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Time and Consciousness in the Bernau Manuscripts

Even a cursory glance in *Die Bernauer Manuskripte über das Zeitbewusstsein* makes it evident that one of Husserl's major concerns in his 1917-18 reflections on time-consciousness was how to account for the constitution of time without giving rise to an infinite regress. Not only does Husserl constantly refer to this problem in *Husserliana* XXXIII – as he characteristically writes at one point “Überall drohen, scheint es, unendliche Regresse” (Hua 33/81) – but he also takes care to distinguish between several different regresses (cf. Hua 33/271). One of the more troubling ones is the one that might be called the *regress of foundation*. It concerns the problem of how to avoid always having to presuppose yet another underlying constituting consciousness. As we will soon see, the attempt to avoid this specific regress is closely linked to the problem of how to come up with a satisfactory account of self-awareness. That Husserl himself was well aware of this link can be inferred from some of his reflections in the beginning of *Husserliana* XXXIII. As he writes at one point, consciousness exists, it exists as a stream, and it appears to itself as a stream. But how the stream of consciousness is capable of being conscious of itself, how it is possible and comprehensible that the very being of the stream is a form of self-consciousness, is the enduring problem of the entire treatise (Hua 33/44, 46).

In this article, I wish to take a closer look at some of Husserl's attempts in the Bernau Manuscripts to account for time-consciousness without giving rise to an infinite regress.

1. The *internal object* interpretation

It has been said before, and after the publication of the Bernau Manuscripts it can be said again with even more force: Husserl does not have *one* theory of time-consciousness, he has several conflicting ones.¹

In previous publications, I have criticized a certain dominant interpretation of Husserl's theory of time-consciousness; an interpretation which I lacking a better name will call the *internal object* interpretation. The *internal object* interpretation argues that we need to distinguish three levels of temporality. Level one would be the region of transcendent temporal objects such as trains, houses, and symphonies. Level two would be the region of experiences (*Erlebnisse*), and would include the intentional acts aimed at the objects on level one, and also the different immanent sensory contents. Level three would be the experiencing (*Erleben*) of the unities on level two. Just as we must distinguish between the constituted dimension in which transcendent objects exist and the constituting dimension that permits them to appear, we must distinguish between the constituted dimension in which the acts exist and the constituting dimension that permits them to appear. The acts are temporal objects existing in subjective or immanent time, but they are constituted by a deeper dimension of subjectivity, namely, by the absolute flow of inner time-consciousness. Thus, according to the *internal object* interpretation the absolute flow makes us aware of the acts or *Erlebnisse* as temporal *objects* in immanent time.²

I find this way of accounting for time-consciousness problematic for a variety of reasons. The difficulty does not so much concern the attempt to distinguish between three different levels, rather it concerns the specific account of the relationship between level two and three. But whereas I have earlier suggested that Husserl's own theory was characterized by fundamental ambiguities and that it was possible to defend different interpretations depending on what passages one selected and emphasized, I now believe that the publication of *Husserliana* XXXIII has shown this suggestion to be wrong. It is no longer possible to claim that the validity of the

internal object interpretation depends on a number of ambiguous passages in Husserl's writings on time, passages that might also be interpreted differently. On the contrary, the Bernau Manuscripts contain texts that quite unequivocally support the *internal object* interpretation.

One example is text nr. 6, which carries the title "*Akte als Gegenstände in der ,phänomenologischen Zeit.*" In this text, Husserl starts out by asking whether it is necessary to distinguish between, on the one hand, the "immanent acts", that is, the acts qua "objects" in immanent time, and on the other, the original time-constituting consciousness itself, that is, the primal stream that constitutes all immanent objects, including the intentional acts (Hua 33/107).³ He then goes on to answer this question affirmatively. Every perception is what Husserl calls an act-object (*Aktgegenständlichkeit*) in immanent time. Every perception is itself something that is constituted as an object in original time-consciousness. For this very reason, it is important to counter the suggestion that the perception is itself a constituting act in the full sense of the word. On the contrary, the truly constituting foundation is made up by the deepest layer, that is, by inner time-constituting consciousness (Hua 33/108-109). As Husserl writes:

[E]s soll gezeigt werden, dass die Wahrnehmungen von immanenten Daten und so alle Akte vermöge der Wesensstruktur des inneren Bewusstseins, das der Urstrom des Erlebens ist, konstituiert sein müssen als Gegenständlichkeiten der immanenten Zeit und derselben, wie die von ihnen wahrgenommenen Daten, und dass eben in dieser Konstitution ihr ‚innerlich‘ Wahrgenommensein besteht (Hua 33/108).

If we as an example take the perception of an immanent tone, the following question arises: What status does this perception have? Is the perception itself also an immanent object, does it also have to be internally perceived, and are we not, as Husserl remarks, threatened by an infinite regress if we opt for this model? But as he then continues, it is mandatory to distinguish between the perception of the immanent tone, on the one hand, and the original or inner consciousness in which the perception is constituted as a temporal unity, on the other. Moreover, it is only the perception of the tone, which is given to inner consciousness, and not the tone itself. Thus, the tone and the perception of the tone are located on two different levels (Hua 33/107-9).

At this point in the text, a certain hesitancy appears. Despite his last remark, Husserl goes on to say, that a perceptual experience is an occurrence in immanent time, and that its duration coincides with the duration of the perceived immanent tone (Hua 33/108). Just as the immanent tone is an enduring object in immanent time, the perception of the tone is an enduring object in the very same time. Both are correlated, and both are constituted unities in original time-consciousness (Hua 33/110). In fact, the mode of givenness of the perception (qua enduring unity) is exactly the same as the mode of givenness of its correlate (Hua 33/112). Husserl even goes so far as to write that the primal process is constituted as a process in the very same manner in which the tone is constituted. Every phase of the flow is first given in a primal presentation, and then in protentions and retentions. Thus, it is given in exactly the same way as the object that is constituted in the flow (Hua 33/116-117).⁴

However, these assertions do seem to cause Husserl certain worries, and as he writes one page later, the coincidence between "Sachzeit" and "Bewusstseinsstromzeit" cannot be a pure coincidence of identity, cannot be the kind of coincidence that we find between objects that are simultaneous (Hua 33/117). This retraction is then amplified shortly after in the following quite unequivocal statement: "Die äußeren Wahrnehmungen gehören ebenso wenig in die Zeitreihe der wahrgenommenen Dinge wie die immanenten Wahrnehmungen in die Zeitreihe der immanent wahrgenommenen hyletischen Daten und umgekehrt." (Hua 33/118).

