

# Intentionality and Referentiality<sup>1</sup>

## The problem of referentiality in Husserl's *Zeitdenken*

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### Abstract

In the framework of Husserl's phenomenology, intentionality is regarded as the main feature of every act of consciousness. Our consciousness is directed towards objects immanent in it, however in a variety of epistemological functions and operations, such as sensory perception, judgment, cognition, volition, imagination, etc. Husserl uses the technical terms *noesis* and *noema* to designate the intentional acts of consciousness and their outcome in the constitution of objects in consciousness. At the same time, the persistence of a hyletic data is emphasized, which as pure sense data escapes the phenomenological reduction and remains as such a residuum in the consciousness. In my lecture I try to work out the clear implication of epistemological referentiality in the phenomenological basic notion of intentionality. Among other things, I rely on the conceptual history of intentionality, i. e. on the earlier theories of intentionality in the Middle Ages and the philosophical revival of this notion in the late 19th century by Franz Brentano. Referentiality defines itself as the referential access of consciousness to objects of sensory perception, judgment, cognition, etc., in which the objects form the final referents. In the phenomenological framework, intentionality refers to the intentional access of consciousness to objects irrespective of their consciousness-immanence or -transcendence. The analogy between intentionality and referentiality is therefore based on the act-character as well as the directionality of consciousness which suggests the characteristic attempt of consciousness to gain intentional-referential access to objects. The directionality of consciousness in every intentional act ultimately marks and confirms the referentiality i. e. the referential access of consciousness to the object. Intentionality as intentional-referential access to objects becomes a problem, when the access of consciousness to the object proves to be inadequate. I try to show how this problem of referentiality inevitably arises in Husserl's *phenomenology of inner time-consciousness*, especially in his conception of a time-object (*Zeitobjekt*). The consciousness-immanence of a time-object, such as a melody, points to a problem, that the intertwining of the temporality of consciousness and that of time-object necessarily results in various aporias of time, as Paul Ricœur observes and discusses in detail in his seminal work *Temps et Récit*. Moreover, the residual persistence of hyletic data, that survives all phenomenological reductions, would establish an actual interface between consciousness and reality, as Jaakko Hintikka emphasizes in his essay *The phenomenological dimension*. The aporicity of time refers to the autonomy of time and, thereby, to the autonomy of time-object in its intentional in-existence in consciousness. The hyletic data as interface between consciousness and reality points to the necessary referential extension of consciousness to objects that are otherwise excluded in the context of phenomenology. From these and similar premises, I would like to demonstrate how the problem of referentiality in Husserl's philosophy of time inevitably presupposes a reversion of referentiality within the prevailing noesis-noema structure that underlies the consciousness-immanence of objects.

### The genesis of the theory of intentionality

Intentionality, the intentional orientation of consciousness to an object immanent in it, formed the basis of Husserl's phenomenology – a fundamental idea that Husserl took over from his teacher, Franz Brentano. Every act of consciousness, such as sensory perception, conceptual judgment and cognition, volitional acts, imagination, etc., is an intentional act that presupposes an object that exists in the consciousness and to which the consciousness is directed. The notion of intentionality was not new; Brentano revitalized it from a long forgotten medieval-scholastic discourse that was

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strategically marginalized by the Cartesian-Kantian modernity. Especially in the late Middle Ages, the problem of intentionality was often discussed in the context of different aporetic discourses in scholasticism.

The timeliness and relevance of this problem is undisputed. However, the philosophical framework-conditions are to be defined initially, in which this problem is debated time and again and continues to exist till date. There are considerable differences between an epistemological and ontological framework, in which we try to locate this problem. Intentionality presupposes the intentional in-existence of objects in the consciousness, which presupposes a certain *mode of being* of the object - as merely a mental object. The orientation of consciousness in every intentional act (which Husserl defines as noesis or noetic acts in the context of his phenomenology) is directional on the one hand. On the other hand, it concerns ontologically only the in-existence of objects in the consciousness. Here the prevailing debate in the late Middle Ages and early modern period about the true mode of existence of objects - whether the objects can have a dual existence as real and mental - casts its shadows again.

Brentano traces the basic idea of intentionality back to an ontological problematic relating to the intentional in-existence of objects, which was debated in the late medieval scholasticism and in the Cartesian early modern period. However, this ontological puzzle originated and developed primarily from an epistemological problematic, or more precisely from an epistemological aporetic, namely the epistemic access of the subject to the object which is perceived through senses, conceptually judged and recognized, aspired for, affirmed or negated, remembered or merely imagined. Now, the important question arises as to whether the orientation of consciousness in any intentional or noetic act only reaches the objects in-existing in consciousness or rather transcends them in order to *refer* to the real objects existing independent of the consciousness.

In the introduction to his seminal work, *Theorien der Intentionalität im Mittelalter*, Dominik Perler emphasizes precisely this epistemological basis of the *seemingly* ontological problem of the intentional existence of objects, which Brentano's theory of intentionality - or his revival of the theories of intentionality from medieval scholasticism - presupposed. The necessary reference of the mind in each of its acts directed to an object - such as sensory perception, conceptual thinking and cognition, affirmation and negation, memory, imagination, etc. - clearly points to an epistemological access or approach of the mind to the objects. Perler sees this *epistemischer Zugang* - or the epistemic reference of the mind or consciousness - to an object as the core problem that gives rise to the theory of intentionality in Brentano:

„Viele unserer geistigen Akte und Zustände zeichnen sich dadurch aus, dass sie sich auf etwas beziehen und dadurch einen Inhalt haben. (...) Der menschliche Geist ist nun mal so gebaut (aufgrund der evolutionären Entwicklung oder infolge anderer natürlicher Prozesse), dass er sich in konkreten Situationen auf etwas Bestimmtes beziehen kann, ähnlich wie der Magen so gebaut ist, dass er etwas Bestimmtes verdauen kann. Hier gibt es nichts zu erklären, sondern höchstens etwas zu beschreiben. (...) Selbst wenn es dem Geist tatsächlich von sich aus gelingen sollte, sich auf Objekte zu beziehen (eine gewagte Annahme, die es zu prüfen gilt), kann man immer noch fragen: Warum gelingt dies dem Geist? Oder genauer gefragt: Wie gelingt dies dem Geist? Wie müssen seine Akte und Zustände beschaffen sein, damit sie sich in konkreten Situationen auf etwas beziehen können? (...) Welche besonderen Eigenschaften oder strukturellen Merkmale ermöglichen es dem Geist, sich in konkreten Situationen auf etwas zu beziehen? Auf diese grundlegende Frage gab F. Brentano in seiner *Psychologie vom*

*empirischen Standpunkt* (1874 publiziert) eine Antwort, die nicht nur den Ausgangspunkt für zahlreiche moderne Intentionalitätstheorien bildete, sondern gleichzeitig auch eine Brücke zu den mittelalterlichen Theorien schlug. An einer berühmten, oft zitierten Stelle stellt Brentano fest:

„Jedes psychische Phänomen ist durch das charakterisiert, was die Scholastiker des Mittelalters die intentionale (auch wohl mentale) Inexistenz eines Gegenstandes genannt haben, und was wir, obwohl mit nicht ganz unzweideutigen Ausdrücken, die Beziehung auf einen Inhalt, die Richtung auf ein Objekt (worunter hier nicht eine Realität zu verstehen ist), oder die immanente Gegenständlichkeit nennen würden.“<sup>2</sup>

In his comments, Perler points to many ambiguities in these considerations of Brentano – between the orientation of consciousness to a content (*Inhalt*) or to an object. Apart from that, these defining considerations would give rise to two major issues of intentionality, which Brentano attributes to the theories of intentionality in the Middle Ages: First, the question: how do objects, that we perceive through our senses, think, remember or imagine, exist for us? Second: where – on which referent – do we actually focus in each of our above-mentioned acts of consciousness? Both questions complement each other, with the first referring to an ontological and the second to an epistemological issue. This complementarity is clearly evident in Brentano’s consideration of the intentionality of consciousness and the intentional in-existence of objects:

„Jedes enthält etwas als Objekt in sich, obwohl nicht jedes in gleicher Weise. In der Vorstellung ist etwas vorgestellt, in dem Urteile ist etwas anerkannt oder verworfen, in der Liebe geliebt, in dem Hasse gehasst, in dem Begehren begehrt usw.“<sup>3</sup>

Here it is not a matter of mere parallelism between epistemological and ontological considerations within the theories of intentionality passed down by medieval scholasticism, but of a reciprocal relationship between intentional acts of consciousness and their objects, which, however, does not exclude a certain hierarchical order within the framework of phenomenology. Although the mode of existence of objects – as real or merely mental – is problematized here, it is ultimately the directedness of the acts of consciousness to objects that most closely characterizes the epistemic access of consciousness to objects, out of which, however, the ontological problem regarding the mode of existence of objects would arise. That is to say, the ontological status of objects is solely determined by the factum whether the consciousness has its epistemic access to an object in-existing in consciousness or to a real object that exists independently of the consciousness. In short, the limit of cognizability (Erkennbarkeit) of the consciousness in its epistemic access to objects ultimately determines the ontological status of the object itself.

