.org/10.5771/9783495994078-95 https://www.inlibra.com/de/page/agb - Open Access -

for Husserl to emphasize that the possibility of memory does not presuppose that one can compare an image to its original:

> It is fundamentally wrong to argue: How can I know in the now about a not-now, since I cannot compare the not-now, which is no more, with the now (namely the memory-image existing in the now)? As if it belonged to the essence of memory that an image existing in the now would be substituted for another thing similar to it and I could compare and would have to compare as with pictorial imagination. Memory or retention is not picture-consciousness, but something totally different.[17]

The important point is rather that time is constituted as an objective entity by reference on the part of memory:

> We run through the melody in the imagination, we hear, as it were, first the first tone, then the second tone, and so on. In each case there is always one tone (or one tone phase) in the now point. The preceding ones, however, are not erased from the consciousness. With the perception of the now appearing, as it were now heard tone, the primary memory of the just as it were heard tones and the expectation (protention) of the outstanding ones merge. The now point has for the consciousness a time yard (*Zeithof*), which takes place in the continuum of memory conceptions, and the entire memory of the melody consists in a continuum of such time yard continuums, or of perception continuums of the kind described.[18]

This requires the secondary, reproductive memory, i.e., recollection in which the former time field is reproduced. In this way, we arrive at

---

17 Husserl 1928, 394. »Es ist grundverkehrt zu argumentieren: Wie kann ich im Jetzt von einem Nicht-Jetzt wissen, da ich das Nicht-Jetzt, das ja nicht mehr ist, nicht vergleichen kann mit dem Jetzt (nämlich dem im Jetzt vorhandenen Erinnerungsbild)? Als ob zum Wesen der Erinnerung gehörte, daß ein im Jetzt vorhandenes Bild für eine andere, ihm ähnliche Sache supponiert würde und ich wie bei bildlicher Vorstellung vergleichen könnte und vergleichen müsste. Erinnerung bzw. Retention ist nicht Bildbewußtsein, sondern etwas total anderes.«

18 Husserl 1928, 395f. »Wir durchlaufen die Melodie in der Phantasie, wir hören gleichsam zuerst den ersten, dann den zweiten Ton usw. Jeweils ist immer ein Ton (bzw. eine Tonphase) im Jetztpunkt. Die vorangegangenen sind aber nicht aus dem Bewußtsein ausgelöscht. Mit der Auffassung des jetzt erscheinenden, gleichsam jetzt gehörten Tones verschmilzt die primäre Erinnerung an die soeben gleichsam gehörten Töne und die Erwartung (Protention) der ausstehenden. Der Jetztpunkt hat für das Bewußtsein einen Zeithof, der sich in der Kontinuität von Erinnerungsauffassungen vollzieht, und die gesamte Erinnerung der Melodie besteht in einem Kontinuum von solchen Zeithofkontinuen, bzw. von Auffassungskontinuen der beschriebenen Art.«

https://doi.org/10.5771/9783495994078-95 https://www.inlibra.com/de/page/agb - Open Access - (cc) BY

an objective sequence of several nows. This means that we constitute the objective time by the possibility to refer to certain points in time in the memory.

People have often expressed fundamental criticism of Husserl's conception of our understanding of time. One of the main problems of the phenomenology of inner time consciousness lies in the question whether this phenomenology can be developed at all without hidden borrowings from objective time. After all, Husserl's descriptions are themselves processual, thus seeming to presuppose a course while they are supposed to explain it. To this, one could possibly reply that Husserl describes consciousness as a whole as thoroughly temporal.[19] Another criticism arises from the fact that Husserl uses metaphors such as stream, river, spring, tail, yard, etc., for his descriptions, which tend to reduce conceptual precision due to their strong imagery. Further, it has often been criticized that Husserl possibly focuses on the concept of now in his analysis of time perception in the sense of a ›metaphysics of presence‹.