Despite these qualms, Husserl concludes text nr. 6 by writing that the question of how experiences are constituted as temporal objects is identical to the question of how their noematic correlates are constituted as temporal objects, for in both cases the process of constitution is the same (Hua 33/121). Moreover, the radical demarcation is not between the act-objects and their correlates, but between these different objects and the primal process of inner consciousness, for this process is not constituted in the same manner as the objects in immanent time (Hua 33/122).

In spite of a certain wavering – a wavering characterizing many of the texts collected in volume XXXIII – Husserl's general idea seems clear. He operates with three layers, and he

argues that the second layer, the layer of intentional experiences, is constituted as immanent temporal objects by the third layer, the layer of inner time-consciousness.

It would be wrong to think that text nr. 6 is an isolated occurrence. Similar statements can be found throughout the volume. In text nr. 7, for instance, Husserl writes that it is a necessary fact that every experience in the course of the streaming life is constituted as an immanent temporal object (Hua 33/128). In text nr. 18, Husserl writes that every concrete experience is a unity of becoming and that it is constituted as an object in inner consciousness. In fact, experiences are simply objects in inner consciousness; objects in which further objects are constituted (Hua 33/318). This apparent preoccupation with objects also comes to the fore in a slightly different context. In text nr. 15, Husserl addresses the problem of the I, and he writes that everything that belongs to the interiority is a real or possible datum for the I of this interiority. That is, every immanent object has a peculiar relation to a prominent object, namely the I, and this I is also an object for itself (Hua 33/284). One page later, Husserl modifies this statement and writes that the I is not an object in exactly the same way as other objects. In fact, it is exactly a subject for whom everything else is an object. But regardless of this correction, Husserl still insists that the I can only be an I insofar as it can become an object for itself (Hua 33/285). However, Husserl is apparently still not quite satisfied with the phrasing, and a few pages later he writes: "Sein Sein ist aber ein total anderes als das aller Objekte. Es ist eben Subjektsein ..." (Hua 33/287). Once again, it is possible to detect a patent indecision in Husserl's text. But it is an indecision that in my view should have been long resolved.

Let me return to the task at hand: I do think there are texts from the period 1917/18 that unequivocally supports the *internal object* interpretation. But of course to admit that the interpretation is correct, is not to concede that the theory it advocates is itself a correct theory, nor does it exclude the possibility that Husserl elsewhere advocates quite different views. In other words, in order to unconditionally endorse the *internal object* interpretation, it is not sufficient simply to find textual evidence that unequivocally supports it. It is also necessary to demonstrate 1) that Husserl does not advance any serious alternative, and 2) that the theory in question is both cogent and systematically convincing. In my view, neither of these two conditions is fulfilled.⁵ To put it differently, I think the position outlined in text nr. 6 (and elsewhere) is fundamentally mistaken. Before I proceed to investigate some of the other alternatives to be found in the Bernau Manuscripts, let me briefly outline why I think that the *internal object* interpretation provides us with a wrong understanding of the working of inner time-consciousness.

2. Why the *internal object* interpretation must be rejected

It is relatively, but not completely, uncontroversial to concede that we in certain circumstances are aware of our own experiences as immanent objects, namely whenever we reflect. If I reflect on my occurrent perception of a copy of Husserliana XXXIII, and if I reflectively try to discern and articulate the different structures of this perception, I do seem to be confronted with a rather peculiar immanent object. In the Bernau Manuscripts, Husserl calls these objects of reflection "noetische Gegenstände" (Hua 33/449). The crucial question, however, is whether our experiences are also given as *objects* in inner time-consciousness prior to reflection. Is their primal givenness an object-manifestation? This is what the *internal object* interpretation claims, but is it really true? Not only do I think it is wrong from a purely descriptive point of view – in my everyday life, I am absorbed by and preoccupied with projects and objects in the world, I am not aware of my own stream of consciousness as a succession of immanent *objects* – but I also think that such a view is conceptually and theoretically misleading.

When we are aware of our own experiences, are we then self-aware? Husserl's answer is affirmative, and I fully agree. When I am acquainted with an experience in its first-personal mode of givenness, the experience is (at least tacitly) *given* as *my* experience, and it is therefore legitimate to speak of self-awareness. When we are directly and non-inferentially aware of our own experiences, the experiences are characterized by a first-personal givenness that immediately reveals them as one's own. When I feel pain, or dizziness, or when I taste freshly brewed coffee, I am not in doubt about whose experiences they are. But in this case, a certain problem arises. Why and how can an object be given as *mine*? How can my awareness of an

object constitute self-awareness? Any convincing theory of consciousness has to respect the difference between our consciousness of an object, and our consciousness of our own subjectivity, and must be able to explain the distinction between *intentionality*, which is characterized by a *difference* between the subject and the object of experience, and *self-awareness*, which implies some form of *identity*.⁶ As Husserl himself points out in text nr. 10, the intentional object *cannot* be identical with the intentional experience that is conscious of the object (Hua 33/199). But in this case, we are faced with a dilemma. To deny that we are aware of the experiences as our own is unacceptable. But we cannot affirm that we are aware of them as our own, as long as we maintain that we are only aware of them as objects.