Perler obviously emphasizes the epistemological aspect in the theoretical notion of intentionality – indeed in the spirit of early modern philosophy. Accordingly, he problematizes the consciousness-immanence of objects as represented by Brentano, to which alone the acts of consciousness can be directed. The context of this criticism shifts from medieval scholasticism to early Cartesian modernism, in which the traditional ontological assumptions prevalent in the Middle Ages began to be tested in a strictly epistemological framework:

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<sup>2</sup> Perler, Dominik: *Theorien der Intentionalität im Mittelalter*, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt/M 2002, p. 1-3.

<sup>3</sup> Brentano, Franz: *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt*, F. Meiner Verlag, Hamburg 1924, p. 227.

„Betrachten wir zunächst die von Brentano skizzierte Theorie der intentionalen Inexistenz unabhängig vom mittelalterlichen Hintergrund. Diese Theorie weist auf den ersten Blick einige Vorzüge auf. Sie erlaubt es, für alle geistigen Akte und Zustände eine einheitliche Erklärung zu geben. Ganz gleichgültig, was wir hoffen, woran wir uns erinnern und worüber wir uns freuen, jede dieser Aktivitäten zeichnet sich dadurch aus, dass sie ein geistiges Objekt hat und genau auf dieses Objekt gerichtet ist. (...) Trotz dieser Vorzüge wirft die Theorie der intentionalen Inexistenz verschiedene Probleme auf. Zunächst kann man fragen, wie es denn möglich sein soll, dass besondere geistige Objekte in den einzelnen Akten und Zuständen existieren. Wie entstehen solche Objekte? Werden sie vom Geist hergestellt? Wenn ja, wie erfolgt eine derartige Produktion? Und wie können sie gleichsam im Geist residieren? Weiter kann man kritisch fragen, ob es denn plausibel ist anzunehmen, dass alle geistigen Akte und Zustände „inexistierende“ Objekte haben und dass sie genau auf diese Objekte gerichtet sind. Wenn ich mich auf den Besuch von Freunden freue, so richtet sich meine Freude doch nicht auf geistig „inexistierende“ Freunde und auf deren „inexistierenden“ Besuch. Vielmehr freue ich mich darauf, dass die Freunde selbst, d. h. Menschen aus Fleisch und Blut, in meine Wohnung kommen. Und wenn jemand sich ein Kind wünscht, so richtet sich sein Wunsch nicht auf ein geistig „inexistierendes“ Kind, sondern auf ein reales Kind. In den meisten Fällen sind Sich-Freuen, Wünschen und andere geistige Aktivitäten nicht auf geistige Objekte gerichtet, sondern auf außergeistige. Die Theorie der intentionalen Inexistenz scheint genau diesen wichtigen Punkt zu übersehen, indem sie alle Objekte von geistigen Akten und Zuständen auf bloße Gedankendinge reduziert.“<sup>4</sup>

Incidentally, the epistemological accentuation was known to be the strategy of the Cartesian modern age, i.e., to replace the scholastic tradition of parallelism between ontological and epistemological considerations with a hierarchical order, in which epistemology predominated and predetermined every ontological assumption. While in the context of medieval scholasticism a non-hierarchical and coequal recognition of the cognizability and existence of the physical, metaphysical and theological entities is to be observed, the early modern age established a clear philosophical-scientific hierarchy, in which the ontological assumptions could be recognized only through strict epistemological scrutiny. In an edited volume, *Individuation and Identity in Early Modern Philosophy*, Kenneth Barber (in the introduction to this work) explains this epistemological turn in a time-symbolic transition from the Middle Ages and into the Early Modern Period:

„These two concerns, ontological and epistemological, are usually linked in the history of philosophy. In an ideal world, philosopher’s heaven as it were, the marriage of epistemology and ontology would be completely harmonious in that all the entities catalogued and classified by the ontologist would meet with approval by the epistemologist and in turn all items on the epistemologist’s short list of knowledge entities would be sufficient for the ontologist’s account of the world. (...) Less dramatically, but more sharply focused, epistemology and ontology can be related in two ways. On what I call the *Strong Model* of their relation, epistemological considerations serve as criteria for the adequacy of an ontological system. (...) On what I term the “weak model,” epistemology and ontology are understood to be parallel methods of investigation having in common only the fact that their respective inquiries are directed towards the same classes of objects. While the ontologist asks what is *in objects* that *individuates* those objects, the epistemologist searches for features *in experience* that allow us to *discern* the difference among objects. (...) Broadly speaking, the weak model is dominant in medieval philosophy. Epistemological concerns are subordinate or at least parallel to ontological concerns. The existents, beginning with God, are given as are the categories available for their analysis. The task of the epistemologist is to support not to challenge the schema, and any attempt to reverse the subordinate role assigned to epistemology (or to advocate the Strong Model) would have been regarded not as an indication of philosophical acumen but rather as a potential source of heresy.

By 1641, however, the strong model has replaced its weaker medieval counterpart. In the opening paragraphs of the *Meditations* Descartes announces that he will suspend belief in the existence

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<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p. 5-6.

of anything not known with certainty. Ontological claims concerning the existence of material objects, of God, and even of the self, must be subjected to a most rigorous epistemological scrutiny before one (or at least Descartes) is entitled to accept those claims.<sup>5</sup>

In an apparent agreement with this primacy of epistemology – i. e., with the precedence of cognizability over existence – Perler emphasizes the problem of the epistemic access to the objects that results from Brentano's concept of intentionality and intentional in-existence of objects in the consciousness. It emphasizes a fundamental epistemological question, namely: What epistemic access do we have to the extra-mental objects? – a question which has been asked again and again in the entire history of philosophy, and which particularly propelled the theoretical philosophy. This question is obviously posed in the context of early modern epistemology and hardly in the context of phenomenology. Nevertheless, it clearly serves as a basis for an advanced phenomenological discussion of the problem of intentionality.

Perler's considerations point to the necessity of a transcendence of consciousness precisely in its reference to objects in every intentional act. It seems improper to limit the epistemic access of the mind solely to an in-existence i.e. to a consciousness-immanence of objects. The epistemic access of the mind in each of its intentional or noetic acts does not end in the in-existing mental objects, but transcend them to reach the real objects. The legitimacy of this radical reinterpretation of intentionality goes beyond the scope of phenomenology in order to regress to the sphere of a strict epistemology that prevailed in the early modern period. However, the problem of epistemic access, which is emphasized here, can be justified in the context of phenomenology, since intentionality, as the basis of phenomenology, forms an analogous phenomenon also in the context of epistemology. The analogy between epistemology and phenomenology (which the phenomenologists would be reluctant to accept) is clearly based on the problem of epistemic access, which gives rise to intentionality in the context of both phenomenology and epistemology.

