

Marco Barcaro

Intentionality according to Jan Patočka

Abstract

In this article, I aim to show how Patočka's work since the 1960s has reconceptualized the theory of intentionality. Never abandoning the referential character of the intentional relation, the Bohemian philosopher situates intentionality in its original matrix: the world. This change has the effect of moving the cause of appearing from consciousness to the world, framing it as what appears and what makes appear. Intentionality is not only connected to transcendental consciousness; intentions also must be interpreted as lines of force (*Kraftlinien*) inside the field of appearing. Patočka moreover locates the origin of all intentional theory in the Aristotelian theory of the soul. Patočka thus wants, on the one hand, to overcome the substantialist argument that considers consciousness a permanent presence and, on the other, to move beyond an idealistic conception of consciousness. Movement is the category that allows us to express these aspects of intentionality. Inserting motion into being is a privilege unique to the soul.

I. Contextualization: on Husserl's path

In *Ideas I*, Husserl writes that “the concept of intentionality [...] is the starting point of the beginning of phenomenology.”¹ Intentionality thus names a problem embracing the whole of phenomenology. It expresses the fundamental property of consciousness; all phenomenological problems, including hyletic ones, can be situated in relation to it. Husserl admits that

it may be ever so difficult to set forth in rigorous and clear analyses what makes up the pure essence of intentionality [...], in any case, experiences are observed from a determined and highly important point of view when we recognize them as intensitive and say of them that they are consciousness of something.²

Intentionality is therefore the heart of phenomenology: it is a structural and constitutive property of the lived experience of consciousness that serves to constitution (*Konstitution*). Intentionality animates hyletic data.

Brentano, Husserl's teacher, resuscitated intentionality as a characteristic property of psychic phenomena. Husserl's fifth logical investigation is dedicated to

¹ Edmund Husserl: *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie. Erstes Buch: Allgemeine Einführung in die reine Phänomenologie*, Hrsg. von K. Schuhmann, Hua III/I. Den Haag 1976, §84, 191.

² *Ibid.*

intentionality, but in that text intentionality still serves as an *in fieri* conception. In fact, *Logical Investigations* was written at a time when intentionality was not strictly considered within the purview of egologic and constitutive issues.³ Here the acts or experiences of consciousness bear intrinsic reference to a content – to an object, to a transcendent entity (real or unreal as it may be⁴). They are always in relation to something beyond consciousness itself. In 1936, Patočka was not able to think of consciousness from outside of Husserl’s framework. As demonstrated by the 1936 article ‘Der Geist und die zwei Grundsichten der Intentionalität’, intentionality always refers to the subject, while the horizon of intentionality refers to consciousness and to the ‘subjective’ point of view: the *cogito*.⁵

II. Arguments

a) From consciousness to the world as capability to let appear

Since the sixties, however, Patočka has argued that intentions have a transcendent character (“the proper significance and content of intentionality is not yet uncovered [...]. We first need to gain [...] ‘transcendental’ character”).⁶ From this perspective, intentional references (theoretical, practical, emotional, and imaginary) are no longer the responsibility of a subject but instead designate the manner in which beings are put in relation to each other. Patočka maintains the referral process as constitutive of intentional relation, but “reintegrates it in its original matrix: the ‘bottom of the world’”.⁷ The world thus becomes the element that produces intentional projections, locating the roots of intentionality in the being of the world, in things. This does not amount to my consciousness building a bridge towards things, because I can’t verify their intentionality – instead I construct intentionality. What then is intentionality? It becomes the tota-

³ Cf. Vincenzo Costa, Elio Franzini, Paolo Spinicci: *La fenomenologia*, Einaudi, Torino 2002, 56.

⁴ The object itself can be merely presumed and does not exist at all in reality. However, an object is always intentional, irrespective of the fact that it exists. *Intentional* indicates its being pointed toward something.

⁵ Cf. Jan Patočka: *Der Geist und die zwei Grundsichten der Intentionalität*. In: *Die Bewegung der menschlichen Existenz. Phänomenologische Schriften II*, Hrsg. am Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen. Stuttgart 1991, 33–42 (this volume will henceforth be cited as BME). It must be recognized, however, that the distinction between *intentionality of object* and *intentionality of horizon* allows us to consider the whole of the world not as the sum of the entities but as a non-totalizable whole.

