

TIME IN FEMINIST PHENOMENOLOGY

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1.

INTRODUCTION: TOWARD A FEMINIST
PHENOMENOLOGY OF TIME

Christina Schües

The book *Time in Feminist Phenomenology* brings together several approaches to a subject that is always present in life but that has been largely disregarded by feminist phenomenology: namely, time. This lack is perhaps surprising since feminist phenomenology is now well established and arises out of the reevaluation and extension of the work of classical phenomenologists for whom time was central, including Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Hannah Arendt, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Emmanuel Levinas, and Paul Ricoeur.¹ In addition, Simone de Beauvoir, Luce Irigaray, and Julia Kristeva are among the influential feminist thinkers who combine phenomenology with feminist *theoretical reflections on time*.²

Given the diversity of philosophies in the phenomenological tradition, it will come as no surprise that each of the essays in this volume approaches the question of time in a different manner. Yet, as different as their approaches are, all texts share one thing: each one engages with feminist phenomenology or feminist theory. If we are to call these essays feminist philosophy, we would not articulate this as a feminist love of wisdom; rather, it would imply a theory in the sense of "theoria," a distant observation from a critical feminist point of view. For this reason the feminist phenomenologists contributing to this volume share an interest in a variety of themes that seem to have been forgotten or disregarded in the history of philosophy. Thus, they focus not simply on the negation or destruction of specific concepts in the history of ideas, but on the productive appropriation and critical rethinking of classical texts and theories, themes and questions. Focusing on these neglected themes means not only enlarging the realm of topics, but also shifting the methodology and meaning of phenomenological discourse. Of course, feminist phenomenologists' special interest is to relate phenomenology to the issue of gender; but central to this relation have been the ontological questions of the nature

of space, time, and the body. So there have been numerous feminist discourses on space, the body, sexual differences, and gender, as well as male-female relations with their intrinsic power structures, and the theme of alterity. However, the issue of time has been neglected. Given that feminist phenomenology has, since the 1990s, engaged in rereading the classics in a most fruitful and productive way, it is even more remarkable that feminist phenomenology has never really considered, or reconsidered, questions of time and temporality, even though, and especially because, they have been central not only to phenomenology, but throughout the history of philosophy starting with the Greeks.

The founding father of phenomenology, Edmund Husserl, whose primary interest lay in the structures of consciousness and its relations to the world, saw clearly that not only our experience, but our existence in general, is temporal. This insight, initiated by Augustine, is central to all phenomenological considerations of time. Well known is the experience Augustine describes in the *Confessions*, where he says that he understands precisely *what* time is when he does not think about it. But as soon as he directs his attention to it and to saying *what* time really is, then he does not know it. These famous sentences typify our basic and common philosophical *difficulties* (*philosophische Verlegenheit*) regarding time. We are concealed in our thoughtlessness about time, even as we take time for granted (*Selbstverständlichkeit*). No wonder there is a resistance to thinking about time that philosophy in general and phenomenology in particular are up against. Our inability to think about time is due precisely to the fact that we take it for granted. To think our taken-for-granted relations with the world is the basic task of phenomenology, and, of course, time is preeminently taken for granted. Time withdraws and therefore remains in the background; as such, it is continuously unsettling (*beunruhigend*). This sort of withdrawal of what should be obvious, as well as the thoughtlessness concerning what we take for granted, is typical of philosophical problems. Some phenomena withdraw from our access and our concepts and, nevertheless, keep haunting us even as they withdraw. To be drawn into and by “something” that withdraws and is hidden is one of the basic philosophical problems; but it is a fascinating problem, *for it involves questioning the very concepts out of which the questions are themselves posed*. One could even say that the real philosophical problem is a question, such as the question of time, that one does not know how to “pose.” Perhaps this is why it appears that thinking is *most at a loss* when it tries to say what time is.