### **The epistemic-referential access to the object**

The epistemic access as the essential trait of intentionality refers – as I would argue – to a fundamental problem of modern epistemology itself, namely the problem of sufficient access of the subject or the consciousness to the object, which is subjected to every intentional act. Now I would call the problem of sufficient access of consciousness to objects *the problem of the epistemological referentiality of the consciousness* itself. Here, in my view, referentiality seems to be a more appropriate expression than intentionality, which, as such, can be replaced by that expression. Both intentionality and referentiality point to the reference, that is, to the epistemic access of consciousness to the object. Nonetheless, referentiality differs from intentionality in certain aspects, that as a characteristic feature of the intentional acts of consciousness, referentiality seems to suggest a more coherent process and structure of the epistemic access to the referents. That is to say, the referentiality of intentional acts implies a more coherent conceptual structure of the epistemic access of consciousness to the referents, that presuppose an ontological-final determination

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<sup>5</sup> Barber, Kenneth F: Individuation and Identity in Early Modern Philosophy, hrsg. von Kenneth Barber und Jorge J. E. Gracia, State University of New York Press, New York 1994, p. 4-5.

of the mode of existence of the objects. Epistemological referentiality thus extends from referential consciousness to its epistemic reference, and further to the mode of existence of the referents, which seems to indicate intentionality as epistemic access in a larger, more detailed and more precise framework.

The problem of epistemic reference is currently discussed in the analytical philosophy of language. However, here it is not about deriving this problem from a prevalent school of thought or drawing contextual analogies. Rather, it is a question of going deeper into the problem of epistemic access to the object, which inevitably emerges from the basic idea of intentionality within the framework of phenomenology. The reference or referencing basically indicates the epistemic access to a referent. As such, this access is directional – as access of consciousness to the object. The directedness of consciousness in every intentional act can therefore aptly be described as referentiality, which presupposes the existence of a referent and is ultimately legitimized by the existence of the same.

In the context of his phenomenology, the directionality of the intentional acts of consciousness is represented by Husserl in a structure, more precisely, in a hierarchical structure from *noesis to noema to object*. Between noema and object a hyletic data, which is not subject to phenomenological reductions, was further identified. This structure within the framework of phenomenology is also an epistemic structure that represents the epistemic access of consciousness to objects in its noetic acts. However, in the context of Husserl's phenomenology, perception, cognition, reflection or imagination of objects as noetic acts obviously relate to noema. Strictly speaking, this epistemic reference does not reach the real objects that are excluded (*ausgeklammert*) in phenomenology. But the referential access of noesis should go on from noema to hyletic data, which, as an irreducible residual factum in consciousness, should necessarily form an interface between the consciousness and the reality – or between the consciousness-immanence and the consciousness-transcendence of objects, as Jaakko Hintikka emphatically stresses in his reflections on Husserl's phenomenology. I will discuss this important point later in my presentation. What is important to note here is the problem of sufficient referentiality of consciousness in its noetic acts, whose access seems to go beyond the noema that is inherent in the consciousness.

The idea of intentionality could effectively obscure this problematic, since intentionality – as the basic trait of the acts of consciousness – clearly indicates its consciousness-immanence. Intentionality as referentiality, on the other hand, would rather elucidate the problem of epistemic-referential access. Compared to intentionality, referentiality points to a reciprocity between the acts of consciousness – as noesis –, the consciousness-immanence and consciousness-transcendence of objects. When this possibility of referential reciprocity is projected into the phenomenological structure briefly outlined above, it would give rise to some basic questions: Where could we identify the final referent? What is the true nature of the epistemic reference that the noesis presupposes?

In my presentation, I attempt to show how such a reciprocity is potentially inherent in the problem of epistemic referentiality, and how it manifests itself particularly in phenomenology, and thus might lead to a referential reversal of the relational

structure outlined above. But first, we must determine the genesis of the problem of epistemological referentiality in the history of the Cartesian-Kantian modern age itself. The epistemological turn in the early (Cartesian) modern age also brought with it the problem of sufficient epistemological referentiality. The question of the mode of existence of the referent - the object in general - was topical in the early modern age of Descartes, Locke, Hume, and others. But the method of epistemological negation, as introduced by Descartes and continued by many philosophers of the early modern period, appears to strategically disguise the problem of epistemological referentiality. The epistemological negation of the secondary qualia and all subjective attributes of the object was at the same time the subjective appropriation of all these traits that constitute the individuation of the object. Such empowerment of the subject, which had blossomed in the Kantian philosophy, also gave the impression that the subject here has a sufficient epistemological-referential access to the objects - through sensory perceptions, conceptual cognition, through memory and imagination, etc. When Kant, in favor of his transcendental system of philosophy, also declared the primary qualia such as space and time to be *a priori Vorstellungen*, the inevitable problem of epistemological referentiality seemed to be buried under a superordinate and predominant context of transcendentalism. The almost axiomatic emphasis, space as a mere form of pure intuition (and *Sinnlichkeit*) a priori, suppressed or even buried a nearly over 300 years debated problem on the visual space perception - especially on the visual size and distance perception - in the early modern period.

Here, in an example of the aporia of visual size perception that Condillac deploys in his polemic against the theory of unconscious inference by Locke and Helmholtz, I would like to show a clear indication of the epistemological-referential reciprocity briefly mentioned above. Condillac explains how the aporia of *Object Size Constancy* in visual size perception contradicts the apriority of space perception, as implied in the inference-theories of Locke, Helmholtz, and others, and how it indirectly suggests a reversal of the epistemic referentiality in the visual size perception. I quote from the work of Michael M. Morgan, *Molyneux's Question. Vision, Touch and the Philosophy of Perception*, in which the aporias of visual space perception prevailing in the early modern period (and later axiomatically suppressed by Kant) are discussed in detail:

„Locke's error, as Condillac clearly points out, was to think that we see the retinal image at all. If we *first* see the flat image and then later perceive, Locke's argument (and Helmholtz's) follows: some process of inference must have go on. But if we never see the image - and Condillac correctly points out that we are never conscious of so doing - then the 'inference' is gratuitous. We do not and cannot see the retinal image: we see objects in the outside world. The Lockean and Helmholtzian language of 'unconscious inference' is an undesirable relic of the 'camera' theory of vision.

In some respects Condillac thought more clearly about this problem than many contemporary psychologists. Take the question of 'object constancy' for example. Condillac knew that 'If a man four feet away ... steps backward to eight feet, the image of him on the retina is halved in size.' Because of this it has seemed even to some contemporary theorists to be a problem that objects do not shrink rapidly in size as they go away.

Originally, the descriptive term 'object size constancy' was used to refer to the non-shrinkage phenomenon. Its use in that way is unexceptionable. But some people now use the term 'constancy' as if it applied to a *process* which set to work on the retinal image: they speak of constancy 'scaling things up' or 'scaling them down'. What exactly do they think is being altered in size by constancy? The size of objects? Obviously not. The retinal image? Still less so. The size of an image in the brain? Possibly: but for what purpose? A moment's thought shows the problems in treating constancy as a

magnifying/minifying process. The cause of the fallacy is the belief that we see the retinal image.

Condillac disposes of the fallacy. For one thing, he makes the very just remark that 'If perception is an inference involving a link between the idea of a man and a height of about five feet, either I should not see the man at all, or I should see him five feet tall' – whereas in fact objects seem to decrease insensibly in size as they move into the middle distance. He ends with the remark 'Nature determines that the sight of these objects should tell me how far the man is away; it is impossible that I should not have this impression every time I see them.' In other words, we see things as we do, not because we make inferences, but because we are as we are. As modern jargon would have it, the system is *hard-wired*.<sup>6</sup>

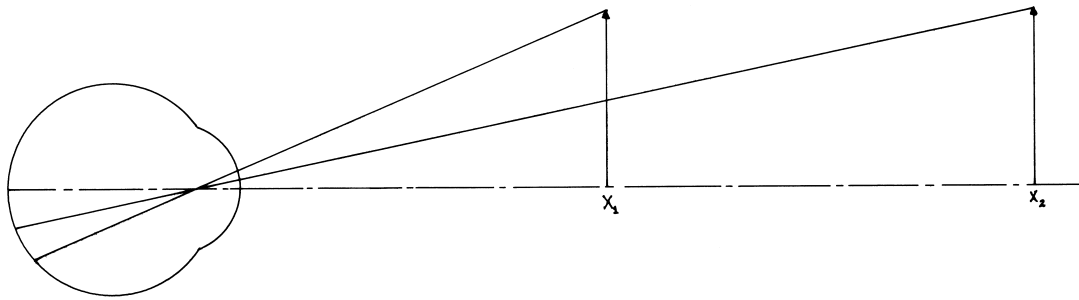


Figure 1: The *object size constancy*

This raises the basic question of identifying the true referent in the visual perception of the size of an object. Modern ophthalmology, supported by psychology and neurobiology, is based on the prevailing *intromission theory* of visual space perception, passed down since antiquity, in which the visual space-perception – i.e. the visual perception of size, distance and position of objects, of free space, perspectival structure of visual field etc. - *refers* solely to an input in the eye, namely the retinal image. The above-cited experimental observations of Condillac refute the almost paradigmatically established basic assumptions within modern theories of visual space-perception, which include the theory of *unconscious inference* by Locke and Helmholtz. According to Condillac, the retinal image cannot be an appropriate *referent* for visual size perception. The following justifications can be derived from the example of the *object size constancy*:

1. We do not see the retinal image, but objects in the visual field. Therefore the unconscious inference, by which the mind develops true perceptions of the size of the objects from the retinal image, is a problematic assumption. For here the unconscious inference is a psychological (and not merely a physiological) matter that necessarily presupposes seeing.
2. Even if we assume that the mind physiologically or neurobiologically *refers* to the retinal image in the eye, the tiny retinal image can hardly suggest the size of the immediate visual image. The comparatively diminutive images on the retina can hardly serve the immediate (true) perception of the size of objects as adequate references.
3. A possible speculation that the mind merely enlarges the images on the retina

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<sup>6</sup> Morgan, Michael J.: Molyneux's Question. Vision, Touch and the Philosophy of Perception, Cambridge 1977, p. 78-79.



by a factor of multiplication will turn out to be false. Because the example of *object size constancy* discussed by Condillac clearly shows that the sizes of the appearance of objects in a visual field remain constant, even if the retinal image, which is subject to the laws of geometrical optics, is halved. Therefore, the *reference* for the constancy of the appearance-size of an object cannot be the size of its retinal image.

From these and other considerations,<sup>7</sup> particularly from the above-discussed *object size constancy* in the visual size perception, it can be concluded that the retinal image, as the sole and most important input in the process of seeing, cannot be an appropriate *referent* for the visual perception of the size of objects (similarly for the visual perception of distance and position of objects, of the free space, etc.). However, our basic question remains unresolved here: Where is the true referent for our immediate visual perception of the size of objects? This question can be formulated differently – pertaining to the phenomenon of the *object size constancy* in visual size perception: To which *referent* does the constancy of object size in a visual field, which is not subject to the radical reduction of the image size on the retina, refer to? The *object size constancy* in visual size perception gives only one answer to this question, namely the constancy of the *actual object size* itself. In the ophthalmological case of *object size constancy*, the mind can only *refer* to the constancy of the *real objects* that appear in a visual field. This points to a total perceptual-theoretical reversal of referentiality in the case of visual size perception, which would, from the outset, refute and invalidate the prevalent intromission theory of vision. However, the reversal of referentiality within the framework of the theory of perception, through which the real or mind-independent objects are *directly referred to* in the process of seeing, would lead to a new aporia of visual perception. We are here puzzled over how or by what *medium* the eye refers directly to the *real objects* in a visual field.

A similar reversal of epistemological referentiality seems to be presupposed in Husserl's phenomenology – especially in relation to the Genetic Phenomenology and the – subsequent – noetic construction of Noema. The philosophical basis – in the form of a philosophical-historical causation – was clearly the revival of the medieval-scholastic doctrine of the intentional in-existence of objects by Brentano. The more or less direct admission of objects in consciousness refuted in principle the predominant Kantian transcendentalism, in which the object is deconstructed by the method of epistemological negation and separation of secondary and primary qualia (which are thus appropriated by the transcendental subject). Especially the idea of a time-object – such as a melody – and its admission in consciousness by Brentano and later Husserl – in his *Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins* – marked a philosophically and historically significant departure from the prevailing transcendentalism of Kant. Although Husserl tried to subsume phenomenology under a superordinate context of transcendentalism (by developing the clear idea of transcendental phenomenology), the initial admission of objects – especially the time-object – in consciousness continued to contradict a transcendental framework of phenomenology. The basic idea of the in-existence of objects in consciousness appears to effectuate a reversal of

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<sup>7</sup> I have discussed the *object size constancy* along with other aporias of visual space perception in a recently published monograph. See Thaliath, Babu: Die Verkörperung der Sinnlichkeit, Karl Alber Verlag, Freiburg i. Br. 2017, p. 94-160.

the predominant phenomenological relation between noesis, noema and object, as established paradigmatically by Husserl.

Both for Brentano and Husserl the time object – like a melody – closely exemplifies the intentional in-existence of an object in the consciousness. For the time-object is an ideal factum and apparently most suitable for the theory of intentional in-existence as proposed by Brentano and Husserl. In comparison with ordinary, materially extended objects, the time-object proves to be an immaterial object; the real existence of a melody is difficult to prove because the secondary qualia - the sounds and the voices, which are obviously subjective qualia – are built solely on a pure primary qualia, namely the time. Accordingly, a merely temporal (but not a material) structure underlies the time-object. The immateriality of the time-object contributes significantly to its consciousness-immanence. Precisely through this immateriality, the reality of the time-object – like a melody – can be easily excluded in the context of phenomenology in comparison with the material objects and can therefore be regarded as an object existing in the consciousness.

However, the appropriateness of a time-object with regard to its consciousness-immanence points to some fundamental problems in the phenomenological notion of the intentional in-existence of objects. The immateriality of the time-object appears to produce a certain aporia of the time-object in which, in reality, the existence of that object can neither merely be excluded nor be reduced to a consciousness-immanence. The aporias of time, as observed by Paul Ricœur in the context of phenomenology, clearly apply to the time-objects in general. Especially the first aporia – relating to the enigmatic synthesis between the static and dynamic conceptions of time – seems to contradict the prevailing transcendental consciousness-immanence of time:

„Die erste von Ricœur behauptete Aporie der Zeit besteht darin, dass eine phänomenologische, subjektive, im heideggerschen Sinne ursprüngliche Zeit und eine kosmologische, objektive, weltliche Zeit nicht auseinander ableitbar, sondern einander wesentlich heterogen sind, einander tendenziell verdecken, dabei aber dennoch eine wechselseitige Abhängigkeit zeigen, die sich allerdings nicht unter einen spekulativen Begriff fassen lässt. (...) Die These von der philosophischen Unvermeidlichkeit der ersten Aporie der Zeit entwickelt Ricœur zunächst anhand einer Gegenüberstellung der augustianischen Zeit der Seele und der aristotelischen Zeit der Bewegung. Sein Ergebnis besteht darin, dass weder die *distentio* der Seele die Extension der Zeit hervorbringen könne, noch sei die Dynamik der Bewegung dazu in der Lage, die Dialektik der dreifachen Gegenwart zu erzeugen.“<sup>8</sup>

Since this aporia of time cannot be solved on the basis of our rational understanding, it should be identified in its objective existence, according to the Aristotelian principle

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<sup>8</sup> Römer, Inga, *Das Zeitdenken bei Husserl, Heidegger und Ricœur*, Springer Verlag, Heidelberg 2010, p. 254-255.

Trans. by author: “The first aporia of time, observed by Ricœur, is that a phenomenological, subjective, in the Heideggerian sense original time and a cosmological, objective, worldly time are not mutually deducible, but essentially heterogeneous and tend to conceal each other, still maintaining a mutual dependence which, however, can not be summarized under a speculative term. (...) The theory of the philosophical inevitability of the first aporia of time is developed by Ricœur on the basis of a contrasting juxtaposition of the Augustinian time of the soul and the Aristotelian time of the movement. Its outcome is that neither the *distentio* of the soul can produce the extension of time, nor the dynamics of motion is able to produce the dialectic of the threefold present.”

of aporia.<sup>9</sup> This points to or even proves the autonomy of time and time-objects in comparison to their merely transcendental conceivability or phenomenological-noetic constructability. The existential autonomy of time and time-object would invalidate the phenomenological claim to a noetic construction of the noema (which here is the in-existing time-object itself) and, consequently, the referential access of consciousness to noema and that of noema to the object (that is excluded in the context of Phenomenology), as a result of which the time-object, which is admitted in the consciousness, dictates to the consciousness its temporality. Husserl's observation, *perception of duration presupposes the duration of perception*, clearly suggests a reversal of the epistemological as well as phenomenological referentiality. Römer explains how objective time, which Husserl tries in vain to reduce to an appearance of time, constitutes "a secret presupposition of his analysis," and how it can hardly be excluded as such in the context of phenomenology:

„Ricoeur ist der Auffassung, dass Husserls Versuch, die objektive Zeit auf ein reines Erscheinen der Zeit zu reduzieren, deshalb misslingen müsse, weil Husserl nicht umhin könne, immer schon Anleihen bei einer objektiven Zeit zu machen. Die objektive Zeit sei eine heimliche Voraussetzung seiner Analysen, obgleich deren offizielles Ziel laute, die objektive Zeit voraussetzungslos aus einem reinen Erscheinen der Zeit zu gewinnen. Diese These, dass Husserl unberechtigterweise das voraussetze, was erst phänomenologisch konstituiert werden soll, begründet Ricoeur in mehrfacher Weise. Er sieht in den Bestimmungen zwischen dem Bewusstseinsverlauf und dem Verlauf der objektiven Zeit diverse Homonymien auftauchen, die ihn vermuten lassen, dass „die Analyse der immanenten Zeit [sich] ohne wiederholte Anleihen bei der ausgeschalteten objektiven Zeit nicht konstituieren könnte“. Dass diese Homonymien kein Zufall sind, zeige sich darin, dass eine Besinnung auf das Erscheinen der Zeit als Erlebnis zum Schweigen verurteilt wäre, wenn sie sich nicht auf den „Gegenhalt eines wahrgenommenen Etwas“ stützen könnte, das in Husserls Analysen durch das Zeitobjekt *ton* geliefert wird.“<sup>10</sup>

Husserl's solution to the aporia of time, which necessarily appears in the synthesis between the *enduring* flow of consciousness and the objective dynamics of the time-

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<sup>9</sup> „Die ursprünglichen Vorstellungen von Aporie in der Philosophie von Platon und Aristoteles deuten auf jene Grenzerfahrung im Denken, also auf die Ausweglosigkeit im Denkprozess, in dem man vor allem nach einer Lösung sucht. Allerdings weist Aristoteles darauf hin, dass die Ausweglosigkeit im Denken weiterhin auf das Aporetische an der Sache bzw. an dem Objekt des Denkens zurückzuführen ist: »Wer einen guten Weg finden will, für den ist es förderlich, die Ausweglosigkeit gründlich durchgehalten zu haben. Denn der spätere Weg ist die Lösung dessen, worin man zuvor keinen Weg hatte. Man kann nicht lösen, wenn man den Knoten nicht kennt. Wenn man aber im Denken keinen Weg hat, dann zeigt das diesen Knoten in der Sache an.« (Aristoteles, Met. B 1, 995 a24–b4)“ Vgl. Jacobi, Klaus: Kann die Erste Philosophie wissenschaftlich betrieben werden? Untersuchungen zum Aporienbuch der aristotelischen »Metaphysik«, in *Metaphysisches Fragen. Colloquium über die Grundform des Philosophierens*, hrsg. von Paulus Engelhardt und Claudius Strube, Böhlau Verlag, Collegium Hermeneuticum, Bd. 12, Köln – Weimar – Wien 2008, p. 31ff.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, p. 256.

Trans. by author: "Ricoeur is of the opinion that Husserl's attempt to reduce objective time to a mere appearance of time must fail because Husserl can not help but always borrow from an objective time. Objective time is a secret presupposition of his analysis, although its official goal is to gain objective time without presuppositions from a mere appearance of time. This thesis, that Husserl unjustifiably presupposes what is to be first constituted phenomenologically, is justified by Ricoeur in several ways. He sees in the determinations between the course of consciousness and the course of objective time various homonyms appear, which let him assume that "*the analysis of immanent time [could] not be constituted without repeated borrowings at the turned off or disabled (ausgeschaltet) objective time*". That these homonyms are no coincidence is shown by the fact that a reflection on the appearance of time as an experience would be condemned to silence if it could not be based on the "counterpart of a perceived something", which, in Husserl's analysis is provided by the temporal object *ton*."

object in its givenness, was the idea of a consciousness-immanent extension of the time-object into retention, primal impression (Urimpression) and protention. Husserl regards the extension of the time-object in the time-consciousness in the form of retention and protention as acts of consciousness or noetic acts. His attempt to derive objective time solely from the inner consciousness of time is always prevented by the emergence of a secret presupposition of objective time, as Ricœur observes. In doing so, Ricœur refers to a "autosufficient evidence-consciousness of duration" which "can dispense with any evidence of a perceptual consciousness":

„Jedesmal“, so Ricœur, „wenn man versucht, die objektive Zeit aus dem inneren Zeitbewusstsein abzuleiten (*dérivée*), kehrt das Prioritätsverhältnis sich um“. Im Zusammenhang mit Husserls Versuch der Selbstkonstitution des Bewusstseinsflusses trete diese heimliche Voraussetzung der objektiven Zeit abermals auf. In Husserls Änderung der Blickrichtung von den Zeitobjekten weg und zum Fluss selbst hin erkennt Ricœur keinen grundsätzlichen Fortschritt gegenüber der Analyse der Zeitobjekte und fragt sich, ob ein „autosuffizientes Evidenzbewußtsein der Dauer denkbar“ sei, „das jeder Evidenz eines *Wahrnehmungsbewußtseins* entraten kann?“<sup>11</sup>

"The autosufficient evidence-consciousness" ultimately signals a clear failure in the constitution of the (perfect) consciousness-immanence of time objects and their pure noetic construction. The retention or retentional extension of a time object, such as a melody, as proposed by Husserl, offers only an apparent solution to the problematic synthesis between the incongruent modes of time, namely the stasis of duration and the dynamics of motion. The persistence of time in retention, which presupposes this synthesis, again suggests an *aporia* of time.

### **The *auto-sufficient* temporality of time-object<sup>12</sup>**

Philosophies of time – until Kant – appear to strategically separate time from time-objects. This can be inferred from various references to the special ontological status that Aristotle, Descartes, Kant and others had attributed to time – as opposed to objects in time. Brentano seems to oppose such ontological segregation of time from objects. Thus, the time-object undoubtedly formed a revolutionary idea in the history of time philosophies. Just as revolutionary was the admission of the time-object in consciousness, as a result of which the time-object is subjected to an intentional inexistence in consciousness. Husserl worked on this idea of Brentano and extended the intentional existence of the object in its temporal extension in retention, original impression (Urimpression) and protention. However, Husserl assumes almost

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<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, p. 257.

Trans. by author: "Every time," says Ricœur, "when one tries to derive the objective time from the inner time-consciousness (*dérivée*), the priority-relation is reversed". In the context of Husserl's attempt at the self-constitution of the flow of consciousness, this secret assumption of *objective time* emerges again. In Husserl's change of perspective from time-objects to the flow of consciousness, Ricœur sees no fundamental progress against the analysis of time-objects of time and wonders whether an "autosufficient evidence-consciousness of duration is thinkable" that can dispense with any evidence of perceptual consciousness? "

<sup>12</sup> The following part of the investigation is an excerpt – with a few changes and modifications – from my essay „The aporicity of the present“, which is a revision of my lecture on *The aporicity of the present. On Ricœur's thinking on time and its aporias*, given at an international conference on *The Present of the Day*, organized by the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Delhi in collaboration with Institut Français, Delhi (January 21-23, 2018). Ref.: <http://hss.iitd.ac.in/news/present-day>. This treatise has been published as pre-print in academia.edu. Ref.: [https://www.academia.edu/36399143/The\\_aporicity\\_of\\_the\\_present](https://www.academia.edu/36399143/The_aporicity_of_the_present)

dogmatically that it is ultimately the time-object, which – in the noesis – constitutes objective time and therefore the time-object (here the melody). Melody as an intentionally in-existing time-object forms the noema, which the noetic acts of consciousness alone can produce.