⁶ Patočka: *An Introduction to Husserl’s Phenomenology*. Chicago 1996, 66.

⁷ Bruce Bégout: *La phénoménologie décapitée? Perspectives et difficultés de la phénoménologie asubjective de Jan Patočka*. In: *Chiasmi International* 4 (2002), 391.

lity of possible references emerging from our being in the world; the subject thus remains a structural moment in the world, but one that always also presupposes the world. Patočka rejects the idea of intentional phenomena. He finds it necessary to recognize unintentional subjectivity and does not think of intentionality as *noesis*; rather, he shifts the origin of appearing from intentionality of consciousness to things themselves – or to the world as what appears and makes appear.

In a paper written in 1950, entitled “The subjective starting point and the objective human biology”, we read:

Phenomenology has moved dangerously in the direction of a subjective idealism: taking as its object the “become subjective”, the inner object, it has come close to excess, if not of the ancient “internal substance” at least of activity that is observable regardless of the global context of the nature. This is linked to the phenomenological theory of intentionality, one of the thorniest chapters in the entire phenomenological philosophy. However, the idea of intentionality is right at its core, only if you move beyond its substantialist interpretation. Intentionality is a kind of dynamic model of subjective information.⁸

Revising intentionality therefore means reconsidering the way we think about how consciousness functions and how it moves toward objects. If consciousness in Patočka is framed as aiming at, the concept of intentionality should not be conceived as causalist but dynamic. Let us examine more closely what led Patočka to this position.

A fundamental move the Czech philosopher made was shifting the locus of empty intention and fulfilment from consciousness to the horizon’s structure of appearing. Since the subject is always a being that appears, as well as a pole of appearance, it belongs to the world. It is given, along with the world and the things of the world: “I’m not ever given, but only co-given, because I’m not ever a thing, a task, an object – being everything in the world, I’m not even a character of the thing but rather toward things”.⁹

If the *ego* appears along with the things of the world, it cannot be given immediately and separately. Thus to understand the subject, we must consider it from within its context and its correlations, from the phenomenal field in which it appears. The field of appearing is not describable from the outside; it is a structure within which the ego is located. It does not, however, have an intentional structure. For this reason, the intentionality of the subject and of subjective acts must be also understood as property of the phenomenal field. This means the

⁸ Patočka: Le point de départ subjectif et la biologie objective de l’homme. In: Le monde naturel et le mouvement de l’existence humaine, trad. fr. E. Abrams. Dordrecht 1988, 161 (this volume will be cited as MNMEH).

⁹ Patočka: Corps, possibilités, monde, champ d’apparition. In: Papiers phénoménologiques, trad. fr. E. Abrams. Grenoble 1995, 129 (this volume will be cited as PP).

subject is no longer considered the founding factor, or rather, the subject is no longer that which ensures the legality, validity, and compliance of certain rules with the transcendental guide of the object. Therefore, the structure of appearance is defined *starting from the world* (the world provides the structure) and not starting from a constituting subject.

The world is not only the possibility of the appearing of reality, but is also the condition of possibility for a being to live in relation with himself and is that which makes possible appearance as such. Thus the *epoché* leads in one fell swoop to the universal *A priori* that opens the place of appearing both for the real as well as for those who experience.¹⁰

Referring to this quote, Dragos Duicu writes:

concrete subjectivity is no longer constituting (*konstituierend*), but, in a certain sense, it is constituted; correspondingly and in reverse, the world is no longer constituted, but, in a certain sense, is constituting (*konstituierend*); and the *epoché* properly named (generalized) is no longer reduction (*Reduktion*) to the sphere of immanence of transcendental subjectivity but is the clarification of the field of appearing in its structure of three co-determined moments.¹¹

In 1936, Patočka thought that the world was the ultimate horizon of consciousness; yet in the *Postface* of the 1976 edition of *The Natural World as Philosophical Problem*, he no longer knew where to place the concept of the world as a totality based on intentional consciousness, because the world had become a problematic concept for an intentional phenomenology understood as consciousness of an object. The concrete (psycho-physiological) subject, as a thing that appears, cannot prove appearing as such (the subject does not condition it but is conditioned). And the moment that, among appearing beings, there are only references to the world, the correlation between noetic and noematic comes into question. In a 1974 preparatory manuscript of ‘Epoché and reduction’, we read:

Actually, there isn’t a fundamental correlation between the ‘noetic’ side (the subjective side of experiences, grasped in absolute immanence) and the noematic side; inside the appearing being as such there are only referrals belonging to the world; there is only the noematic side, the world or the phenomenon of the world.¹²

¹⁰ “Die Welt ist nicht nur die Bedingung der Möglichkeit des Erscheinens des Realen, sondern auch die Bedingung der Möglichkeit eines Seienden, das im Selbstbezug lebt und dadurch die Erscheinung als solche ermöglicht. So führt die Epoché mit einem Schlag zum universalen Apriori, welches sowohl für das Reale als auch für das Erlebende den Ort des Erscheinens eröffnet.” BME 421. All translations from the French and from the German (into English) are my own.

¹¹ Dragos Duicu: La phénoménologie asubjective de Jan Patočka, une phénoménologie non intentionnelle? In: Bulletin d’analyse phénoménologique VI 8 (2010), 235 f. The three movements are: the world, the subjectivity and the how of the appearing.

¹² PP 169.

Referrals (*Verweisungen*) are mutual references in the field of appearance. What was before considered to take place in the subject (in the immanent sphere of his experiences), is now understood to be external; not in him but in front of him, in the world, in what appears. “If the *noesis* is located now in front of the subject, then it merges in fact with the *noema*. This calls into question the first distinction of noetic and noematic.”¹³ In this way, Patočka renegotiates the Husserlian ontology of the ontological duality of experience and reality¹⁴ – considering the world a condition for the appearance of both that also touches upon acts, experiences, and the intentionality connected to them.

b) Some consequences

Stating that the subject is not constituting (*konstituierend*) but a receptor, changes the concept of intentional consciousness. According to Patočka, intentionality is not sufficient to define consciousness, because the experience of consciousness also has a dark side. Thus, intentionality would also require approaching the unconscious. The Czech philosopher explains that an account of consciousness requires a different formulation that makes use of the theory of temporality.

Even if it were defined by intentionality, the concept of “consciousness” would, by its own principle, be unsuitable [to account for the appearing of the appearing being]. “Conscience”, whose mode of being, on the one hand, remains undetermined, is grasped through pure internal reflection, as something constituted and subsisting that always remains an entirely positive entity; as something that cannot give rise to any form of overcoming, that cannot be the source from which appearance proceeds. It is the disclosing of the “is” in its fundamental strangeness.¹⁵

This quote connects Patočka’s critique of intentionality to constituting (*konstituierend*) consciousness or to transcendental consciousness. Patočka thinks that consciousness is certain only of its existence; it is not clarified in itself and

¹³ Duicu: La phénoménologie asubjective de Jan Patočka, une phénoménologie non intentionnelle?, 236 f.

¹⁴ Cf. Ideen I, §42: Being as Consciousness and Being as Reality. Essentially Necessary Difference Between the Modes of Intuition. According to Patočka, this position is an untenable metaphysical theory, because it leads to the derivative nature of the world.

¹⁵ “Man kann also grundsätzlich nicht mit den Begriffen eines ‘Bewußtseins’, selbst wenn es durch Intentionalität definiert wird, auskommen. Das ‘Bewußtsein’, abgesehen davon, daß seine Seinsart unbestimmt bleibt oder sogar, wenn in der reinen Innenreflexion gefaßt, ein Konstatiertes, Vorhandenes ist, bleibt ein durchaus positives Seiendes, welches keinen Überstieg und deshalb keine Erscheinung, kein Aufbrechen des ‘es ist’ in seiner grundlegenden Befremdlichkeit herzugeben vermag.” BME 449.

does not solve the problem of transcendence.¹⁶ Transcendence as such, given in the transcendence of the world as whole, cannot be reduced; it cannot be derived from another thing, deducted, or constituted (*konstituiert*) as pure immanence. Therefore, as we have seen, subjective intentions must be understood as phenomenal referrals unfolding inside the field of what appears and intentional effectuations as lines of force (*Kraftlinien*¹⁷) that unfold appearing (*das Erscheinen*) inside appearing being. Considered in this way, Patočka de-objectivizes intentions, and intentionality becomes a particular feature of the structure of the horizon of consciousness. All referrals (*Verweisungen*) or acts of conscience in this sense are not achievements of the subject but part of the structure of appearing. For all these reasons,

