

# Patočka and the critique of Husserlian time consciousness

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## INTRODUCTION

The theme of temporality in Patočka's thought can be developed in different directions and with different intonations based on which texts are taken as the point of departure. Yet the subject is undoubtedly important since temporality characterizes our way of being in the world : while abstract objects are characterized by timelessness, our objective realities are always inserted in a measurable time. The continuity of time is a law of Being of reality. For this reason, perception of a temporal object involves temporality itself ; that which exists as an individual object cannot exist in a discontinuous temporal form. Moreover, human life takes place on different temporal levels. With reference to this point, in a 1967 essay entitled *The Natural World and Phenomenology*, Patočka analyses temporality through three synchronous structures : the structure of the inner and outer horizon of man, the structure of orientation in spatiality, and the structure of otherness. To clarify being's way of being, therefore, we must always clarify its proper temporal character. Time is a fundamental component of the being of man and things : without it, « neither the being of particulars in the world nor our clarity concerning the existent, our comprehension, our comprehending behavior and action, and, finally, knowledge would be possible » (Patočka J., 2016b, p. 116).

Temporality can also be analysed as the foundation of the world, because the world always gives itself as a space-time horizon (Patočka J., 1996, p. 16-17). Patočka states that, « time as future is the essence of the world — Being as totality of possibilities that happen to us, which opens our situation and, with it, it opens also other things » (Patočka J., 1972, p. 2.16.9)<sup>1</sup>. The world gives itself to us as a field of possibilities.

<sup>1</sup> « Zeit als Zu-kunft ist das Wesen der Welt — Sein als auf-unszukommendes Möglichkeitsganzes, welches unsere *Situation* erschließt und darin die anderen Dinge ». Original in German. All translations from German to English are mine. Translations from Czech to English are based on the official French and German versions of the text and were verified by Professor Jan Frei (JPA of Prague), to whom I am especially grateful.

For Patočka these possibilities are not — as in Husserl — traced back to the past through protention and the field of the pre-given. On the contrary, Patočka roots them in an a-subjective worldly foundation, thus maintaining the radical unavailability of the future. Considering temporality starting from the idea of the future is important to note because, in Patočka's last works, it becomes related to the phenomenological philosophy of history, the future of Europe, and global civilization. Since even Patočka's late thought remains connected to his philosophical system (Novotný K., 2007, p. 106), in this paper I focus on the theoretical points of departure for Patočka's reflection on temporality as he begins to move away from Husserl through analysis of internal time consciousness.

I will proceed in three steps. First I will deal with the centrality of temporality to the foundation of Patočka's a-subjective phenomenology. Then, in the second part of the paper, I will outline how Patočka distances himself theoretically from Husserl by developing four arguments : 1) the foundation as inaccessible and without objectification ; 2) a dark place in reflection ; 3) world order and time consciousness ; 4) temporality and world appearing. Finally, in the conclusion, I will identify three new theoretical acquisitions the Czech philosopher derives from his reappraisal of temporality as the common thread clarifying our relationship with the world.

## I. A DISTANCE FROM INTERNAL TIME CONSCIOUSNESS

The notion of the world is inextricably connected with time. It is always the world of a specific epoch that manifests itself to man. Expressing positions close to Husserl's, Patočka asserted this in his 1936 thesis :

The phenomenology of time is one of the most fundamental philosophical disciplines, if not the foundation of all phenomenology. The original flow of time is at the basis of all consciousness and, therefore, of all world-belief, of all theses. Yet we cannot say that transcendental consciousness is *in time*, understood as a homogeneous milieu of instants. Transcendental consciousness is *the flow of time*, it is time. Time is the incessant genesis of a manifold of phases. (Patočka J., 2016b, p. 68-69)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> In addition to in the 1905 lessons on the constitution of temporal objects (every object has its own way of being in time, its own temporalization), Patočka quotes Husserl several times in the *Zeitbewusstsein* (Husserl E., 1928).

Also echoing Husserl, Patočka writes : « creation is precisely time » in the sense that time is the condition of Being in general (Patočka J. 2016b, p. 69). Time is not a wordly process, but it has an ante-procedural character, i.e. time is the foundation of every worldly process, because it influences every process (but not statically). In the same text, the Czech philosopher goes on to say :

The world is not in time ; rather, time *is* the world. (Patočka J., 2016b, p. 77-78 – my italics)

In this formulation, which at first seems both concise and obscure, the world does not clearly refer to the physical world of objects (the sum of beings) but is understood in a phenomenological-transcendental sense<sup>3</sup>. Thus, the fundamental dimension of the world is original time, but it is impossible to explain this or any space if not on the basis of time. Or in other words, transcendental consciousness « becomes » time : at its genesis and across the variety of its phases, it is a process and « it pertains to the function of producing all being » (Patočka J., 2016b, p. 78)<sup>4</sup>. This means that time creates the horizon in which things become possible and appear. Moreover, if time *is* world, then world is not a closed totality but « a *structurally unstable* totality » (Costa V., 2009, p. 40)<sup>5</sup>, a *movement* in which possibilities are manifested. The world, therefore, « is not a simple static form but rather, in its most intrinsic essence, a *process* » (Patočka J., 2016b, p. 78). The world moreover cannot make itself present in an experience, because it is neither the sum of facts (as in positivism) nor of entities.