The aporias of time (as emphasized by Ricoeur), from which phenomenology can hardly dissociate, clearly point to a failure of this order and hierarchy of the noetic-noematic structure of consciousness. Husserl's phenomenology is based on this. The aporia of the coincidence between flow and staticity has the original contradiction between the statics and dynamics as a base phenomenon. The staticity of a dynamic phenomenon is obviously a static endurance of a dynamic now-point (*Jetztpunkt*) in the time phenomenon. But this aporia arises precisely in the admission of a time-object, which has its own temporality, in the consciousness that always flows. Starting from this aporia of the present, one can say that the time-object admitted in the consciousness no longer submits to the flow of a noetically functioning temporal consciousness. Instead, intentional consciousness seems to focus on an autonomous or, in Ricoeur's terminology, an *auto-sufficient* temporality of the time-object. This would significantly deconstruct the prevailing notion of noesis in phenomenology, and thereby reverse the hierarchical order of the primacy of noesis over noema, which is clearly indicated in Ricoeur's consideration, namely, the reversal of the priority relationship.

When the auto-sufficient temporality of the time-object admitted in the consciousness gets in the way of the noetic constitution of the time-phenomenon, it will be the time-object itself – in all its existential autonomy – that dictates the consciousness its temporal flow. Here, the time-object resembles an unmanageable guest who is invited by the consciousness to his transcendental household. Husserl tacitly owed his conviction of the noetic constitution of a time-object to a prevailing and unavoidable transcendentalism.

The invalidation or reversal of the phenomenologically determined primacy of noesis over noema, which can only be accomplished by the time-object admitted in the consciousness, could have several consequences for the phenomenology of inner time consciousness. The inversion of the noetic-noematic structure necessarily implies a reversal of certain fundamental aspects of the process of perception, especially in the case of a time-object. Both the Kantian transcendental philosophy as well as the Husserlian transcendental phenomenology is based on a common principle of the *direction* of perception from a transcendental subject or consciousness to an object. Conversely, if the time-object dictates its temporal course in its intentional in-existence, it can invalidate the prevailing phenomenological assumption of the noetic constitution of noema. In my opinion, this has been established in Husserl's conception of retention and reflexion or presentification (*Vergegenwärtigung*) as primary and secondary memory.

Retention as primary memory forms a consciousness-phenomenon in the immediate perception of a time-object, such as a melody. On the other hand, according to Husserl, the presentification (*Vergegenwärtigung*) of a time-object can be described as its secondary memory. In the immediate auditory perception of a melody, the retentional persistence of each past tone – which sinks back and shades off – emerges strictly speaking not from a specific referent. The retention of a time-object in consciousness,

which Husserl develops from Brentano's conception of the original association, is not supported by the givenness of a melody, for in the retentional expansion of a time-object in consciousness the melody does not exist as a concrete object. The elapsed original impression of the melody *now* has a retentional existence in consciousness, which sinks back to nothingness. The protentional expansion of the time-object is in a similar way related to its now-point in immediate perception or presence.

The retentional and protentional extension of a time-object have – according to Husserl's phenomenology of inner time consciousness – no real presence, but only an intentional in-existence in consciousness, whereby the in-existence of the protention in consciousness – in comparison to that of retention – seems to be a problematic assumption. However, the problem of the real presence – or the problem of the absence of retentional and protentional extension of a melody in its immediate presence or givenness – should not exist in its presentification in memory. For in the memory, an already heard melody should exist in its retentional and protentional extension. In other words, in its secondary memory, the retention, the original impression (*Urimpression*) and protention of a time-object are real *presences* that already exist in the consciousness. If we are aware of both the past of retention and the future of protention, then the retentional and protentional extension of a time-object in our consciousness should not be an unreal, but a real presence.

However, when we recall a melody in our memory, we recognize that we are experiencing the rhythm or temporal sequence of the melody more or less unchanged – like in the first hearing of the melody. Once again, we get the impression that the melody also expands retentionally and protentionally when it is remembered, and as such it proves to be almost the same as its very first auditory perception. That is to say, we have almost the same experience that the melody, in its recollection or presentification, is again given to us as original impressions that extend retentionally and protentionally. However, the sounds in our consciousness cannot be compared with that in immediate auditory perception; we are able to remember only shadowed tones and voices, almost like the faded colours. But the rhythm of the melody – its temporal structure – seems to be intact and is reproduced as such. Since the retention and protention are fundamentally based on the time structure of the melody, we experience the retentional and protentional extension of this time-object both in its immediate perception as well as in its presentification in memory unchanged.

We could imagine the following three cases here:

1. We listen to a melody for the first time.
2. We listen to the same melody several times.
3. We try to remember the melody.

In the first case, we rely only on the mere givenness of the melody as a time-object. Both the retentional and the protentional extension of this time-object is in this case a fresh experience. In the second case we already have the melody in our memory. We are aware of the tones, the voices and above all the rhythm – the temporal sequence – of the melody. This awareness should accompany us while listening to the melody several times. Especially we are aware of the protention of a melody or a song – i.e.

what comes successively to us. Our direct perception of the retentional and protentional extension of a melody – in contrast to the first case – does not have the status of a fresh experience. Moreover, the non-existence of retention and protention in reality, which is presupposed in the first case of the immediate perception of a melody, is not valid in the second case, i.e. in the repeated listening to the melody. For the original impressions (*Urimpressionen*), the always passing (retention) and the coming (protention) of a melody are already present as memories in the consciousness. Therefore, in principle, we cannot assume a retentional persistence and a protentional arrival of a melody during their repeated hearings. The third case most clearly illustrates this fact. Here we do not directly hear the melody, but it is merely realized in consciousness as a secondary memory. The retentional and protentional extension of a melody should in principle be hardly relevant for this realization, because the time-object is *present* in its entirety in the consciousness.

However, in all these cases we have more or less the same experience of the rhythm of the melody. Both in the repeated hearing and in the mere presentification of the melody in memory, we realize that this time-object extends in retention and protention almost like its very first immediate perception. I.e., in all these cases we have only an original impression in the *present*, which extends retentionally and protentionally. Neither the accompaniment of memory – or remembered retentions and protentions – in the second case nor the presence of all retentions and protentions in consciousness, as the third case requires, can influence this experience and thus shape it differently. With regard to the third case, one can ask whether consciousness *consciously* remembers or reproduces the time-object – the melody – or does the melody unfold itself within us in a clear autonomy of its temporality? When we remember a piano concert by Beethoven or a song by Lata Mangeshkar, do we actually play the piece of music or sing the song in our consciousness? This case seems very unlikely, because most of us do not have the extraordinary ability of musicality. In fact, as we recollect or recall the instrumental music or song, we hear Beethoven's music play *itself* or the song of Lata Mangeshkar sings *itself* in our consciousness. The melody or the song as a time-object seems to preserve its original temporal autonomy here in its intentional in-existence in consciousness. It is not consciousness that merely reproduces a time-object in memorization, but the time-object unfolds itself in consciousness in all its existential autonomy, dictating to consciousness its own autonomous rhythm.

Here we see how the temporality of a time-object – such as a melody or a song – passes unchanged from a real, objective givenness into memory, and thus serves as the basis for the existence of the time-object in consciousness. The existential autonomy of a time-object against every noetic act of consciousness is clearly evident. The temporal structure of a time-object – that constitutes its temporal rhythm – seems to be the irreducible and indestructible skeleton of the time-object, which remains intact from the real givenness of the time object until its intentional in-existence in consciousness. The tones and the voice as secondary qualia clearly form the perishable and transitory flesh extending on the skeleton of temporality. Therefore, when we recall or remember a melody, we experience its skeleton of rhythm, that remains intact, and at the same time the *shadowy* tones and voices. However, such an autonomy of time-object has hardly been recognized within Husserl's phenomenology. The retentional and protentional extension of a time-object

in its immediate auditory perception is, according to Husserl, an accomplishment of the consciousness. Likewise, the presentification of a time-object in consciousness is basically a noetic act. Here the time-object is subject to a fundamental noesis-noema-structure of phenomenological reduction, both in its mere reception as an auditory perception and in its recollection or presentification as a secondary memory. As against this, the external and merely given time-object is excluded (*ausgeklammert*). Phenomenology presupposes that a time-object is merely given as an original impression (*Urimpression*) in a punctiform now; their retentive and protentive extension should, therefore, necessarily result from noetic acts of consciousness.