One reason for which it is at a loss, which is reflected in the essays in this volume, has its roots in the Greek tradition with which our contemporary thinking still struggles. For the Greeks, time was understood on the basis of movement and change, meaning, as the now moment of the present (*Gegenwärtige*). However, we

no longer accept the idea that time is only the now of the present moment (*Jetzt der Gegenwärtigkeit*). It seems clear to us that time is not present simply in the now of the present because, whatever is now, will immediately become a past. The dimensionality of time, its status as past, present, and future, is not included in the notion of the now moment as present, as it was for Greek thinking.

Augustine’s big achievement arose from his investigation of the relation between personal experiences and time, which led to the realization that time is multidimensional. Augustine was the first philosopher to propose a concept of internal time in order to explain movement in relation to experience.³ For him, time is not in the world or a property of the world, but rather the *extension of the soul*. The soul measures the time of movements in the form of a continuous presence: “The present considering the past is memory, the present considering the present is immediate awareness, the present considering the future is expectation.”⁴ Past, present, and future are psychic or mental functions, which do not have their corresponding temporal order in the world. The soul measures impressions that are found in the soul, in consciousness, and hence, only the soul has time. In other words, time has a subjective structure.⁵ With Augustine, time has its real location (*topos*) in the soul, and, thus, time means temporality, and redemption from temporality is accomplished only by the grace of God. The tension of the soul, unifying itself out of the dispersed manifold, is the result of the *curiositas*, an aspect of truth; Augustine posits this as the way to overcome the limitations of Greek thinking about time. However, the problem remains: Does time have reality? Is time real? Does time exist? Or is time only an a priori form of the idea of subjectivity?⁶

Aristotle addresses this question when he argues that the determination of time is the counted succession of “nows,” in which movements enfold themselves. This does not imply that space or location (*topos*) is more real than time or that time exists only in the human understanding (because counting takes place in the human understanding). But Aristotle knows that human beings are beings who have a sense for time (*aisthesis chronou*) because they have expectations. However, in this context, expectation means having foresight concerning something not present, whereas having a sense of time seems to imply having foresight regarding something futural. By defining time as merely the distinction between the present and the non-present, Aristotle loses a true concept of time. Although he construes human beings as having goals and purposes, this only means being able to distance oneself from the present in order to look at that which could next be present. As such, we can see that this anthropological thesis does not explain anything about temporality, that is, how it is that we have a sense of time.

In the twentieth century, phenomenology sets out to investigate time with respect to subjective, lived time—the time of experience. Husserl understood this

problem, and he showed that as soon as we reflect upon the nature of time and upon subjective time consciousness, the lived experience of time, its familiarity vanishes, leaving us “involved in the most extraordinary difficulties, contradictions, and entanglements.”⁷ Nonetheless, Husserl focused on internal time consciousness in contrast to objective, physical time. In this regard, the threefold experience of time—past, present, and future—was considered by many phenomenologists to be the fundamental approach to time. However, differences emerged over the concept of presence and the origin of time as presence. Husserl, in his transcendental phenomenology, constructed the structure of time out of a passing presence as a fundamental moment of genetic time constitution. Husserl’s phenomenology of time lays the foundation for the analysis of how time is constituted, how experiences are temporally structured, and how different modes of consciousness can be distinguished in reference to their time structure. Thus, the founding father of phenomenology is a rich source for the successors who all have set off in very different directions. Henri Bergson, whose work belongs to the realm of life philosophy but who has been in close relation to phenomenological and existential research, especially concerning his study of memory, puts more emphasis on the past and, hence, the concept of memory as constitutive of the creation of the present.⁸ Martin Heidegger’s guiding principle in *Being and Time* is the idea that being-there projects itself into the future and, therefore, “the primary phenomenon of primordial and authentic temporality is the future,” and thus, is being toward the future.⁹ The ontological concept of being-there is put in relation to the existential fact that all humans are “being driven toward death.”¹⁰ The individual being finds his or her authenticity and liberty only in acknowledging the existential fact of his or her mortality. Jacques Derrida criticized Husserl’s conception as metaphysics of presence by referring to different levels of speech and meaning: “Signs represent the present in its absence.”¹¹ With this basic insight he opens the ground for hermeneutics and deconstructive approaches of different kinds.