In this sense, temporality has an « asubjective » character, and the unity (*Einheit*) of time becomes the foundation of phenomenology (see Patočka J., 2000, p. 105). At the same time, Patočka distances himself from the reflective analysis constituted by internal time consciousness even before elaborating a conception of time distinct from the phenomenological tradition :

Time must be understood differently from 1. Kant, where it is a representation of imagination, a « pure image », a void ; 2. Husserl and Heidegger,

<sup>3</sup> The world, understood as a phenomenal aprioristic field of apparition, constitutes the condition of possibility for every experience.

<sup>4</sup> Although *The Natural World as a Philosophical Problem* turns to subjective evidence as its last form of evidence, it is linked from the beginning to the question of the world as a whole (see Costa V., 2009, p. 39, n. 64).

<sup>5</sup> « una totalità *strutturalmente instabile* ».

since even here time, particularly temporality, is *the subjective* element that unifies through anticipation and retention, through the modes of temporalization proper to the dimensions of temporality. (Patočka J., 2000, p. 105)<sup>6</sup>

Phenomenology can no longer be based on an allegedly absolute foundation located in the subject ; rather, « it is necessary to present on a new *asubjective* foundation, that is, on the basis of time and its clarification etc. [...] a new theory of *human* experience, that experience which belongs to the connection of this original clarification » (Patočka J., 2016, p. 271)<sup>7</sup>. As Vincenzo Costa has shown, on this point « Patočka indicates *the need to move from the transcendental plane to the ontological-transcendental plane* : temporality, deferring, is not a way of being of the subject, nor of *Dasein*, but *the general law of Being movement* » (Costa V., 2009, p. 42)<sup>8</sup>.

## II. DEVELOPMENT OF ARGUMENTS

### *a. An inaccessible foundation without objectification*

Investigating time, however, poses the most difficult problems to phenomenology. For example, how can the subjective flow of lived experiences not belong to the realm of objectivity but nonetheless be considered an « object » ? The problem only grows if we consider that every phase of change affecting an object can be traced back to a duration (*continuum* of appearance) that belongs to a *constituent now*. Moreover, this *now* remains difficult to clarify, because

in the actual present we have the original source and a continuum of echoing moments — but all those are metaphors ; we have no explicit expressions for it. (Patočka J., 1996, p. 122)

<sup>6</sup> « Die Zeit muß anders gefaßt werden 1. als bei Kant, wo sie eine leere Imaginationsvorstellung, ein “reines Bild”, ein Leeres ist ; 2. als bei Husserl und Heidegger, denn auch ort ist Zeit und besonders Zeitlichkeit *das Subjektive*, Subjektiv-Einigende durch Antizipation-Retention, durch Zeitigungsarten der Zeitlichkeitsdimensionen ».

<sup>7</sup> « Není nutno naopak na novém základě, základě *asubjektivním*, tj. základě času a jeho zjasnění etc. ... podat teorii *lidské* zkušenosti jako patřičné do souvislosti tohoto původního zjasnění ? ». The phrase is worded as a question (« isn't it necessary... »), but it indicates positive affirmation (« it is necessary... »).

<sup>8</sup> « Patočka indica la necessità di *passare dal piano trascendentale a quello ontologico-trascendentale* : la temporalità, il differire, non è un modo di essere del soggetto, né del *Dasein*, bensì la *legge generale del movimento dell'essere* ».

In this continuous flow, a clear view of intention disappears — for we have neither names nor apperceptive schemes suitable for explaining what is happening. Husserl himself also recognized the weakness of intuition in relation to time and that there cannot be absolute evidence for an intuition<sup>9</sup>. Therefore, the problem of the flow of consciousness remains unsolved and cannot by itself constitute ultimate givenness, because it cannot be both constituent of, and at a certain level, constituted (as the ultimate, founding given) by objectivity. Identification of what makes this double function of the *ego* possible remains problematic in the flow of consciousness<sup>10</sup>.

A further problem emerges over identification of what makes this dual function of the *ego* in the flow of consciousness possible (see Patočka J., 1996, p. 125).

The problem of time, fundamentally, is the problem of a whole that changes and makes possible its singularities, parts, and the lived experience of partial, single moments. In this regard, reflection always grasps only what has passed, an object, but not the source itself at work in reflection and to which reflection always refers.

Husserl identified the necessary foundation of all objects with the correlative consciousness of the subject, purified by the *epoché*. In a certain sense, an object is constituted by the retentionality of past lived experiences, but what must nonetheless be given is that which makes endless reflection possible. According to Patočka, this assumption is problematic because, on the one hand the principle of evidence requires the presence of an ultimate foundation, and on the other hand, because time consciousness always shows us only phases of a flow and never the ultimate foundation of the presence of things, which, by contrast, is hidden. Thus, the possibility of certainty becomes problematic, because at the end « what our glance grasps of it is always already a phase in a stream » (Patočka J., 1996, p. 125) and never a completed object.

<sup>9</sup> The principle of all principles reminds us that everything originally given to us by intuition should simply be accepted as what it is presented as, and « only within the limits in which it is presented here » (Husserl E., 1983, § 24).

<sup>10</sup> Husserl does not debate this question in any of his published works, only his work manuscripts. In published Husserlian texts, we find important details on this theme in the *Husserliana* VIII, Beilage XVI to XXI. In addition, the group B manuscripts on reduction also include some analysis on this topic (in particular Ms B II 18). Some of these manuscripts were published as part of the *Husserliana* XXXIV on phenomenological reduction. In the secondary literature, we find some trails leading in this direction in the book by J. M. Broekman, 1963 (*Phaenomenologica*, n. 12).