### **The problem of referentiality**

We have seen that it is not the noetic reproduction that allows consciousness to remember or presentify a time-object – such as a melody – but the existential autonomy of the time-object that unfolds or, in a sense, *presentify itself*. While slowing down the tape in a tape recorder or the disk in a turntable by some defects of the apparatus or by the low voltage, we hear the slowing or dragging of the melody or voices. But any attempt to recall or presentify a melody or a song in our memory, while consciously slowing it, will fail. In doing so, we learn that the melody or the voices are resisting our conscious slowing down in the process of presentification in our memory. We also learn that the tonality of the melody, or the voice of the singer, though shadowed in memory as mere secondary qualia, cannot simply be replaced by a different tonality in the recollection or presentification. Both these memory-experiences clearly prove the existential autonomy of a time-object – in its immediately given presence as well as in its in-existence in the consciousness – that cannot be subjugated within the framework of a phenomenology of noesis.

If the consciousness cannot merely reproduce the existence of a time-object noetically, and if instead the time-object unfolds itself in its presentification, dictating thereby to the consciousness the temporal sequence or the rhythm of the object, the prevailing phenomenological hierarchisation *noesis-noema-hyle-object* is to be reversed. Above all, the noesis-noema structure is reversed here, whereby the noema seems to attain an existential primacy over the noesis. The existential primacy of the time-object also implies that noesis has no merely generating, but rather a supporting function towards noema. In other words; the noema is not just produced noetically here, but the noesis primarily supports the existential autonomy of noema. However, this autonomy can still be traced back to the *hyle*, which lies – in the context of Husserl's phenomenology – at a deeper level of consciousness, and furthermore to purely objective phenomenon or to the mere present of the (given) time-object beyond the consciousness. This points ultimately to a referential reversal of the prevalent structure, namely *the (given and phenomenologically excluded) time-object – hyletic data – noema – noesis*. The original reference is then no longer the noesis, but the immediately given presence of the time-object itself – on a purely objective level. What consequences could such a referential reversal have in the context of phenomenology? One of the important results of this referential reversal would be: we regain the *presence* of the time-object, though it still seems aporetic to us. The following points could explain the apority of this recovered presence of the time phenomenon and its significance:

1. By assuming the existential autonomy of the time-object, the prevailing



transcendental phenomenology will clearly succumb to a structural and referential reversal. The direct admission of the time-object in consciousness has the consequence that it no longer needs a generating function of the noesis; instead, the temporal object dictates to the consciousness its temporality both in its immediate presence and in its presentification in secondary memory. The noesis or the noetic acts of consciousness now support the existential autonomy of the noema rather than merely producing it, as it is assumed in traditional phenomenology. However, in this case, the intentional in-existence of the time-object can ultimately derive its existential autonomy from the givenness or from the original presence of the time-object. This points to a shift in the epistemological accentuation from the noesis to the actual presence of the time-object in reality. The referential shift and reversal of the prevailing *noesis-noema-relation* should finally overcome the consciousness-immanence of the time-object – in its intentional in-existence – or transcend the boundaries of consciousness in order to reach the *present* of the time-object. A necessary consequence of such epistemological-referential regression would be a process which, in the phenomenology, opposes the tacitly assumed exclusion of the real objects; this process thus would be the *inclusion* of objects (here: the time object), which were excluded and as such marginalized within the framework of phenomenology. Through this necessary inclusion of the *presence* of the time-object, the object reappears as a *referent*, which alone can determine and safeguard the previously discussed existential autonomy of the time-object, both in its immediate presence and in its intentional in-existence. The fact that the temporality of a time-object – like a melody – ultimately builds on this objective reference also means that the mere temporal structure of the time-object passes over unaltered – like a skeleton – from the immediate presence and externality into the consciousness of an intentional in-existence.

2. The fact that the time-object in its existential autonomy dictates the consciousness (its) temporal *flow* inevitably leads to the assumption that the retentive and protentive extension of the time-object is not merely generated noetically, but rather determined by the time-object itself – and indeed in its immediate givenness. In other words, the existential autonomy of the time-object seems to include not only a punctiform *Urimpression*, but also its retentive and protentive extension, without the consciousness needing to participate in it noetically. The *factum* of noesis in the retention of the time-object and its sinking back and shadowing in the consciousness are not to be doubted here; still the phenomenological claim to reduce these qualities merely to noetic acts of consciousness appears to be inconsistent from the outset, especially when we consider the autonomous unfolding of the time-object discussed above in its presentification in secondary memory. But if we originally ascribe the retentive and protentive extension to the time-object itself, we are inevitably confronted with an aporia, namely the aporia of the mere presence or the *now* of the time-object, which in principle causes only a punctiform *Urimpression* in the consciousness. The aporiticity of the presence of the time-object is here quite analogous to that of a geometrical point; it is analogous to the real existence of a punctiform *now* of a time-object – like a melody – in more or less the same way of the aporia of the real existence of a geometrical point. Paradoxically, the axiomatic point (which has no extension)

cannot determine the actual objectification of the point; Similarly, the real existence of a merely punctiform presence of a time-object cannot be imagined. In both these cases, the clear influence of the mathematical formalism on the modes of thinking and imagination of philosophers and scientists can hardly be overlooked. As Cusanus already noted in the Middle Ages and was later reiterated by some philosophers like Hobbes in the early modern age, an axiomatic point cannot exist *in reality*. For the actual existence of a point presupposes its spatial extension, which contradicts the axiomatic conception of the point as unextended. Likewise, a merely punctual presence of a time-object in reality cannot exist; this presence of a time-object should necessarily have a temporal extension. The spatial extension of a real point forms a clear analogy to the real extension of the punctual presence of a time-object. Both are but aporias that elude our imagination. We could still visualize the spatial extension of a point and the temporal extension of a time-object by incorporating the fact of the infinitesimals and their gradation towards a limit in representing these aporias. A point would then be the limit, more precisely, the limit of a centripetal gradation or intensification of an infinitesimal extension. The unextended point can only be imagined in reality as a limit of gradation; an isolated extension of this limit cannot be thought of. Likewise, the real extension of a punctual now of a time-object as a limit of an infinitesimal expansion of the time-object in retention and protention can be imagined in time. Here the limit arises clearly in the juncture between protentional and retentional extension of a time-object, in which, however, the protention alone tends towards a punctual limit, whereas the retentional extension of the punctual *Urimpression* represents a tendency to move away from the limit of the mere presence of the time-object into infinity, resulting in a gradual sinking and shadowing of retention.

This reality of the time-object is clearly based on a *real* time structure (which constitutes the temporality of the time-object), which, as we have previously discussed, remains unchanged from its mere givenness to its existence in the memory. The real extension of a time-object therefore has a constant or imperishable temporality that has its origin in the factum of the object itself. That the time-object in its presentification in secondary memory preserves the constancy and autonomy of temporality, as represented in its retentional and protentional extension, can be traced back to the factum of the *real* time-object itself. That is to say, we hear a time-object such as a melody in retentional and protentional extension, not because the retention and protention of the time-object is merely generated noetically by the consciousness, but because the time-object itself is given in a *real* retentional and protentional extension. Likewise, we are able to presentify a temporal object in our secondary memory in the same retentional and protentional extension, because the time-object, in its in-existence in consciousness, preserves its *original* temporal structure, as *given* in the reality. This autonomy of the temporal structure of a time-object ultimately lies in the fact that time, like space, forms an irreducible, immutable and indestructible skeleton of the reality of a time-object. Similarly, the autonomy of the temporal structure, which opposes hegemony of noesis in the context of phenomenology, points to a necessary referential regression back to the excluded time-object in reality, as previously discussed. The time-object in

its real existence and givenness becomes the *true referent*, to which both the immediate temporal perception and the consciousness-immanence of the time-object can be traced back. This referential access to the real time-object necessarily implies the bridging between consciousness and reality, to which the phenomenology of time and temporal consciousness seems to point closely. In his phenomenology, Husserl emphasizes a hyletic stratum in consciousness that is deeper than noema and, as such, is not subject to phenomenological reduction. This hyletic stratum builds – according to Husserl – on the mere sensory data, such as colour, sound, taste or pain, which has a primordial existence in consciousness. By surviving the phenomenological reduction in the deepest stratum of consciousness, the hyletic data, according to Husserl, forms an interface between consciousness and reality.