[...] we can no longer speak of an “intentionality of consciousness”. Referrals are not found in the ego or in the egologic, but in the appearing being itself. If there are “intentions”, they are something belonging to what is in front of the subject, something detached from invariants that are purely thinglike [...]. The presumed intentions are nothing other than lines of force of the appearing of the apparent being. They do not form or “constitute” anything, but simply show and refer to other than what already appears. In this way they themselves are data, not adequate data, but data of missing things.¹⁸

¹⁶ If consciousness is transcendent (since it does not exist as a worldly reality, and it is not a thing), then it does not have a positive content; it involves overcoming itself and is identified with the field of appearance. If, instead, consciousness is meant as a sphere of evidence closed in upon itself, then it is not transcendental. If consciousness belongs to the world, then, according to Patočka, we must reject the fundamental distinction of transcendental-empirical in favor of a deeper dimension. It remains mysterious in Husserl how the self-constitution of the empirical consciousness occurs by means of the transcendental one. Consciousness does not exist as a substance that has representations, but it consists in its relation to the world, in the unveiling or manifestation of the world. We cannot dissociate consciousness from phenomenality; intentionality designates this relationship with the world. Behind this conceptualization we find the reflection of Descartes. In Descartes the tension between understanding consciousness as a substance (*substantia cogitans*) and its function of making appear leads to a gap between consciousness and world, a distinction between transcendental and empirical. The problem is the lack of a hinge between the level affirming existence and the level distinguishing between cogito and other things. (cf. Emre Şan: *La transcendence comme problème phénoménologique – Lecture de Merleau-Ponty et Patočka*. Milan 2012, 44). In Descartes, however, existence is indubitable, because it belongs to another class than worldly existence.

¹⁷ Cf. Patočka: *Vom Erscheinen als solchem*. Texte aus dem Nachlaß, Hrsg. von Helga Blashchek-Hahn und Karel Novotný. Freiburg 2000, 124 (this volume will be cited as EaS).

¹⁸ “[...] kann es aber auch keine ‘Intentionalität des Bewußtseins’ geben. Nicht am Ich und im Ichlichen gibt es Verweisungen, sondern am Erscheinenden selbst. Wenn es ‘Intentionen’ gibt, dann sind sie etwas zur Gegenseite des Subjekts Gehöriges, was sich aber von den rein dinglichen Invarianten ablöst [...]. Die angeblichen Intentionen sind nichts anderes als Kraftlinien des Erscheinens am Erscheinenden. Sie formieren und ‘konstituieren’ auch nichts, sondern zeigen bloß und weisen auf anderes [,] als [es] das schon Erscheinende ist. So sind sie selber Gegebenheiten, freilich keine adäquaten, sondern defiziente Sachgegebenheiten.” EaS 123 f.

In Husserl, presumed pure data and the ‘subject’, which is composed by constituting (*konstituierend*) data (hyletic and intentions), are “a pure construction which, moreover, contradicts itself.”¹⁹ As we have seen, the phenomenal field is a structure of appearing and “it does not have an ‘intentional structure’.”²⁰ We can only “follow the relations internal to the field that alone determine which structures are to be considered as belonging to the self and what the structure of the psychic is as such.”²¹ Patočka’s purpose is therefore not to erase the structures laid out by Husserl but to study the character of givenness, appearance, and reciprocal referrals according to the analysis provided by *Logical Investigations*.²² For these reasons, “his work should not be understood to trace the question of the possibility of real empty intention or of total fulfilment; neither an initial empty nor a final fulfilment or radical disappointment (*Enttäuschung*) of intention are adequate to explain the structure of the horizon, since this structure supposes, to the contrary, the irreducible presence (and hence the impossibility of absolute empty intention) and the inexhaustibility (and hence the impossibility of total fullness) of the world.”²³