To find a way out of this problem, then, we must grasp the more subjective element of the subject : the identity of the *ego*. This identity resides in the living present of the consciousness of time ; this is where the essence of the ego is revealed. To reveal what makes reflection on the subject and its constitution possible, we cannot take anything already established as a premise but must move beyond the circuit of the flow of consciousness. In this sense, excluding any temporal extension, the *ego* remains in the present moment (the original *nunc stans*). Yet, according to Patočka,

This « standing now » is evidently something of a contradiction or a paradox. « Now » is something that is essentially passing ; to call it stationary appears to run against everything evident. (Patočka J., 1996, p. 126)

Considering such a critique of the Husserlian approach, the only possible alternative is desubjectification of the temporal flow. Indeed, the temporal living subject changes continuously and, for this reason, at its bottom

is in principle ever new as on the first day of creation. (Patočka J., 1996, p. 148)<sup>11</sup>

The subject cannot only be an absolute present. Temporality cannot be excluded, because the structure of sensible experience and of subjectivity are unthinkable without it, but it is assumed to elaborate an asubjective phenomenology in which the subject is not the foundation of the appearance of entities. This phenomenology will unfold, as we know, in the concept of movement and in the movements of human existence. The asubjective sphere is, therefore, constituted by two fundamental transcendences : the world and temporality. Patočka shows that, if we abandon the Husserlian primacy of the consciousness, Heideggerian regression to the first foundations of Being is not the only remaining possibility (see Terzi R., 2009, p. 208).

Husserl proposes we base reflection not on this or that concrete *nunc stans* but on the *ego* and on retention in general<sup>12</sup> ; Patočka, meanwhile, understands the *nunc stans* that founds the temporal flow to be a constant

<sup>11</sup> The future is characterized as birth and ever-new creation (see Patočka J., 2016a, p. 656).

<sup>12</sup> On this point, Klaus Held argues that the *ego* cannot be intuited in entirety (see Held K., 1966). Gerd Brand, conversely, thinks that we can grasp the *ego* in reflection (self-reflection) only by transforming it into being (see Brand G., 1955).

foundation, which endures and shows itself to objective reflection only in its temporal becoming. However, this foundation

is not a *mere substrate*, a mere bearer, but rather an agent — therein it is fundamentally different from other « unities in plurality. » Yet precisely its functioning as such, considered apart from the self-alienation inseparable from it, is not accessible to us without objectification. (Patočka J., 1996, p. 127)

Objectification, however, always requires reference to objectivity, and objectifying reflection requires presupposition of the *nunc stans*. The *ego* is therefore only perceived through retrospective objectification and at the same time lives « through the idea of an antecedent foundation » (Patočka J., 1996, p. 127)<sup>13</sup>. As we notice, at this point the problem of a temporal foundation clashes with the reflection that, by its nature, it is always an objectifying act :

Thought is always objective and where the object disappears, thought remains before an enigma that it cannot overcome. (Patočka J., 1999, p. 23)<sup>14</sup>

As Patočka observes, reflections on time take on particular importance because it is thanks to them that Husserl's thought « fulfills its program and goes beyond itself » (Patočka J., 1996, p. 128). Patočka elaborates a not yet objective, indeed pre-objective, conception of temporality that opens the way to a new and deeper definition of phenomenology. His analysis of temporality is therefore crucial because it is here that « the first great step beyond the original system took place » (Patočka J., 1996, p. 128)<sup>15</sup>. Temporality is therefore the place where the need for an asubjective phenomenology emerges.

<sup>13</sup> The reflection of the subject, on the other hand, presupposes an objectification of the subject (its becoming a being, according to Klaus Held) and a distance (achieved by retention) between the reflecting *ego* and the reflected *ego*.

<sup>14</sup> « Myšlení je vždy předmětné; tam, kde předmět mizí, zůstává před záhadou, kterou není s to zvládnout ». For the Czech philosopher, objectification is not only a characteristic of thought, but all the general tendencies of our mind and instinctual equipment are directed towards reality, materiality, and objectivity (see Patočka J., 2002, p. 125).

<sup>15</sup> The theory of the *flow* of consciousness allows Husserl to go beyond the dogma of the instantaneity of all consciousness. Its importance for Patočka is also demonstrated by how the latter's analysis of time develops various problems, including the relationship between consciousness and transcendence of data, consciousness and representations of the world, consciousness and intentionality, and temporality and the givenness of the field of presence.

*b. A dark moment in reflection*

As mentioned above, Husserl himself makes possible openings for moving beyond the limits of a subjectivist system. A first opening occurs in the dialectical structure of reflection, where Husserl states that reflection always presupposes alienation from ourselves, making the reflecting being « simultaneously what he sees and more than what he sees » (Patočka J., 1996, p. 133). Therefore, at the very edge of phenomenological visibility, we discover another visibility, not yet thematized but also not in conflict with the possibilities of phenomenology : « the visibility of relations even beyond the region of positive, objective and objectival content — a dialectical visibility » (Patočka J., 1996, p. 133). Thus, starting from the dialectical structure of reflection, Patočka arrives at a dialectical visibility that is important because it does not manifest the power of the spirit to force the thing to manifest itself, but

demonstrates the powerlessness of reflection before its own reality, the impossibility of objectifying a being which is always already *ahead of itself* and which thus eludes all efforts of the concept at embracing it. Dialectics is [...] also a recognition of the dark moment in the structure of objectivity. (Patočka J., 1996, p. 133)

This « dark moment » indicates what reflection is not able to grasp with the objectifying act — that is, what always eludes it because it is subject to temporality. Objectivity, therefore, remains an ideal that we need in order to think of reality as accessible but which bears in itself a cluster of themes and questions that need to be distinguished and patiently spelled out.