But is there any alternative? Since my aim in this paper is to offer a critical examination of Husserl's position in Bernau Manuscripts and not to outline a viable alternative (I have tried to do so elsewhere), a few remarks will have to do. The obvious way to dismantle the dilemma is to concede that we are aware of our own experiences in an immediate, pre-reflective, and non-objectifying manner. If we are to avoid an infinite regress, this primitive pre-reflective self-awareness cannot be due to a secondary act or reflex, but must be a constitutive aspect of the experience itself. Metaphorically speaking, subjective experience is characterized by a certain self-luminosity. It can be compared to a flame, which illuminates other things and itself as well. That is, the first-personal givenness of experience should not be taken as the result of a higher-order representation, reflection, internal monitoring or introspection, but rather be treated as an *intrinsic feature* of experience. In fact, if genuine self-awareness is to be possible – and who would deny its existence? – this seems to be the only option.⁷ Thus, the solution is to deny that the primal givenness of the experience is an object-givenness. But by denying this, one is also rejecting the *internal object* interpretation.

Perhaps it could be objected that we need to distinguish between different types of objects. As Kortooms repeatedly insists in his recent book *Phenomenology of Time*, when saying that the experience is given as an "object", the term "object" must be placed within inverted commas, since the consciousness of the experience is not really a grasping, objectifying consciousness (Kortooms 2002, 102, 130, 192, 237). To put it differently, the experiential "object" is only a marginal, non-grasped and non-objectified "object". In my view, this rescue attempt is hopeless. Some terminological rigor is required, and to speak of a non-objectified object is unacceptable.

For Husserl, an object is something that is constituted in a process of objectification. More specifically, Husserl argues that something is only experienced as an object the moment it is experienced as being in possession of a sort of *transcendence*.⁸ It is only when we experience something as a unity in a multiplicity of adumbrations, as an identity across differences, that is, as something that transcends its actual appearance, that we are confronted with objects. Moreover, objects transcend their experiential appearance, or to put it differently, object-givenness always involves a distinction between that which appears and that to whom it appears. But when is my experience given as an identity across difference, when is my experience given as an object? My own suggestion is quite simple: We only experience our acts as temporal *objects* when we reflect. When this happens, the identity of the act appears across the differences in givenness. If I reflect upon my present perception, the perception is given as that which remains identical across the differences in respectively pre-reflective and reflective givenness, i.e., it is given as the *same* as what was previously experienced unthematically. It is only in reflection, where we are confronted with a relation between two different acts, the reflecting and the reflected, that the latter can appear as transcendent vis-à-vis the first. On the pre-reflective level, where there is only one experience, it cannot appear as a temporal object, since it cannot appear as transcendent in relation to itself.

It is obviously necessary to distinguish thematic and marginal modes of consciousness. We also need to dismiss any narrow conception of consciousness that equates consciousness with attention and claims that we are only conscious of that which we pay attention to. But this does not justify the claim that the experiences prior to reflection are given as marginal objects, i.e., this does not justify the claim that our pre-reflective experiences remain in the background as potential themes in exactly the same way as, say, the hum of the refrigerator. In my view, the entire analogy is misleading, since it remains stuck in the subject-object model. To put it

differently, the attempt to transfer the structures and principles of object-intentionality to the domain of self-awareness involves a regular category mistake and is bound to fail.

In addition, however, the *internal object* interpretation (or at least one version of it) also faces a quite different problem. According to it, our experiences are pre-reflectively given to inner time-consciousness, but inner time-consciousness itself is also given (to itself). If this self-givenness is of an objectifying kind, if inner time-consciousness is also given to itself as an object, the consciousness that is aware of this object will supposedly also have to be given to itself, and we are consequently facing an infinite regress. But even if it is supposed to be of a non-objectifying kind, we still have the problem of actually locating this additional self-awareness. If we examine a reflection on a perception of a blooming orchard, four elements should be discernible according to the *internal object* interpretation. 1) The orchard is given as a transcendent object. 2) The reflection is pre-reflectively given as an internal object. 3) The perception of the orchard is reflectively given as an internal object, and finally 4) the very constituting flow of inner time-consciousness to which all these objects are given, also reveals itself. But that seems somewhat excessive, i.e., the basic question is whether such a manifold can be phenomenologically spelled out, or whether it, on the contrary, is the result of a speculative construction. I for my part find it impossible to intuitively cash out the distinction between the pre-reflective givenness of the experience and the non-objectifying self-givenness of the primal process.

But to insist that the very constituting flow of inner time-consciousness *is* the pre-reflective self-givenness of the experience is not to deny the distinction between the experience and the experiencing, is not to deny the distinction between the intentional act and the pre-reflective givenness of the act. It is easy to illustrate why this distinction must be kept. If we take three different acts, say, a visual perception of a bird, an anticipation of a forthcoming holiday, and a denial of the claim that Earth is the largest planet in our solar system, these three acts obviously have different intentional structures. But the self-givenness of the three acts does not have a different structure in each case. On the contrary, we are faced with one and the same basic structure. For that reason, it is not permissible simply to collapse the distinction between the act and its self-givenness. In short, the idea is not to deny the distinction between the flow and the experience. The flow is one; the experiences are many, so obviously there must be a difference. But this difference is not a difference between the whole and its parts. The flow of inner time-consciousness is not simply the totality of all the acts. The flow of inner time-consciousness is a basic dimension of non-objectifying self-manifestation, and this self-manifestation is exactly what we encounter in the pre-reflective self-givenness of the acts. To put it differently, prior to reflection there is no awareness of internal objects and there is no distinction between the lived self-manifestation of the experiences and the flow of inner time-consciousness. Inner time-consciousness simply is the name of the pre-reflective self-awareness of our experiences.