Regarding hyletic data, the pre-givenness of the thing through its thinglike characters needs to be underscored: the thing is there before being constituted by us and before consciousness directs itself towards the data. We dynamically encounter things; we do not intentionally constitute objects by animating data. As Dragos Duicu again notes, “the dynamic of our encounter with things no longer belongs to an intentional animation of *data*, but it expresses the movement that we are, that lies ahead, and corresponds to the movement of appearing.”²⁴ Hyletic data are abstractions; consequently, they cannot belong to the sphere of the immanent subject (which means that they are neither acts nor mental processes) but are located in things. The animation of hyletic data (the intentional *morphé* according to the scheme of *Ideas I*) is not a process that can be

¹⁹ “[...] eine reine Konstruktion, dazu noch sich widersprechend.” EaS 124.

²⁰ “[...] hat also keine ‘intentionale Struktur’.” EaS 151.

²¹ “[...] sondern es müssen die Innerfeldbeziehungen verfolgt werden, welche selbst erst darüber entscheiden, welche Strukturen als ichlich zu gelten haben und wie die Erscheinungsstruktur des Psychischen als solchen ist.” EaS 151.

²² “We believe that Husserl himself has provided, in the *Logical Investigations*, an analysis’ model of relationships of this kind, and this through the fundamental example of intention and of fulfilment or disappointment.” “Wir glauben, daß Husserl selber es war, der in den Logischen Untersuchungen ein Muster an Analyse derartiger Verhältnisse gegeben hat, und zwar am grundlegenden Beispiel von Intention und Erfüllung bzw. Enttäuschung.”) EaS 151. Patočka avoids the language of Husserlian analysis characteristic of *Ideas* and prefers, instead, the (not subjective) structure of the horizon of appearing.

²³ Duicu: La phénoménologie asubjective de Jan Patočka, une phénoménologie non intentionnelle?, 239.

²⁴ Ivi 243.

legitimized, and it is not by means of such animation that the being is constituted.²⁵ According to Patočka, this scheme needs to be revised, because it distorts the sense of intentionality. In fact, we always aim at the same thing, and the idea of adequate fulfilment makes sense only as much as *we presuppose the existence* of the thing to which we refer. The dynamic of fulfilment-emptying belongs to the field of appearing, and the movement of subjectivity, the target of appearance, correspond to this dynamic. The subject is not founded on positive content but should be thought as a pronominal empty structure that is fulfilled from the bottom of the world. Even the explanation for things that synthesis gives us can be attributed to the fact that the subject has a dynamic nature (is motion). The identity of the thing, therefore, is not built in a gradual manner. Syntheses are “the laws of the appearing all together of the subject (in order to become a unit, to aim that unity) and of objects.”²⁶ Consciousness does not address the object animating the data; rather, hyletic data are characters of things (the only ones that appear) according to lines of force and perspectives that are always dynamic. Intentionality as *noesis* is therefore insufficient, because it prevents us from thinking about how consciousness can go beyond itself. In Patočka, ‘primacy’ thus moves from perception to the network of all references external to the subject in the phenomenal field. This is confirmed by the fact that, in the horizon’s structure, Patočka speaks of ‘near’ and ‘far’ and not of fulfilled or deficient intention. Intentionality indicates the relationship between consciousness and what does not exist, in the sense that every sketch exceeds itself as an object that calls forth new sketches. Intentional consciousness, therefore, is a node in which many points of Husserl’s theory are radically revisited.²⁷

²⁵ Cf. EaS 178 f. Intentionality, therefore, is not constituent of appearance. Husserl’s theory of animation of hyletic data seems inherited from psychology, according to which subsistence would be a fundamental character of being.

²⁶ Patočka: Corps, possibilités, monde, champ d’apparition. In: PP 127.