Recognizing that even apprehending ourselves and the certainty of our *ego* presupposes this blind spot in reflection, we return to the problem of how to grasp transcendence. Transcendence, « which the *epoché* had driven out of the world », reappears « at the very root of immanence » (Patočka J., 1996, p. 134), or rather, reflection. It must be said, however, that this interpretation of Patočka does not fully recognize the intentions Husserl developed through the doctrine of reductions to consciousness. The important point for us is the insufficiency of the Husserlian explanation of transcendent givenness<sup>16</sup>. This point seems relevant, because it

<sup>16</sup> In this sense, the paradox of transcendence, which one tries to explain by reducing it to immanence, would lead the phenomenological project to fail if it remained attached to its Cartesian starting point : the idea of the foundation of philosophy as a science based « on the exclusive self-certainty of (purified) consciousness » (Patočka J., 1996, p. 134). Transcendence is not something positive that can be synthesized, but rather lies in proximity to and difference from what is given. Transcendence is characterized by three aspects :



shows that reflection on time represents an attempt to think of the human's insertion in the world from another perspective.

According to Patočka, the appeal of phenomenology is that it focuses on how things present themselves *in persona*, in consciousness, through intellectual insight and intuition ; whereas, the ambition to clarify the conscious process of appearance with the same intuitive and material clarity is less justifiable. Here phenomenology bumps into a limit inherent to the very conditions of evidence. As we read in Patočka's lessons on Husserl :

Apparently, philosophy can no more be transformed into a theory of a pure inquiry into immanent perception than the classical rationalism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries could make it into a doctrine of a priori cognition and concepts. The world cannot be brought without remnant into the light of intuitive clarity ; on the one hand, we are dependent on its facticity, on the other, there is the inevitable darkness which belongs to the temporal character of reflection. (Patočka J., 1996, p. 134)

This temporal characteristic of phenomenality probably also bears other difficulties (in addition to those indicated in the instance of the *nunc stans*). For example, « there is the question of the overall meaning of the historicity of our knowing, whether the world might not be *in principle* susceptible to being uncovered only gradually and not as a whole, even though we intend it as a whole and so schematize it » (Patočka J., 1996, p. 134). The human, therefore, finds itself exposed to the world in its incompleteness — an incompleteness temporally realized in humanity as a historical-social whole. However, this condition does not bear a negative meaning, since « neither the world nor our I can be rendered perfectly transparent » (Patočka J., 1996, p. 134) ; on the contrary, it is positive insofar as

both the world and humans belong to each other so inseparably that a separation of these beings or even of some of their aspects — for instance, of the subjectivity of the human subject — is unthinkable. If the subjectivity of the subject is expressed as a *nunc stans*, as I in a constant, stable moment, then that means the subject must constantly objectify itself, transforming itself into an object, if it is to exist as a subject, and that ultimately means, if we look at all the implications of internal time consciousness, that it must become incarnate, that it must be the subjectivity of a *corporeal* subject. (Patočka J., 1996, p. 134)

the gap (there is no perfect coincidence between subject and object in perception), excess (the world is always in excess of my perception), and negativity (what manifests itself is intrinsically intertwined in what is not manifest) (see Şan E., 2012, p. 311).

c. *The order of the world and the consciousness of time*

After recalling in the previous two sections the way Patočka re-reads Husserl, we will turn to what Patočka himself thought about temporality. His analysis of time is fundamental, because it opens up understanding of the world order : since time is the condition of all individuality and existence, it prevents us from considering individuality or existence as predicates of the *ego*. Secondly, the concept of world introduced in *Ideas I* (which first indicates the environment of things) is deepened in Patočka's thought over time<sup>17</sup>. Husserl himself identifies what makes it possible to transcend the limit of immediate contact with individual beings and establish contact with entire universal spheres — and ultimately with all that is. Time, whose origin Husserl located in lived experience, « became for him the *world horizon* itself » (Patočka J., 1996, p. 128).

This consideration of time overcomes the limit presented by the incompleteness of sensible perception. As this process is infinite, intentionality leads to the constitution of ever-new objects. The primitive concept of world<sup>18</sup> is thus overcome by the concept of horizon (not understood in the thinglike sense) and of the intentionality of horizon. Starting from temporality, we can ask ourselves : what is the relationship between the world, as the sum of existing things, and the world as a universal horizon ? Patočka's answer is that « the world as a whole is ever-present, present as a horizon » (Patočka J., 1996, p. 105) and this givenness of horizon, founded on temporality, is originary. The horizon is not a subject-object relationship, singular perspective, or anticipation ; rather, singular perspectives and anticipations are only possible on the basis of this temporal foundation. Time, therefore, is not an object, but the horizon of all types of objects, occurring in different degrees (modes of temporalization). On the one hand, Husserl recognizes an enlargement of the concept of the world. On the other hand, his method leads to two reductions :

<sup>17</sup> It is important to note that Patočka refers continually to the first book of *Ideas*. This text is characterized by a lack of reference to temporality (see Costa V., 2002, p. 462), but temporality is the condition of possibility for the manifestation of any object and the cornerstone of all so-called theories of experience (see Husserl E., 1984, p. 274).