To sum up, I do not think the *internal object* interpretation offers us a satisfactory account of neither time-constitution nor of self-awareness. To be even more condemning: I think that the position that is developed in text nr. 6 and elsewhere demonstrates an astonishing confusion, an inability to properly distinguish quite different constitutive contexts. Husserl apparently takes his analysis of the constitution of objects as paradigmatic and then indiscriminately applies those results elsewhere. The fact that a mistake of this kind can at all be found in the Bernau Manuscripts demonstrates one thing very clearly. Any expectations to the effect that the Bernau Manuscripts as a whole represents a step forward in comparison to earlier material found in *Husserliana X* is bound to be disillusioned. In a recent article entitled "Das Problem der Zeit bei Husserl," Alexander Schnell points out that when reading the Bernau Manuscripts one frequently gets the impression that Husserl had simply forgotten his earlier insights, and had to start all over (Schnell 2002, 90). I believe text nr. 6 confirms this verdict.⁹

3. An alternative model

Let us now look at one of the alternative suggestions founds in *Husserliana XXXIII*. In text nr. 10, we find Husserl pursuing a rather different strategy. At first, Husserl writes that we need to

distinguish three different levels, namely the (objective) time of nature, the (subjective or immanent) time of the phenomenological appearances (which makes up the first level of transcendental time), and finally a further sphere of "experiences" (the word is placed in inverted commas) that constitutes all of the above. This division then gives rise to the following question: Is the constituting streaming of experience itself in phenomenological time, or is it rather atemporal? But as Husserl then writes: "Auch der Erlebnisfluss, in dem das Tonereignis gegeben ist, ist ein individuelles Objekt und hat seine Zeitstrecke und Zeitstelle" (Hua 33/185). Fortunately, Husserl immediately retracts and he points out that such a view would lead to an infinite regress – if we speak of the constituting flow as an object, we also have to speak of the givenness of this object, and therefore also of a further more fundamental flow for whom this object is given, etc. (Hua 33/185). Husserl then suggests another possibility: Could it not be the case that the primal process can persist without itself being given as a temporal object (Hua 33/187-188, 33/244), and could it not be the case, that the constitution of the experiences as objects in immanent time only takes place in reflection, and that we prior to reflection are simply dealing with a mere running-off of data (Hua 33/245) In appendix V, Husserl juxtaposes the two models considered so far:

Die beiden Möglichkeit: 1) [...] Der Prozess des Ichlebens ist ein beständiges ‚Wahrnehmen‘ von Erlebnissen, ein beständiges Konstituieren von Zeit mit zeiterfüllenden immanenten Gegenständen. Demgemäß kann immerfort ein reflektives Erfassen einsetzen, das den aufmerkenden und erfassenden ‚Blick‘ auf das immerfort sich Konstituierende richtet. 2) Das ist nicht der Fall. Ströme des ursprünglichen Lebens sind, verlaufen, ohne Erlebnisse im Sinn zeitlich konstituierter Einheiten aktuell konstituiert in sich zu tragen. Nur eine Potentialität liegt vor, die Reflexion besagt einen Neuvollzug von ‚Auffassungen‘, ein Hineinbringen des Zeitkonstituierens, und zwar ein immer mögliches, das aber nicht schon vorher war, nicht schon ohnehin im Spiel war und nur seinen attentionalen Modus zu ändern hätte (Hua 33/203-4).

Ultimately, however, Husserl rejects the second, alternative, model. Two different considerations seem decisive. First of all, Husserl insists that no process of primal life (*Urlebensprozess*), i.e., no constituting stream of consciousness is possible unless this process is conscious of itself at the moment of its occurrence (Hua 33/188). As he repeats again and again: "Das Leben selbst ist im Fließen lebendiges Bewusstsein des Fließens" (Hua 33/103, cf. 33/48). Thus, it will not do to try to avoid the danger of an infinite regress by postulating the existence of a fundamental unconscious and non-constituted process. Such a construction would only give rise to even crasser absurdities (Hua 33/200-201). However, one might reasonably ask, why this observation is at all relevant in the present context. Apparently, because Husserl simply equates "being conscious" with "being conscious as an object," and he therefore insists that unless the primal stream is given to itself as an object, it will remain unconscious.

Husserl's second reason for rejecting the alternative model is that it is difficult to understand how something can be given as a temporal object in reflection unless it was already constituted as a non-grasped, marginal, object prior to reflection. After all, reflection is exactly characterized by disclosing, not by producing its theme. There must, in other words, be something for the reflection to grasp hold of, it must be able to gain a foothold if it is to succeed, and this foothold will exactly be lacking if the stream is originally a mere running-off of data (Hua 33/201, 205).

How convincing are both of these counter-arguments? I do not think they are convincing at all. First of all, although Husserl is right in pointing out that an unconscious foundation is of no help – as he writes at one point: If we presuppose a series of unconscious content, it is by no means clear why this series should become conscious simply by being apprehended in a certain manner (Hua 33/201) – it is regrettable that he simply identifies consciousness with object-consciousness and constitution with object-constitution. He should have known that the way in which we are acquainted with our own subjectivity differs radically from the way in which we are acquainted with objects, and that it is phenomenologically unacceptable to operate with the following false alternative: Either consciousness is given as an object, or it is not given at all.¹⁰ To put it differently, the real and decisive problem with the second model is that it does not consider

the following natural possibility: The primal stream is conscious in and through itself in a non-objectifying manner, and it is its possession of this pre-reflective self-awareness that allows the stream to reflect upon itself, thereby constituting immanent temporal objects. In text nr. 10, Husserl briefly considers the possibility that a *conscious* process might constitute the experiences as immanent (objects) through a special apprehension, but he does not pursue this option in further detail (Hua 33/200).

Secondly, although Husserl is right in arguing that the very stream of consciousness does involve some kind of streaming unification, although the possibility of reflection does presuppose that a certain formation of unity occurs in the primal stream, it is difficult to understand why he wants this unity to be the unity of a temporal *object*. Why does it need to come about as the result of an object-constitution? In short, would it not have been appropriate to distinguish between the passive self-constitution, self-temporalization and self-unification of the lived stream, and its subsequent reflective objectification?