²⁷ It must be noted, however, that Husserl admits various degrees of intentionality. Only second degree intentionality is mediated (cf. First Philosophy, lesson LIII). A form of original, non-objectifying intentionality called pre-intentionality is present then, even in Husserl. To examine this issue in more depth, see Stéphane Finetti: *Riflessione e astrazione. La dottrina della riduzione fenomenologica nella filosofia di Husserl*. Milan 2013, 185. In addition, Patočka himself writes in 1950 (cf. MNMEH 168) that subjective information cannot forgo causal objective models. Moreover, he recognizes that Husserl, in the last period of his life, emphasized the importance of understanding the horizon (*Horizont*) as the world relating to the subject as a body. He thus agrees with Husserl’s view that the reality of information is a *concretum* (has priority over the abstract). Thanks to this priority of the concrete, subjective information, associated with explicative schemes, can yield fruitful impulses. Patočka instead criticises the Husserlian claim of the intuition of the subjective being, who can intuitively glimpse in apodictic evidence. Patočka does not accept the bias of the truth-adequation of the absolute being of consciousness or of absolute subjectivity. The concept of totality is fundamental because it changes the way the subject relates to things (and, thus, also intentionality). Intentionality the-

c) The soul as intentionality

It is necessary to outline another aspect of Patočka's texts: the theory of intentionality as soul. Reflecting on the subject, Patočka lingers on the Aristotelian concept of soul.²⁸ We see indications of this emerge in four texts: 'La philosophie transcendante de Husserl après révision'²⁹ (1969/70), 'Der Subjektivismus der Husserlschen und die Möglichkeit einer asubjektiven Phänomenologie'³⁰ (1971), 'Plato and Europe'³¹ (1973), 'Phänomenologie als Lehre vom Erscheinen als solchem'³² (1974).

The Aristotelian argument about the soul is interesting because, through it, Aristotle faces the problem of the appearance of the being, since one of the most efficacious functions of the life principle is precisely that of allowing to appear. Patočka locates in the Aristotelian concept of soul the essence of intentionality: "Indeed, this text of Aristotle is the beginning of all intentional theory."³³

In *De anima* Aristotle writes that "in a way the soul is all existent".³⁴ Through this thesis, "Aristotle captures not only the essence of so-called intentionality, but also the idea of the different modes of the same thing's appearance."³⁵ Everything that appears can be met *hic et nunc* (function of *aisthesis*) or can be grasped (or seen) by an intellectual supratemporal vision (function of *noesis*). These faculties concern things and their shape (*eidos*). The peculiar way in which they are met and viewed, however, requires elaboration. For indeed, we do not all encounter the same things "because it is not the stone that lies within the soul, but its form."³⁶ The object cannot be transported into the soul. Moreover, there is need

refore must be thought more as life than as consciousness (cf. Renaud Barbaras: *La vie lacunaire*. Paris 2011). It highlights the need for a deeper conception of subject's belonging to the world.

²⁸ Cf. Aristotle: *De anima*, III 8, 431 b 20–432 a 15. To examine the reading of the problem that Patočka makes until his encounter with Bolzano, Brentano, Meinong and Twardowski cf. Patočka: *Introduction à la phénoménologie de Husserl*, trad. fr. E. Abrams. Grenoble 1992 until 247 (this volume will be cited as IPH). To elaborate on this point, see also the article of Şan: *L'âme comme intentionnalité*. In: *Fogli Camprostrini* 2 (2012), 95–100.

²⁹ IPH 237–240.

³⁰ BME 289 f.

³¹ Patočka: *Plato and Europe*, tr. en. P. Lom. Stanford 2002, 193 f. (this volume will be cited as PE).

³² EaS 155.

³³ Patočka: *Sur les problèmes des traductions philosophiques*. In: Nathalie Frogneauux (Ed.), *Jan Patočka. Liberté, existence et monde commun*, Le Cercle Herméneutique. Paris 2012, 22. Text written in 1968.

³⁴ Aristotle: *De anima*, III 8, 431 b 20.

³⁵ "[...] faßt Aristoteles nicht nur das Wesen der sogenannten Intentionalität, sondern auch die Lehre von verschiedenen Erscheinungsweisen desselben zusammen." BME 290.

³⁶ IPH 237.

of a place that can receive all the forms of things and, in a sense, identify with them. The soul's ability to aim at or to meet "is the ability to be identical to that which can be intended or met".³⁷ To put it in more modern language, "it must have a 'noematic' side, it must be able to be put in front of itself, precisely within the soul, something of an 'object'".³⁸ Thus in Aristotle, the functions of *aisthesis* and *noesis* are characterized by what corresponds to the modern term of objectivity (a term that Aristotle does not have).