<sup>18</sup> It indicates an objective concept on the basis of which the world designates the total objective unity. This unity is understood as a sensible unity, totality of sensible real and possible perceptions, although the givenness of the world is subject to the limits of sensible perception (see Husserl E., 2001, § 36). However, Husserl also affirms that the world is never given to us without restriction, nor does it take place properly in any process of perception. He also speaks of the inadequate evidence of the world, i.e. of the ontological impossibility of a givenness of the world as a whole.

the reduction of the objective being to the constitutive flow of transcendental subjectivity, and the reduction of transcendental life to the *ego* of the « absolute » *nunc stans*. According to Patočka, Husserl's explanation of the concept of time attests to some shortcomings of reduction to subjective immanence. Taken at the level of concrete content and not systematic intent, Husserl's conception does not lead to the extreme subjectivism that would seemingly follow from his attempt to rigorously base philosophy on the absolutely evident givenness of a purified Cartesian *cogito*. This analysis of time therefore allows us to evaluate Husserl's contribution in a different light, beyond the purpose of locating a rigorous and scientific foundation for philosophy. For example, it becomes impossible to identify the original givenness (to which intuitive *data* refer) of subjective immanence, because

all objectively transcendent content of this givenness, *all that is given in it* and appears in it both as natural and instrumental entities, landscapes, animals, already transcends givenness as such *in a temporal manner*. (Patočka J., 1996, p. 129)

This quote clarifies two things : the first is that all ordered reality (the enduring world) transcends the present ; the second is that our actual experience, in reality, is always a process of progressive verification. For this reason, « our belief in the world is a belief in an *ordered world* and not only in a *given world* » (Patočka J., 1996, p. 129). And this means three things :

- 1) the subject intervenes actively (the world requires this from us), organizing *data* according to a before and an after (since the world is not a chaos, but an order) ;
- 2) immediate and obvious givenness excludes this organizing activity based on time (because it is subjected to continuous verification) ;
- 3) world order can unveil itself through temporal transcendence (made possible by the internal consciousness of time).

Thus, the internal consciousness of time on which our experience is based allows us to understand that reflection also has a temporal character and that

- a) immediate givenness refers to the immediate present,
- b) intuition does not originally grasp what is given but is a progressive verification of the given,
- c) the ordered world transcends the present.

Reference to the term « *order* » allows Patočka to make a further clarification : the world would be a real world even if, in representation, it were a chaos. « Just as a given order is no proof of its own reality, so chaos is no proof to the contrary » (Patočka J., 1996, p. 130). This means, therefore, that not only the ordered world lies within logical laws<sup>19</sup>. For this reason Patočka states :

A chaos though, is something different than *no world at all* ; it is precisely an *un-ordered world*. An un-ordered world does not mean the nonexistence of the whole, only the nonexistence of the whole of a *certain type*. (Patočka J., 1996, p. 105)

For Patočka, the concept of world does not agree with logic, because the world as a whole does not identify with the objective unity of objectively verifiable things. Indeed :

The world as a whole is never verified but it is rather always the presupposition of all verification. (Patočka J., 1996, p. 104)<sup>20</sup>

Internal consciousness of time is important, because the *world order* can never present itself except through transcendence, specifically temporal transcendence. Temporal transcendence, however, is only possible through internal time consciousness. Thus « an orderly world is relative to internal time consciousness, cannot be grasped and verified except on the basis of temporal consciousness [...]. Thus it is temporal consciousness that opens up understanding to the order of the world » (Patočka J., 1996, p. 130).

To state that understanding of the world order depends on time consciousness does not mean, however, that the world order is created by consciousness. It is only co-ordinated by consciousness (by its appearing to me). In Husserl, this process derives from the being constituted by consciousness as an intentional pole, while for Patočka only representation and anticipation are constituted in the conscience, and they depend on donation precisely because our sense of conscience resides in temporal

<sup>19</sup> Husserl E., 2001a, § 65 : « It would further be possible to demonstrate *ad nauseam* the absurdity involved in considering the *possibility* of an illogical course of the world in signitive thought, thereby making this possibility *hold*, and destroying in one breath, so to say, the laws which make this or any other possibility hold at all ».

<sup>20</sup> Even the idea of the annihilation of the world, if it could be fully thought through, would not prove the reality of an imaginary world, because it could be a transcendent world with intentional subjects, but it would never prove the fulfillment of their intentions. The idea of the annihilation of the world, therefore, cannot shake the transcendence of the present given to the subject.

transcendence. From such a premise, « we can deduce [...] nothing with respect to the given world in which something else is added to the continuity which is in any case presumptive and dependent on ongoing verification » (Patočka J., 1996, p. 130).