3. The above-discussed reversal of referentiality, which the Husserlian phenomenology itself achieves through the assumption of the intentional in-existence of an object in consciousness, can be traced back to the methodological step of admitting objects in the consciousness, as represented in the philosophical propaedeutic of Brentano and Husserl. The admission of objects in the consciousness – as intentionally in-existing objects – has its price. Neither the noesis – the act of consciousness – nor the concept of noema can adequately explain the constitution of the in-existing objects in the consciousness (or consciousness-immanence of objects). The problem of referentiality inevitably arises here. The noesis should necessarily refer to a noema and this further refers to an object that seems to be beyond the domain of subjective consciousness. In his treatise *The phenomenological dimension*, Jaakko Hintikka discusses the problematic relationship between noemata and object in Husserl's phenomenology:

The most important reduction Husserl deals with is the transcendental reduction, which can be described by saying that in it one's belief in factual existence is „bracketed“ and one's attention is directed, is fixed „on the sphere of consciousness“ and in which we „study what is immanent in it (*Ideas I*, § 33). (...) From the viewpoint of a self-sufficient intentionality, the only reasonable sense one can make of these reductions is to aver that what is „bracketed“ in them is the very reality which can be intended by means of the vehicles of intentionality. A phenomenologist's entire attention is on this view concentrated on noemata or whatever meaning bearers we are considering.

This way of looking at the phenomenological reductions is mistaken, I shall argue. The main difficulty with an account of phenomenological reductions which sees in them a method of concentrating one's attention exclusively on noemata is that far too much will then end up being bracketed. Such an exclusive concentration inevitably brackets, not merely objects, but the relation of noemata to objects. (...) It is sometimes said that phenomenology is the study of acts and of their noemata. It is not; it also includes the study of the relation of noemata to their objects.<sup>13</sup>

According to Hintikka, in Husserl's phenomenological-strategic undertaking to exclude objects that exist independently of consciousness, a certain failure is signalled, which is manifested above all in his acknowledgement of a residual and non-intentional hyletic data (which survives all phenomenological

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<sup>13</sup> Hintikka, Jaakko: *The phenomenological dimension*, in: *Cambridge Companion to Husserl*, Cambridge, 1995, p. 79-80, 87.

reductions) in consciousness. Husserl calls such a hyletic data in consciousness a phenomenological residuum. Here Hintikka refers to a paradox in Husserl's idea of the hyletic raw material, which is noetically modulated into objects. Hintikka asks: How can such a noetic-constitutive processes be legitimized within the framework of phenomenology, if the object of this constitution itself is excluded from the phenomenological considerations?

Husserl claims that what is immediately and primarily given to us in sensory awareness is unarticulated raw materials, hyle, which our noeses structure into objects, their properties and interrelations, etc. (The process of such structuring is precisely what Husserl means by his term noesis). But how can we even hope to be able to find out about such constitutive processes, if their input is by definition unavailable to phenomenological reflection?<sup>14</sup>

The hyletic datum, that survives all phenomenological reductions, should therefore necessarily become a residual objective factum in the consciousness that forms an "interface" or "overlap" between the consciousness and reality:

It is important to realize what is involved in the Husserlian quest of the immediately given and why it cannot be accommodated by any dichotomy between our consciousness (prominently including its intentional acts) and the intended objects. The idea that something about the actual world is immediately given to me implies that any such sharp dichotomy has to break down. What is immediately given to me will then at the same time be part of the mind-independent reality and an element of my consciousness. There has to be an actual interface or overlap of my consciousness and reality. This is the basic reason why any sharp contrast between the realm of noemata and the world of mind-independent realities ultimately has to be loosened up in Husserl.<sup>15</sup>

Admitting the hyletic datum in consciousness could radically reverse the directional processuality in consciousness from noesis to noema. For the hyletic data being a bridge or common wall between consciousness and reality here seems to rehabilitate the real objects that the phenomenology strategically excludes. Thus, the noetic acts, constituting the noematic in consciousness, seem to be surpassed in consciousness by the direct penetration of reality. Hintikka refers to this necessary reversal, which Husserlian phenomenology presupposes precisely in its emphasis and preference for a directly lived experience:

What a phenomenologist like Husserl maintains is that everything must be based on, and traced back to, what is given to me in my direct experience. It is not a part of this position that what is so given to me are mere phenomena. On the contrary, the overall phenomenological project would make little sense unless the phenomenological reductions led us closer to actual realities. In order to exercise this mistake it is crucially important to emphasize that, according to Husserl, there is an actual interface of my consciousness and reality, that reality in fact impinges directly on my consciousness.<sup>16</sup>

The hyletic data are sensory data, which are necessarily based on the spatial and temporal structures. That is to say, hyletic data form a composition between the spatio-temporal structures as primary qualia and the secondary qualia such as colour, sounds, taste, smell, pain, etc. The residual existence or persistence of hyletic datum in consciousness, which – as Hintikka emphasizes

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<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, p. 83.

– is not subject to phenomenological reduction and thus forms an interface between consciousness and reality, can therefore be deconstructed in primary and secondary qualia (a distinction that John Locke makes in his theoretical discourse in philosophy). Considering the fact that solely the perceiving subject produces the secondary qualia, we could once again separate the factum of subject from the hyletic data, so that only the spatial and temporal structures remain. From this, we can conclude that ultimately it is the phenomenologically irreducible spatial and temporal structures that bridge the gap between consciousness and reality. The reality of this interface of primary qualia, which is opposed to the Kantian-transcendental reduction of space and time solely to *a priori* forms, clearly points to the real or existential irreducibility and persistence of space and time – as the skeleton of reality itself – both in their given presence as well as in their consciousness-immanence. The interface between consciousness and reality, as presupposed by phenomenology, also points to an extension of the noematic reference beyond the hyletic data to the real objects themselves (as Hintikka emphasizes). Such an extension of the phenomenological and perceptual-theoretical reference, which transcends the domain of the perceiving subject and reaches the sphere of objects, clearly implies the necessary inclusion of the phenomenologically excluded objects. The spatial and temporal structures owe their irreducible and indestructible existence and transitory nature primarily to the objects and their immediate presence. The included real objects become not only the primary references, but also the true initiator of referentiality, in which they determine the consciousness-immanence of the spatial and temporal structures of the objects, or rather dictate to the consciousness the spatiality and temporality of the in-existing objects.

The admission of objects – especially a time object – in the consciousness clearly marked the point of departure of phenomenology from a prevailing Kantian transcendentalism. As we have seen, the admission of a time-object in the consciousness ultimately leads to the reversal of epistemological referentiality even within a phenomenological structure of *Noesis-Noema-Hyle-(bzw. hyletic data)-Object*. Consequently, the referentiality shifts from noetic constructability to *objectively given* reality; the consciousness should *refer* to real objects. This will contradict the phenomenological conception of the exclusion (*Ausklammerung*) of real objects, resulting into the inclusion of objects as *referents* in the process of consciousness. However, this phenomenological inclusion of real objects, that follows from our investigation, does not overcome the aporia of the spatial and temporal existence of the objects; instead, the apority of their *presence* is again intensified. For the inclusion of real objects (which exist independent of consciousness) in the subjective perception of the external world would mean the immeasurable expansion of the domain of the subject itself. The real objects consist not only of material bodies, but also of the non-corporeal free space. This implies that the inclusion of external objects in the perception ultimately means direct involvement of the entire environment in the consciousness. However, the notion that the pre-logical and purely aesthetic subject *in reality* extends in the body and in the external i.e. extra-bodily environment eludes our rationality, which has been trained by the prevailing transcendentalism for a long time. The hyletic interface between consciousness and reality, which Husserlian phenomenology tacitly implies, significantly expands the

horizon of the prevailing modern epistemology, so that our perception of the world is no longer merely a priori conditioned, but emanates from the real existence of the world of objects. Here the consciousness-immanence of the world coincides with its consciousness-transcendence. This solves one of the long-standing epistemological aporias in the history of philosophy, namely the aporia of the sufficient *referential access* of the perceiving subject to the (perceived) object, in that the object itself is directly involved as the true referent in the perception. The price we pay for such a solution would be the assumption that there is an original unity between the domain of the subject and that of the object or the environment, which again appears aporetic to us. The irreducibility, indestructibility, and transitory nature of the spatio-temporal structure of reality form the basis of this aporia.

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