For Aristotle and Patočka the soul is necessary for things to appear; it is able to identify itself in pure forms as well as real ones, but *without* identifying with their matter – because the soul shows things, and "is somehow the strength of this manifestation of things",³⁹ without constituting (konstituieren) them. It simply allows things to manifest themselves, makes room for their appearing. The action of the soul, therefore, is composed of the unification of activity (strength of manifestation) and passivity (allowing to appear that establishes relation with the bottom). "But the *thing* is there, even before our nominalization, at a lesser degree of reflection."⁴⁰ The lack in Aristotle of a term designating the object is reflected in the absence of a term designating that aspect of psychic life characterized by intentional or mental relation. Aristotle's solution is this: the objective term of relation is in the soul or, using a term perhaps more familiar to us, in the 'subject'; it is something belonging to life. The soul, therefore, 'identifies' itself with the objective term, but this identification remains problematic. For Aristotle, in fact, the identification occurs in a certain manner, that is *potentially*. Therefore, there is identification only in a certain sense. Aristotle defines the soul using the paradigm of the hand. The soul is similar to the hand as the instrument of all instruments, because the hand never becomes an instrument but makes instrumental that which can serve as an instrument: "thus the soul is able to ensure that all forms are properly forms, that they are something that appears".⁴¹ The instrument (things) does not lose its autonomy in the hand (soul), but it is what it is *only* when it is in the hand (or rather, only thanks to the soul). Similarly, the things learned, the content of thought, are what they are only in relation to an *eidos*, that is, to a vision or intuition.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ "Es muß eine 'noematische' Seite haben, es muß innerhalb der Seele selbst sich 'Gegenständliches' entgegenstellen können." BME 290.

³⁹ "[...] elle *est* en quelque sorte la force de cette manifestation des choses" Patočka: Sur les problèmes des traductions philosophiques, 23.

⁴⁰ IPH 238.

⁴¹ "[...] und so macht auch die Seele alle Gestalten erst eigentlich zu Gestalten, d. h. zum Erscheinenden" BME 290.

This identification between soul and things remains problematic. How, for instance, can Aristotle say that things, in their being conceived in the soul, somehow become the soul without ceasing to be themselves? In this regard, the comparison between the soul and the hand is enlightening, because the hand likewise does not change what it manipulates (“things appear in the soul without therefore losing their own form, their essence”⁴²; things remain what they were, or rather, become that which was already present in them as a latent possibility). On the other hand, the example of the hand is not completely accurate with regard to identification. In fact, the identification that occurs in the soul would be incomprehensible if the soul did not have different modes within itself allowing for the identification to take place. It follows, therefore, that “identification is not absolute; it concerns what makes a thing a thing – thus, what makes it what it is, but not its actual individual reality.”⁴³ What passes through the soul, in a certain sense, is the form (*eidōs*), what the thing is without matter.

Aristotle tries to solve this problem, crucial for metaphysics, with the categories of potentiality, actuality, form, and matter. For Patočka, the central problem instead “consists simultaneously in objectivity and subjectivity, *both* in what it is referred to *and* what is perceived or met.”⁴⁴ In light of this, the definition that Aristotle gives of the soul

[...] would therefore be translated, roughly, like this: *the soul is in a certain sense even the noēma*; that with which the life of the soul has to do with, belongs in some way to the soul. In what manner is the problem to be solved. The problem remains a problem.⁴⁵

The only sketch of a response to this problem is again provided by Patočka’s analogy of the hand, which gives sense to all other instruments. “Like the hand, [...] so too thought and life give meaning to everything that belongs to them as objects which they handle”.⁴⁶ For Patočka,

the fundamental intuition of Aristotle about appearing is that the appearing being appears necessarily *to someone* [...]. And this appearing means that the appearing being is present originally not only ‘in itself’ but also outside of its material reality. Given this, the soul as the ‘ground’ of appearing must be what offers appearances a place where they can show themselves.⁴⁷

⁴² “[...] daß Dinge in der Seele erscheinen, ohne dadurch ihre eigene Gestalt, ihr Wesen zu verlieren” Ibid.

⁴³ IPH 239.

⁴⁴ Ivi 240. The terms *object* and *objective* arise with the scholastic tradition (cf. IPH 241).