*d. Temporality and the appearing of the world*

As stated above, for Patočka time consciousness opens up understanding of the world order, but world givenness always remains an obscure presupposition that can be better understood through the study of appearing as such. Patočka wonders whether consciousness of the horizon also begins with the world, since the experience of horizon is carried out by the world as the condition of possibility of experience. Thus understood, the sense of representation (*Vor-Stellung*) of the world changes : it does not mean placing a being before the gaze but expresses what is indicated in this gaze :

the real world is not a presentation for us while temporality with its horizons and intentionality with its poles fall under the impression of a presentation. (Patočka J., 1996, p. 131)

The real world, however, is linked to anticipations and presentations in general by the lawlike bond of correlative relations between the *structure of presentations of beings* (which also includes their mode of verifiability) and the factual being itself. This bond of relations refers to the laws of appearing outside of which the being cannot show itself as what it is and how it is. According to Patočka, these laws *belong to the being itself, not only to its presentation*. (Patočka J., 1996, p. 131) Yet representation is essential to the appearance to us of the being as such, since « a being cannot manifest itself, it is not intrinsically manifest » (Patočka J., 1996, p. 131) but through a representation.

Patočka points out that « from the point of view indicated, the importance of Husserl's analyses of time consciousness is not diminished but perhaps even expands » (Patočka J., 1996, p. 131)<sup>21</sup>. Here I am interested in pointing out a problem : on the one hand, representation of what we acquire from the foundation of experience (as a world ordered according to laws and, in this way, provided with meaning) depends on the world that we anticipate to be a world ordered according to the laws, and

<sup>21</sup> Husserl's indications lay the foundations for a whole subsequent work.

in this way meaningful<sup>22</sup> ; on the other hand, if being is not manifest in itself but refers to representation (in which understanding of the being is constituted according to laws), « there is no reason to suppose that this presentation might be something other than the very manifestation of things and that the manifestation of things is anything other than this presentation in its factual unfolding » (Patočka J., 1996, p. 132). What, then, is the relationship between the laws of representation, by which we understand the world, and the laws manifesting the world itself ? Patočka thinks that

the world and the understanding of the world within a being who, as essentially temporal — that means, « internal time consciousness » — by its very nature relates to the world, to the totality of all that is, essentially belong together and constitute a unity. (Patočka J., 1996, p. 132)

The reason why understanding of the world and its representation are not separable is based once again on time : they constitute a unity in a being that is temporal. Time binds them together. The world cannot be separated from the clarity of understanding to which both objects and the representative scheme of the world are bound together by a relationship of eidetic necessity. One can wonder, however, to what extent such clarity about the world is possible. For Patočka the possibility is real, but « it contains no *total* clarity about the world nor the possibility of a contemporaneous and uniform penetrability of its totality » (Patočka J., 1996, p. 132). Since clarity depends on the constitution of the representation of being in the world, clarity is not only « not a reality, but is also a presumption that it is hardly possible » (Patočka J., 1996, p. 132). Our understanding is therefore always the *possible* understanding of *what appears*.

Excluding the presumption of absolute reflection, a full understanding of the world does not seem possible, because « the constitution of this presentation is nothing given once and for all » (Patočka J., 1996, p. 132). In fact, whether it is a succession of historical events over time or the genesis of the flow of consciousness in internal time consciousness, understanding

is rather itself a temporal process. (Patočka J., 1996, p. 132)

This means that temporality has a fundamental bearing on our constitution of the world, and Husserl's method leaves this problem open.

<sup>22</sup> Therefore, we experience not only the given world but also the world anticipated as ordered according to laws.

His analysis of time indicates to Patočka, however, which types of investigation should be excluded. The genesis of historical events and flow of consciousness present unmanageable problems, « which cannot be resolved once and for all by reflecting on the givenness of purified consciousness as the ultimate foundation of all evidence, capable of providing us with a definitive scientific justification, binding for everyone and for all times, of all evidence and of all consciousness based thereon » (Patočka J., 1996, p. 132). As we have argued in the first two parts of this section II (*An inaccessible foundation without objectification* and *A dark moment in reflection*), reflection on the consciousness of time and on the ultimate *ego* tied to it shows that

we are not moving towards an ever greater and more evident clarity, but [...] our greatest insight is at the same time a *vision of what is escaping us*. Precisely the attempt at a radical clarity inevitably bears with it its dark places, dark not only for us but, rather, belonging to the very nature of clarity — that it is not a clarity of things themselves but rather a *clarity dependent on presentation*, and specifically on the presentation of a temporal being (which, as temporal, is in turn, in principle possible only as finite). (Patočka J., 1996, p. 132-133)

The representation and temporal character of the manifestation of being are therefore an obstacle to clear understanding. This is why Patočka speaks of « dark points ». As explained in the first section, this is why the *nunc stans*, as the ultimate way of expressing subjectivity, shows us that the direct and positive self-giving of this phenomenological foundation is not possible or even thinkable, because

the functioning I is a process and because self-grasping is always a reification of something transposed thereby from a live process into a product, from creative to created, from subjectival to objectival, if it is to stand in the light of reflection. (Patočka J., 1996, p. 133)

Full apprehension of ourselves is therefore not possible, because the *ego* is temporal, historical and changes, while reflection is by nature objectifying and timeless.

### III. THREE ACQUISITIONS

The sections above have shown us the need for a deeper definition of temporality that can become the point of emergence for an asubjective phenomenology. In conclusion, I would like to point to three new

acquisitions on the general function of temporality presented by the Czech phenomenologist, especially in chapter VII of *Husserl's introduction to phenomenology*.