Three further objections against Husserl's conception have been advanced by Wolfgang Kersting: (i) There is a reduction of the subject of time to the direct perception of objects; thereby reduction of the subject of time to a theory of perception. (ii) Husserl's analysis of single points of temporal perception fails to make intelligible the unity of perceived objects; but we hear a melody, not the succession of tones. (iii) Subjectivity is not properly described from the perspective of perceiving a sequence of now-points.[20] But as a philosophical contribution to the analysis of inner time consciousness, Husserl's analyses nevertheless remain valuable. I think that the point that deserves to be maintained is his ›phenomenological reduction‹: the description of mental phenomena free from any ontological and epistemological commitments.

References

Aristotle (1957): *Physics*, Volume I: Books 1–4, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

[19] Cf. de Warren 2009, 40.

[20] Kersting 1992, 85–86. Similarly, Seel 2010, 76–88, criticizes Husserl's attempt to derive the course of time from the consciousness of an absolute observing subject.

https://doi.org/10.5771/9783495994078-95 https://www.inlibra.com/de/page/agb - Open Access -

Augustine (2016): *Confessions*, Volume II: Books 9–13, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
Beyer, Christian (2011): Husserl's Conception of Consciousness, in: Cramer, Konrad/Beyer, Christian (eds.): *Edmund Husserl 1859–2009. Contributions on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the philosopher's birth*, Berlin: de Gruyter, 43–54.
von Herrmann, Friedrich-Wilhelm (1992): *Augustinus und die phänomenologische Frage nach der Zeit*, Frankfurt a.M.: Klostermann.
Husserl, Edmund (1976): *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*. Erstes Buch: Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie. 1. Halbband, ed. by Karl Schuhmann, The Hague: Nijhoff.
Husserl, Edmund (1969): *Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins (1893–1917)*, ed. by Rudolf Boehm. Reprint of the 2nd verb. Edition, The Hague: Nijhoff.
Husserl, Edmund (1973): *Zur Phänomenologie der Intersubjektivität. Texte aus dem Nachlass*. Dritter Teil: 1929–1935, ed. by Iso Kern, The Hague: Nijhoff.
Husserl, Edmund (1980): *Vorlesungen zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins*. 2. Aufl., Tübingen: Niemeyer.
Husserl, Edmund (1984): *Logische Untersuchungen*. Zweiter Band: Untersuchungen zur Phänomenologie und Theorie der Erkenntnis, ed. by Ursula Panzer, The Hague: Nijhoff.
Husserl, Edmund (1999): *Erfahrung und Urteil*. 7th ed., Hamburg: Meiner.
Kersting, Wolfang (1992): Selbstbewußtsein, Zeitbewußtsein und Zeitwahrnehmung, in Forum für Philosophie Bad Homburg (ed.), *Zeiterfahrung und Personalität*. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 57–88.
Seel, Gerhard (2010): Why Time Cannot Be a Form of Inner Anschauung. Critical Remarks on Kant's and Husserl's Explanations of Time Consciousness, in Lohmar, D. & Yamaguchi, I. (eds.): *On Time: New Contributions to the Husserlian Phenomenology of Time*, Dordrecht : Springer.
Römer, Inga (2010): *Das Zeitdenken bei Husserl, Heidegger und Ricoeur*, Dordrecht: Springer.
de Warren, Nicolas (2009): *Husserl and the Promise of Time. Subjectivity in Transcendental Phenomenology*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Zahavi, Dan (2002): Husserl and the Problem of Pre-Reflexive Self-Consciousness, in: Hüni, Heinrich & Trawny, Peter (eds.), *The Appearing World*. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 697–724.
Zahavi, Dan (2004): Time and Consciousness in the Bernau Manuscripts, in *Husserl Studies* 20, 99–118.
Zahavi, Dan (2005): *Subjectivity and Selfhood*, Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

https://doi.org/10.5771/9783495994078-95 https://www.inlibra.com/de/page/agb - Open Access -