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ “Die aristotelische Grundeinsicht, was Erscheinen betrifft, ist eben die: es muß das Erscheinende *jemandem* erscheinen [...]. Und dies Erscheinen bedeutet, daß das Erscheinende nicht nur ‘in sich’, sondern auch außerhalb seiner stofflichen Wirklichkeit im Original anwe-

In Aristotle, in addition to physical place, there is psychic ‘place’, where anything can appear for what it is. Thus, attributing sensitive qualities to things, we are really talking about their possible presence in this psychic place, building on the determination of the psychic element of appearing.

III. Provisional conclusions: the primacy of movement

Patočka’s aim is to overcome the substantialist conception that considers consciousness a permanent presence (for Descartes the soul is *res, substantia*) and not a form that characterizes a thing in its inner being. The fact that the subject belongs to the world requires a deeper intentionality. In addition to the reification of the subject, Patočka also wants to overcome the idealistic conception of consciousness (to avoid subjectivism). Relation means that consciousness is inseparable from the world. Both are impossible without relationship to the other. Consciousness’s mode of existing, however, is different from that of mundane reality: it is open to the world without being a worldly reality. Therefore, it should be thought of as perpetually overcoming itself, as transcendence. The category that best allows us to express this, rather than intentionality, is movement. Inserting motion into being is a peculiar privilege of the soul: “the soul vouches for the movement of everything that exists”.⁴⁸

In the Aristotelian conception of the soul Patočka finds the concept that allows him to think of consciousness as not a closed entity and not even intuitive (the consciousness of the being), worth losing the primacy of the relationship with the world. The soul, as condition and site of the manifestation of things, becomes for the Czech philosopher the phenomenal field. He does not speak of subjective synthesis but of identification processes, as in the Aristotelian conception of the soul according to which the soul is a form that cannot distinguish itself from its contents. “In this way Patočka finds the bridge between experience and the thing.”⁴⁹ Before subjective synthesis there is “the connection inside of things”.⁵⁰ Syntheses are material, and my subjective synthesis is to collect and recognize this unique identity inside of things. The Greek concept of the soul, identified with the essence of intentionality, allows for a desubjectivized theory

send, gegenwärtig ist. Dann kann aber die Seele als Ort der Erscheinung nichts anderes sein als dasjenige, was den Erscheinungen diese Stelle bietet, wo sie sich zeigen können.” EaS 155.

⁴⁸ Cf. PE 187. In this passage that refers to Plato, we are not talking about the individual soul, but the soul of the world. It is also interesting to read shortly after that “The soul introduces itself into movement through understanding” Ivi 187.

⁴⁹ Emre Şan: *L’âme comme intentionnalité*, 97.

⁵⁰ Patočka: *Phénoménologie et ontologie du mouvement*. In: PP 32.

of appearing and, therefore, an asubjective phenomenology. The subject, then, is not founded on positive content. Husserl's intentionality, however, even if it does not constitute the real, "aims to make it appear".⁵¹ Things are the unique content of the soul, which is thought of as a movement that allows for the event of appearance. Let's briefly recapitulate Patočka's theoretical path with a quote from Dragos Duicu:

In the asubjective phenomenology of Patočka, every moment of Husserl's theory of intentionality is reworked. Hyletic *data* are considered as abstractions to the benefit of the characters of things, which alone appear; there is no longer reason to speak of an animation of such *data*, and intentionality as constituting of objects is contested; instead of characterizing the being of consciousness, intentions indicate the lines of force of appearing. Only the dynamic of fulfilment / emptying is preserved, but just to illustrate the type of meeting between the movement of subjectivity and the movement of appearing.⁵²

Is Patočka's contribution sufficient to redefine the essence of intentionality? Certainly not. But his contribution encourages us to re-think intentionality in a deeper sense, as a vital relationship with the world that should be considered not only epistemologically but also ontologically. In this sense, Patočka's thought also enters into dialogue with recent neuroscience and brain studies. But this is a subject that calls for a paper of its own.

⁵¹ Costa: Husserl. Rome 2009, 59.

⁵² Duicu: La phénoménologie asubjective de Jan Patočka, une phénoménologie non intentionnelle?, 243.