1) First, temporality criticizes *the primacy of presence* (as sense intuition) in the determination of phenomenality. Husserl's affirmations on emptiness and on absence as modes of givenness make it clear that presence is never only a mere presence, and absence is never mere nothing. As we read in *Die Selbstbesinnung Europas* (1974) :

[...] what is not present cannot be proved. This does not mean there is nothing to see. Simply, the possibilities, offered to sight, are not those that things presenting themselves before the eyes provide. (Patočka J., 1994, p. 249)<sup>23</sup>

2) Secondly, time acquires an exceptional meaning in relation to being. Clarifying the meaning of time, therefore, also means clarifying all that is in the world, because the transcendental concept of the world (understood as the structure in which appearing is given) is also characterized by temporality<sup>24</sup>. The world is the original « space-time containing and mediating all and everything » (Patočka J., 2016b, p. 159). This means the world is not real (as a being is), and it is characterized by an inexhaustible depth as it is the field of possibility for our experience. As seen above, the concept of possibility should not be understood in a subjective sense, because it is the world itself that gives possibilities. This is fundamental, because it allows us to understand that the world « is not the *representation* of a possibility, but the connection of the possibilities *themselves* » (Patočka J., 1994, p. 254)<sup>25</sup>. Therefore, there is an intrinsic bond between the world and temporality : indeed, starting from temporality, the world can be removed from the ambit of the intuition of an object and understood as a whole. If we do not understand the fundamental meaning of possibility, starting from the still-to-come, we lose the original character of the

<sup>23</sup> « [...] die als solche kein Präsenes und deshalb Konstatierbares ist. Das bedeutet nicht, daß hier überhaupt keine Sichtmöglichkeiten sind. Es sind aber keine Sichtmöglichkeiten, wie Dinge sie gewähren, welche sich vor den Blick einstellen können » Translation modified.

<sup>24</sup> The Husserlian interpretation of the world as a horizon sees an intentionality of horizon indifferent to orientation and temporalization. This leads to a subjectivation of the world and to levelling it to a present anticipation included in its dependence on the subject. See Patočka J., 1994, p. 254.

<sup>25</sup> « Sie ist aus demselben Grunde keine Möglichkeitsvorstellung, sondern das Gefüge der Möglichkeiten *selbst* ».



world and, consequently, insist on the *givenness* of the appearing being and on the full present. Yet the world is a field of possibilities,

the world, in its ground, can be grasped only by temporality, starting not from the objectified “time of the world”, but from temporality ; the world originally has a futurely character and therefore is not something effective. (Patočka J., 1994, p. 254)<sup>26</sup>

And, in the 1972 essay, *Body, possibility, world, field of appearance*, we read :

time as future is the essence of the world—Being as a totality of advenient-to-us possibilities, which opens our *situation* and, in it, [it opens] other things. (Patočka J., 1972, p. 2.16.9)<sup>27</sup>

Access to the world therefore always takes place in my subjective condition in light of possibilities that open up to me. Possibilities are before me, in the world and not in me ; they are given by the world. « I do not open my possibilities but *my situation*, in light of possibilities that open up *themselves* » (Patočka J., 1972, p. 2.16.9)<sup>28</sup>. Ultimately, understanding the importance of temporality allows us to found the world on it. Not only does this remove the world from the dominion of the present and the intuitable being, and from the subject, but it moreover opens up the possibility of a cosmological interpretation of temporality.

3) Thirdly, Patočka considers original temporality (« not a simple lived experience, but time as such » Patočka J., 1991, p. 284<sup>29</sup>) not only in a non-objective way (as a dominion of the present, an intuitable phenomenon), but also without reducing it to consciousness (temporality is neither subjective nor objective, but extended in the cosmological sense) :

We have to acknowledge that what lies at the ground of the natural world is not “internal time consciousness”, but rather care and temporality. (Patočka J., 2016b, p. 184)<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> « Deshalb ist Welt im Grunde nur zeitlich zu fassen, aber nicht von der objektivierten Weltzeit her, sondern von der Zeitlichkeit ; Welt hat ursprünglich Zukunftscharakter, und insofern ist sie unwirklich ».

<sup>27</sup> « Zeit als Zu-kunft ist das Wesen der Welt – Sein als auf-unszukommendes Möglichkeitsganzes, welches unsere *Situation* erschließt und darin die anderen Dinge ».

<sup>28</sup> « Ich erschließe nicht meine Möglichkeiten, sondern *meine Lage* im Lichte der Möglichkeiten, die *sich* erschließen ».

<sup>29</sup> « keines bloßen Zeiterlebens, sondern der Zeit als solcher ».

<sup>30</sup> In 1976, ten years after *An Introduction to Husserl's Phenomenology* (1965), Patočka's position changed. In 1965, he critiques subjectivism and rationalism ; in 1976 time becomes the guiding light for redefining phenomenological correlation.

Therefore, temporality becomes the central idea guiding his analysis of the original relationship between *ego* and world : « temporality is the central idea of the explanation and analysis of the natural world, the guide that has to replace explanations found in noetic-noematic correlative-intentional analysis » (Patočka J., 1980a, p. 2.15.5)<sup>31</sup>. As Roberto Terzi writes : « temporality thus reveals itself to be the meaning and very source of phenomenological correlation in its poles and different shapes. It is from the question of temporality that the aporias and limits of the Husserlian position can be brought to light in order to unhinge them and thus radicalize phenomenology in new directions » (Terzi R., 2009, p. 207 s). This comprehension of time consciousness is linked to the decisive place that the notion of history will take in Patočka's work. Indeed, referring critically to Husserl's conception of internal time consciousness, the Czech philosopher writes: « Phenomenology cannot see history as something substantive, making it one of its central themes, without manifesting therein its entire basic conception, methodical as well as material » (Patočka J., 1996a, p. 45)<sup>32</sup>.