4. The influence of Brentano

In a note from 1929, Fink writes that Husserl in his intended revision of the Bernau Manuscripts planned to work out what he took to be the most important advances *vis-à-vis* the material on time-consciousness from 1905-1910, and that this included a "Restitution der Brentano'schen-Aristotelischen Lehre" (Quoted in Bruzina 1993, 360). It is, in fact, quite easy to identify Brentanian elements in the Bernau Manuscripts. Whether they also constitute an advance *vis-à-vis* Husserl's earlier reflections is, however, a different question.

Let me quickly recapitulate Brentano's position in *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt*.

After his famous analysis of intentionality in book II, chapter I, Brentano turns to the problem of self-awareness, or as he calls it *inner consciousness*. Equating consciousness with the psychical phenomenon or act, Brentano takes consciousness to be characterized by a reference to an object, namely to the object that consciousness is conscious of. The term "conscious," however, can be used in a twofold sense. On the one hand, we can say of an act that it is conscious of an object. On the other hand, we can say of an object that it is conscious insofar as one is aware of it. All psychical acts are characterized by their being conscious of something. The question is whether they are also conscious in the second sense, i.e., whether one is also aware of them, or whether one must deny this and consequently admit the existence of *unconscious* psychical acts (Brentano 1874, 142-143).

One of the traditional arguments in defense of the existence of an *unconscious* consciousness insists that only the unconscious can save us from a vicious infinite regress. *If* all occurrent experiences were (self)conscious, that is accompanied by an inner consciousness, and if this inner consciousness were itself conceived of as an independent experience, it itself would also have to be accompanied by a further inner consciousness, and so forth *ad infinitum*.

In *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt*, however, Brentano ends up rejecting the existence of an unconscious consciousness. He claims that it has an implication that is just as absurd as the position it seeks to avoid, the implication namely that self-awareness originates out of the unconscious. At the same time, Brentano obviously wants to avoid the infinite regress. How does he manage to pull off that trick? Brentano denies one of the crucial premises, and argues that the inner consciousness in question, rather than being a new experience, is simply an internal feature of the primary experience. Thus, an experience is conscious not by being taken as an object by a further experience, but by taking itself as an object, and according to Brentano, this prevents any infinite regress from getting off the ground.¹¹

Let me provide a simple illustration: While hearing a tone, I am aware of hearing it. What is the structure of my consciousness in this case? I have a perception of a tone, and an awareness of the perception, and consequently two objects: The tone and its perception. Contrary to appearance, however, I do not have two different experiences. As Brentano points out, the perception of the tone is united so intrinsically and intimately with the awareness of the perception of the tone, that they only constitute one single psychical phenomenon. Their apparent separation is merely due to a conceptual differentiation (Brentano 1874, 179-180). Brentano

consequently claims that every intentional act has a double object, a primary and a secondary. In the case of the hearing of a tone, the primary and thematic object is the tone; the secondary and unthematic object is the hearing. It is important to notice, however, that this secondary object of the act although conscious is not itself thematically observed (*beobachtet*). To observe something thematically is to take it as one's primary object, and for the act to do so with itself is strictly impossible. The tone which we hear is observed, the hearing of the tone not, since it is only by observing the tone, that we are aware of the hearing; only by intending the primary object, that we are aware of the secondary object (Brentano 1874, 181).

It is not difficult to locate a Brentanian influence in the Bernau Manuscripts. First of all, Husserl does briefly consider the possibility of avoiding an infinite regress of foundation by means of the unconscious, but just like Brentano, he ultimately rejects this solution (Hua 33/200). Secondly, Husserl frequently simply seems to accept Brentano's alternative: The experiences are either unconscious or given as objects, there is no third possibility (cf. section 3 above). And finally, and most revealing, on several occasions Husserl employs Brentano's distinction between the primary and the secondary object of consciousness. As he for instance writes in text nr. 2 and 1, respectively:

Bewusstsein ist nicht bloß Sachbewusstsein, Bewusstsein von seinem ‚primären‘ Gegenstand, sondern auch ‚inneres‘ Bewusstsein, Bewusstsein von sich selbst und seinem intentionalen Prozess. Es hat neben den primären Gegenständen seine ‚sekundären‘ (Hua 33/42).

Beiderseits haben wir mittelbare Intentionalität, und zu jeder mittelbaren Intentionalität gehört die doppelte ‚Richtung‘ der Intentionalität, auf das primäre Objekt und auf das sekundäre Objekt, d.i. auf die ‚Akte‘ und die primären Objekte im Wie ihrer Gegebenheitsweise. Beiderseits führt das auf keine unendlichen Regresse der Intentionalität (Hua 33/10. Cf. 33/206).

Husserl's positive appraisal in the Bernau Manuscripts differs rather strikingly from his original assessment of Brentano's theory, which we find in the first edition of *Logische Untersuchungen*. In that work, Husserl denied that there was any phenomenological evidence in support of the claim concerning the existence of a *constant* and *ceaseless* inner perception, and he consequently rejected Brentano's theory as a piece of construction (Hua 19/367, 19/759).

It could be argued that this criticism is based on a misunderstanding. Husserl seems to equate Brentano's notion of inner consciousness with his own notion of inner perception, but he is thereby overlooking the fact that Brentano explicitly warns against understanding inner consciousness as a kind of thematic observation (cf. Brentano 1874, 181). To put it differently, if Husserl takes Brentano to be claiming that we are constantly thematically aware of our occurrent experiences he might be right in rejecting the thesis but wrong in ascribing it to Brentano. However, Husserl's criticism can also be interpreted in a slightly different manner, namely simply as involving a rejection of Brentano's idea that we are *constantly* objectifying our own experiences. As Husserl points out in the 1. Investigation, the sensations are originally simply lived through as moments of the experience, they are not objectified and taken as objects. This only happens in a subsequent reflection (Hua 19/80). This assertion is then followed up in the 2. Investigation, where we find the following very significant remark:

Daß der zugehörige Belauf an Empfindungen oder Phantasmen *erlebt* und in diesem Sinne bewußt ist, besagt nicht und kann nicht besagen, daß er *Gegenstand* eines Bewußtseins in dem Sinne eines darauf gerichteten Wahrnehmens, Vorstellens, Urteilens ist (Hua 19/165. Cf. 19/395).