Patočka elaborates phenomenology starting from the phenomenological concept of world and original temporality. This reflection on temporality will lead him in the mid-1960s to develop the concept of movement – which, to him, seems to be the only concept capable of enabling us to think of a non-positive and non-static transcendence. He replaces the static model of mobility with the model of *ateles energeia* : « [...] there must be something like a movement through which the heart of the world constitutes its contingent content and of which space-time-quality in totality is a sediment » (Patočka J., 1980, p. 2.17.1)<sup>33</sup>. As Renaud Barbaras writes, this means that « time, as a unity of the world, must itself

<sup>31</sup> « Časovost je vodítkem výkladu a rozboru přirozeného světa, které musí nahradit vodítka analýzy noeticko-noematické, intencionální ». This outlines the *Postface* to the French edition of the book *The Natural World as a Philosophical Problem*.

<sup>32</sup> The notion of history is connected to the problem of manifestation because the appearing of the world is at the basis of all that man can do. There is a link between the unveiling of the world structure and history because « the opening of the world is ever historical in all its forms [...] [the] manifestation, however, is itself historical » (Patočka J., 1996a, p. 9-10). Patočka criticizes the ahistorical disinterestedness of Husserl's transcendental spectator and, by taking an asubjective perspective, he changes the conception of history. As Ricoeur also underscores, historicity becomes the loss of all security – a loss which completely exposes man and his freedom (see Patočka J., 1996a, p. XI). History therefore becomes characterized by its problematic nature.

<sup>33</sup> « [...] musí existovat cosi jako pohyb, kterým srdce světa vytváří svůj nahodilý obsah a jehož sedimentem je prostoročasokvalita v celku ».

be traced back to the proto-movement of individuation which deposits it [time] as its sediment » (Barbaras R., 2014, p. 536). If time as a unity of the world is brought back to the proto-movement of appearing, this movement becomes an eternal, timeless movement. Patočka, therefore, establishes the notion of movement starting from the notions of time and world ; movement becomes central to the exit from a subjective conception of time.

Secondly, the attempt to grasp the world starting from the event of time (and especially the conception of the future as a possibility coming to us) will allow him to stress — unlike Heidegger — that possibilities are not created by us. They are in front of us; they come to us from outside, from the world. This reflection on the world will increasingly appear in the space of a critique of Husserl's concept of the life world. In fact, more than talking about the « life world » (*Lebenswelt*), the late Patočka speaks of a « secret of the world » (*Weltgeheimnis*) to indicate the experience of the mystery of the world. As Emre Şan asserts, temporality is, thus, « the phenomenological witness of a deeper unity and, therefore, of a more original way of being » (Şan E., 2012, p. 311)<sup>34</sup>. The term mystery can indicate the unavailability of appearance as that-which-is-to-come, but it can also be understood not as a renunciation of reflection but as an invitation for philosophy to renew its own foundations.

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<sup>34</sup> « le témoin phénoménologique d'une unité plus profonde et, partant, d'un mode d'être plus originaire ».

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RÉSUMÉ – La question de la temporalité est l'un des aspects les moins étudiés de la pensée de Patočka et elle est très peu discutée dans les débats internationaux concernant ses travaux. Cependant, elle revêt une importance décisive, car elle prépare son projet de phénoménologie asubjective. Cet article se concentre sur le cheminement qui mène à cette conception : il identifie les éléments théoriques et les conséquences asubjectives de l'analyse que le phénoménologue tchèque propose des *Leçons pour une phénoménologie de la conscience intime du temps* (1893-1917) de Husserl. Le temps n'est plus considéré comme l'unité du flux subjectif constitué par la rétention, mais il est compris comme l'ajointement primordial du champ d'apparaître dans sa structure « déjà » unifiée d'espace-temps-qualités. Le fondement de la structure du temps ne peut donc plus être le présent vivant du sujet et son champ de présence. L'aboutissement de ce parcours critique, qui n'est pas analysé ici, nous confirme que la temporalité fait référence aux lois de l'apparaître et reste un enjeu central, car elle agit sur notre compréhension du monde et sur la relation sujet-monde dans l'histoire.

ABSTRACT – Temporality is one of the least studied aspects of Patočka's thought and rarely occurs in international discussions of his works. Nonetheless it is of key importance, as it paves the way for his asubjective phenomenology. This article concentrates on the path that led to this concept: it identifies the theoretical aspects and the asubjective consequences of the Czech phenomenologist's analysis of Husserl's *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893–1917)*. Time is no longer viewed as the unity of the subjective flux constituted by retention, but is understood as the primordial coincidence of the field of appearing in its «already» unified structure of space-time-qualities. The foundation of the structure of time can therefore no longer be the subject's living present and his field of presence. The outcome of this critical itinerary, which is not analysed here, confirms for us that temporality refers to the laws of appearing and remains a central issue, as it acts on our understanding of the world and on the relationship subject-world in history (transl. J. Dudley).