Obviously the central word is the term "bewußt". Husserl denies that the sensations are a phenomenological naught. On the contrary, they are conscious, that is experientially given, when they are lived through, and as he points out this givenness does not come about as the result of an objectification, does not come about because the sensations are taken as objects by an (internal) perception. The sensations are given, not as objects, but exactly as subjective

experiences. The very same claim can be found in the 5. Investigation. There Husserl writes that the sensations as well as the intentional acts themselves (i.e., all that is really contained in the stream of consciousness) are lived through and experienced (*erlebt*), but he denies that they appear in an objectified manner; they are neither seen nor heard. They are conscious without being intentional objects (Hua 19/395, 19/399).¹² This is not to deny that we can in fact direct our attention towards our experiences, and thereby take them as objects of an inner perception (Hua 19/424), but this only occurs the moment we reflect.

In the light of these statements, the conclusion is easy to draw: In *Logische Untersuchungen*, Husserl does not seek to identify the givenness (or to be more precise the self-givenness) of our experiences with the givenness of objects. Thus, unlike Brentano Husserl does not believe that our experiences are conscious by being taken as secondary *objects*. As he explicitly states in the 6. Investigation: “Erlebtheit ist nicht Gegenständlichkeit” (Hua 19/669).¹³

In central texts from the Bernau Manuscripts, however, Husserl unfortunately seems to have forgotten this insight completely.

5. Retention and protention

The main thrust of this presentation has been critical. I have tried to demonstrate that it might be wise not to have too high expectations to Husserl’s account of time-consciousness in the Bernau Manuscripts. In my view, a good part of the material found in *Husserliana* XXXIII is simply inferior to Husserl’s earlier analyses, (not to speak of Husserl’s subsequent analyses in the C manuscripts).¹⁴ In short, I would be rather reluctant in following Ingarden in his appraisal that the Bernau Manuscripts might be Husserl’s “most profound and perhaps most important work” (Ingarden 1962, 157).

However, my critical appraisal of the Bernau Manuscripts has to be modified on at least two accounts. First of all, the texts collected in *Husserliana* XXXIII do not all deal with the problem of how to avoid an infinite regress, and it is undeniable that the Bernau Manuscripts contain a wealth of fascinating and novel material when it comes to some of the other topics treated. One very prominent example that, as far as I can judge, really does present a step forward is Husserl’s new analysis of the relation between the primal impression – or the primal presentation as it is now, much more appropriately, called – and the retention and protention. Secondly, the two different attempts at accounting for the workings of time-consciousness that I have presented so far do not exhaust Husserl’s repertoire. Let me very briefly outline one further alternative that can also be found in the Bernau Manuscripts.

After having considered and rejected an unconscious starting point, Husserl recapitulates his reflections in the following manner:

Müssen wir also nicht schließen: ein Urprozess, der für sich selbst nicht als Prozess konstituiert, also seiner selbst bewusst ist, ist undenkbar? Es muss also jedes Erlebnis bewusst und auch das Bewusstsein von ihm selbst bewusst sein. Es wird nun alles von der Aufklärung der Selbstbezogenheit des Erlebnisse erster Stufe konstituierenden Prozesses abhängen, die ja zunächst so klingt wie der sich am eigenen Schopf aus dem Sumpf ziehende Herr von Münchhausen, und die wir doch nicht preisgeben können, wenn unendliche Regresse vermieden werden sollen [...]. (Hua 33/207).

What is the structure of this primal self-awareness? If we are to avoid an infinite regress, the primal process must constitute itself in such a manner that it is conscious of itself without presupposing any further processes. It must so to speak rest in itself (Hua 33/191). The task is then to come up with a satisfactory account of this notion of self-constitution. In text nr. 2, Husserl seeks to explain self-constitution and more specifically the “Seiner-selbst-bewusst-Sein des Bewusstseinsstromes” (Hua 33/46) in terms of a process of coincidence (*Deckung*) and fulfillment that occurs between the successive phases of the primal stream itself. To be more specific, and here I am quoting the introduction by the two editors: “Der neuen Lehre der Bernauer Manuskripte zufolge ergibt sich das Selbstbewusstsein des Urprozesses vielmehr aus dem Erlebnis einer *gegenwärtigen* anschaulichen Erfüllung, d.h. aus dem Bewusstsein des

kontinuierlichen Übergangs von retentionalen Protentionen zu ihrer anschaulichen Verwirklichung.“(Hua 33/xlii). To some extent, one can see this final attempt as an elaboration of Husserl renowned analysis of *Quer-* and *Längsintentionalität*. According to Husserl’s analysis in *Husserliana X*, each retention is not only retaining the preceding tone, but also the preceding primal impression. That is, the actual phase of the flow is not only retaining the tone, which has just been, but also the elapsing phase of the flow. In short, the retentional modification does not only permit us to experience an enduring temporal object, it does not merely enable the constitution of the identity of the object in a manifold of temporal phases; it also provides us with temporal self-awareness. In the Bernau Manuscripts, however, this account undergoes one decisive change.¹⁵ The importance of protentional consciousness is emphasized. A present phase of consciousness is conscious of itself as a present phase of consciousness, because it is conscious of itself as the actualization of a preceding anticipation (Hua 33/46). Thus, as Kortooms puts it, self-consciousness is ultimately possible because “the consciousness that fulfills itself retains the protentional directedness toward fulfillment that belonged to the preceding phase of consciousness” (Kortooms 2002, 162).

Why is this model at all of interest for our current investigation? Because Husserl apparently no longer looks for an underlying foundation to explain how the stream of consciousness can be self-aware, but instead accounts for this self-awareness in terms of the very structure of the stream itself. Thus, no regress of foundation is apparently initiated. Unfortunately, however, this does not guarantee that the model is successful. Let me briefly mention two critical reservations.

1. Kortooms takes the explanation offered by Husserl in text nr. 2 to be the most convincing account to be found in the Bernau Manuscripts. In his view, this model does actually succeed in explaining the process of self-constitution in a satisfactory manner. This sounds very promising, of course, but when Kortooms then adds that self-constitution is basically a question of how the primal stream is constituted for itself as a secondary temporal object (cf. Kortooms 2002, 160, 193), the old problems just reappear. I will leave it open whether this reading does in fact capture what Husserl is driving at in text nr. 2 or whether it simply reflects Kortooms understanding of the matter. But if Kortooms were in fact right, it should be clear why the model would *not* provide us with a satisfactory account or understanding of what self-constitution is all about. The way to avoid an infinite regress is by accepting the existence of a kind of non-objectifying self-awareness that undercuts the distinction between that which appears and that to whom it appears. This is why any attempt to construe self-constitution as the bringing to givenness of an *object* is bound to fail.

2. Is it wise to attempt to understand self-constitution in terms of *fulfillment*? Fulfillment is a relational process. It is a relation between something that fulfils and something that is fulfilled. Even if that which fulfils and that which is fulfilled turns out to be the same, we are still dealing with a dyadic structure, and the question is whether such a structure will enable us to understand *self-constitution*.¹⁶ There are reasons to believe that Husserl in his original analysis of *Längsintentionalität* in *Husserliana X* stayed clear of such a dyadic and relational account. Certainly, in this analysis Husserl did focus on the relation between the primal impression and the retention in his account of the absolute self-manifestation of consciousness (something that Derrida and Henry have respectively praised and condemned).¹⁷ But Husserl also explicitly argued that the *retentional* modification presupposes an *impressional* (primary, original, and immediate) self-awareness, not only because consciousness is as such self-given, but also because retention of an unconscious content is impossible (Hua 10/119). This notion of impressional self-awareness seems required if one is to avoid the aporetic consequences suggested by some deconstructive readings: Initially, consciousness is unconscious, and it only gains self-awareness *nachträglich* through the retentional modification. In contrast to this reading, which makes self-awareness emerge out of non-identity, Husserl’s notion of impressional self-awareness allows for the following interpretation. Pre-reflective self-awareness is “immediately” given in the ecstatic unity of primal impression-retention-protention, and is not a gradual, delayed, or mediated process of self-unfolding. This seems to be what is required if one is to avoid the Scylla of an instantaneous, non-temporal self-awareness, and the Charybdis of a completely fractured time-consciousness that makes the consciousness of the present and of the unity of the stream unintelligible. To repeat, the notion of impressional self-awareness seems required, but as

far as I can see, it does not play any significant role in the Bernau Manuscripts. I could be wrong, however. In their introduction to *Husserliana* XXXIII, the two editors write: "Anders als in den frühen Texten handelt es sich dabei nicht mehr um ein bloß nachträgliches, d.h. retentionales Bewusstsein vom Urstrom, sondern um ein wesentlich in der fließenden Gegenwart verankertes Selbstbewusstsein des Urstroms" (Hua 33/xlii). But then again, the two editors also claim that one of the promising new insights to be found in the Bernau Manuscripts is Husserl's realization that the primal process is not simply an objectifying intentional consciousness, is not simply intending the acts as immanent temporal objects (Hua 33/xxxvi, xliii). I have to admit that I have been unable to find a clear and unequivocal articulation of such a position anywhere in the Bernau Manuscripts, and it is certainly not a view that Husserl maintains consistently in these manuscripts.

6. Conclusion

Let me conclude with a brief digression. In Heidegger's lecture course *Prolegomena zur Geschichte des Zeitbegriffs* from 1925, Heidegger writes, that Husserl operated with a too narrow concept of Being. Due to his exclusive interest in intentionality, Husserl identified the Being of consciousness with the Being of objects, and consequently failed to uncover the unique mode of Being characterizing intentional subjectivity itself. Heidegger consequently states that a more radical phenomenology is called for. This phenomenology would have to return to the original givenness of subjectivity, and should not merely consider it, as Husserl did, insofar as it is a (potential) *object* of reflection (Heidegger 1979, 143, 152). Overall speaking, this is by no means a fair assessment of Husserl's phenomenology, but the criticism does seem pertinent when it comes to Husserl's position in the Bernau Manuscripts. After all, in these manuscripts, Husserl repeatedly asserts that the experiences are objects, that the I is an object, and that even the primal stream is an object. As a contrast, it is quite revealing to take a brief look at Heidegger's own position in the lecture course *Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie* from 1919/20, that is, from the years immediately following the composition of the Bernau Manuscripts. According to Heidegger, experiential life is not an object, and any investigation that seeks to grasp it as an object is consequently bound to fail. But from the fact that life is not an *object*, one should not, as Heidegger immediately adds, infer that it must then be a (traditionally conceived epistemological or psychological) *subject*. Both objectification and what he calls "subjectification" are, according to Heidegger, theoretical deformations of life (Heidegger 1993, 145-147, 236). Thus, when it comes to the study of pure life, traditional categories such as inner and outer, transcendence and immanence are all misplaced (Heidegger 1993, 253). Heidegger's own point of departure is factic life-experience itself with its concrete articulations and tendencies. And as he says, the task is to disclose the non-objectifying and non-theoretical self-understanding of life-experience in all of its modifications (Heidegger 1993, 155-156, 250). As is clear from this as well as other lecture courses from the same period, Heidegger doesn't subscribe to the view that life only becomes acquainted with itself through reflection. On the contrary, Heidegger clearly acknowledges the existence of a more fundamental form of self-acquaintance that is part and parcel of experiencing itself. Any worldly experiencing involves a certain component of self-acquaintance and -familiarity, every experience is characterized by the fact that "ich mir immer irgendwie vertraut bin" (Heidegger 1993, 251). And as Heidegger repeatedly emphasizes, this basic familiarity with oneself does not take the form of a reflective self-perception or a thematic self-observation, nor does it involve any kind of self-objectification. On the contrary, we are confronted with a process of lived self-acquaintance, which must be understood as an immediate expression of life itself, and whose distinctive feature is its non-reflective character (Heidegger 1993, 159, 165, 257-258).¹⁸ It is regrettable that Husserl was unable to formulate himself with the same unambiguousness in the Bernau Manuscripts. Fortunately, and this should not be forgotten, he did so elsewhere.¹⁹

NOTES:

¹ In Kortooms' recently published book *Phenomenology of Time*, which contains the most detailed analysis of Husserl's Bernau Manuscripts to date, Kortooms argues that it is possible to find at least three different, and mutually conflicting, attempts at explaining time-consciousness in the 1917/18 manuscripts (Kortooms 2002, 110).

² For such an interpretation, cf. Brough 1972, 308-309, Sokolowski 1974, 156-157.

³ It is only at the very beginning of the text that Husserl takes the caution of placing the term "object" within inverted commas.

⁴ This passage seems to constitute an exception to one of the claims made by the editors of the volume, since they argue that Husserl in the Bernau Manuscripts distinguishes clearly between the retention of an immanent object and the retention of the primal process (Hua 33/xl).

⁵ In § 37 of *Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewußtseins*, Husserl writes that our perceptual act or perceptual consciousness is not in immanent time, is not a constituted temporal unity, but a moment of or a wave in the self-temporalizing, flowing experiencing itself (Hua 10/75-76. Cf. Hua 29/194). Later, in the same volume he writes: "Also *Empfindung*, wenn damit das *Bewußtsein* verstanden wird (nicht das immanente dauernde Rot, Ton etc., also das Empfundene), ebenso *Retention*, *Wiedererinnerung*, *Wahrnehmung* etc. ist *unzeitlich*, nämlich *nichts in der immanente Zeit*." (10/333-334). But whereas Husserl claims that our acts (be it perceptions, recollections, anticipations, imaginations, judgments, etc.), qua absolute constituting consciousness, reveal themselves, but not as immanently given temporal objects, he also quite explicitly writes that the very same acts appear in subjective time with duration and temporal location qua *objects of reflection* (Hua 10/112, 10/285, 10/293, 14/29). For an extensive presentation of this alternative account, cf. Zahavi 1999a, 2003b

⁶ It could be objected that there is something inappropriate about designating my awareness of my own occurrent experiences as an instance of self-awareness. According to this objection, self-awareness is an awareness of an identical self, and not simply an awareness of a manifold of (changing) experiences. There are several problems with this objection, however. First of all, it is not only possible to speak of self-awareness in terms of an experience being aware of a self. It is also possible to speak of self-awareness simply in terms of an experience being aware of itself. Secondly, it is by no means evident that the self is necessarily something that stands apart from or above the stream of consciousness. On the contrary, one might identify a certain basic notion of self(hood) with the invariant dimension of first-personal givenness characterizing all of my experiences (cf. Zahavi 1999a, 138-152, Zahavi 2000, Zahavi 2003a). For places where Husserl himself might be opting for exactly such a definition, cf. Hua 14/429, 13/184, 4/350, 14/151, EU 193.

⁷ For a lengthy exposition and defense of non-objectifying self-awareness, cf. Zahavi 1999a.

⁸ Occasionally, Husserl also speaks of subjectivity itself as being (self-)transcending. But first of all, self-transcendence and object-transcendence should not be confused. Secondly, although it is true that we are exactly aware of ourselves as intentional and temporal self-transcending beings, this does not entail that the very primordial *awareness* of this self-transcendence is itself dyadic, and that it itself involves a distinction between that which appears and that to whom it appears.

⁹ Perhaps it could be argued that Husserl in text nr. 6 (and elsewhere) is simply playing with a certain idea, trying to see where it will lead him. But if this charitable interpretation is correct, one might wonder whether the text deserved to be published.

¹⁰ To argue in this way is to fall victim to a misunderstanding that according to Michel Henry has dominated most of Western thought, and which he has dubbed *ontological monism*. It is exactly this principle of ontological monism, which has been behind the persisting attempts to interpret self-awareness in terms of reflection or introspection. In these cases, the model of intentionality has been the paradigm, self-awareness has been understood as the result of an objectifying intentional activity, and has therefore been taken to be a special form of *inner* object-manifestation (Henry 1963, 91-118). In contrast, one has to insist on the difference between object-givenness and self-givenness. Although the term "givenness" is used in both cases, they do not share the same structure (cf. Zahavi 1999b).

¹¹ As it turns out, Brentano does actually not succeed in avoiding an infinite regress. Cf. Zahavi 1999a, 30.

¹² This positive appraisal to Husserl's early view on sensations should not be understood as a simultaneous endorsement of his "apprehension – apprehension-content schema".

¹³ This is an insight that we also find in many of Husserl's later writings. For an extensive discussion, cf. Zahavi 1999a, Zahavi 2003b.

¹⁴ In itself, this observation can serve as a refutation of the following simplistic take on Husserl's development: Husserl's oeuvre can be seen as a series of meditations on the same fundamental themes, meditations that were constantly improved, refined, and deepened. For that reason, on any given topic Husserl's later writings are always preferable to his earlier ones.

¹⁵ Nevertheless, the ideas developed in text nr. 2 must be seen as an elaboration of the model found in *Husserliana X*, they do not offer us a completely new account.

¹⁶ Dieter Henrich is known for his forceful criticism of such an attempt (cf. Henrich 1970).

¹⁷ For an overview of their different takes on Husserl's analysis, cf. Zahavi 1999a, 82-90.

¹⁸ For a more extensive discussion of Heidegger's early views on reflection, selfhood, and pre-reflective self-awareness, cf. Zahavi 2004.

¹⁹ I am indebted to Jim Hart for comments to an earlier version of the article. This study was funded by the Danish National Research Foundation.

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