These differences in the phenomenological tradition evoked further phenomenological reflections on time such as Paul Ricoeur’s reflections on narrative identity as discussed in this volume by Annemie Halsema, discussions of differences between the time of the world, the time of life, and personal time (Alfred Schutz, Wilhelm Dilthey) invoked in particular by Gail Weiss, as well as Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s emphasis on bodily anchorage in the world and in time (in Stoller and Fisher).¹² Modern and contemporary philosophy has developed a number of varied and sometimes incompatible time concepts. However, explorations of the relation between time and gender, or feminist issues and time concepts, have been completely neglected by many phenomenologists. That is, even though various rapprochements between feminism and phenomenology

have examined different aspects of lived experiences from the aspect of gender, comparatively little attention had been paid to the exploration of time and temporality in relation to gender. This is particularly extraordinary since time is a fundamental category for modern and contemporary philosophy and its reflection on ontological, epistemological, political, aesthetic, and ethic dimensions, dimensions that are issues for feminist phenomenology and gender theory. Moreover, it is particularly surprising since even the classical phenomenologists and hermeneuticists have developed concepts and linkages, such as time and lived experience (Husserl), the lived, anonymous, habitual body (Merleau-Ponty), or narrative identity (Arendt, Ricoeur), that are fundamental and useful for the thematization of gender and feminist theory in relation to issues of time. The field, which had been set out by classical phenomenologists, can be *shifted* into, *even transformed* by, gender theory and feminist phenomenology. Moreover, this transformation from classical philosophy of time into time concerning gender theory and feminist phenomenology can be traced back to our ideas about the origins of time itself. That is, at least for a moment we shall look at the beginning of questioning time, meaning the historical transformation from mythos to logos, from myth to reason. Ancient philosophers, such as Plato in the *Timaios*, struggled with the question of how to think about the simultaneous emergence of the cosmos with time. This question was of great importance for the astronomical and physical explanation of movement and change, and has important implications for the feminist phenomenological view of time. Thus, the starting point for this collection, the essay by Dorothea Olkowski, is appropriately concerned with the beginning of time, that is, the mythological prehistory of occidental philosophy. Since the question of myth and of the beginning of time concerns history *before* the logos, her essay is systematically located and literarily named *Prologue*. That is, it is a prologue in its double sense: as the beginning of history and as the situation before the history of logos.

Greek mythology tells the story of the god Hades, who comes from the underworld. Made imperceptible by the gift of the Cyclops, the helmet that conceals him, he comes to earth to abduct Kore, daughter of Demeter. For the Greeks, this abduction is a defining act that creates the seasons and so becomes the original determination of time for human beings. Olkowski argues that this conception of time is the determining act of the god of the underworld and a function of death and disjunction. Thus, for the Greek poets and philosophers, every so-called act of creation is ultimately an act of destruction and death. Olkowski finds this notion developed further in Western philosophy by Plato, for whom Nature is the “God of All Things,” who creates nothing, but who unravels all the elements, a “setting in due order.” But what this means, she claims, is that with respect to time, the

invisible world of Darkness and of the dark god Hades asserts its "rights" over the *visible world*, the world of the goddesses Demeter-Kore.

Thus, Olkowski posits that the visible world might be reinterpreted as the world of the Pelasgian goddess Eurynome. Eurynome was called the wide-wandering goddess, the visible moon and diffuse light. She was the universal goddess who set the cosmos in motion by dancing with the wind. But from her union with the wind, the goddess also brings forth the snake Ophion, who exasperates her by proclaiming himself the author of the self-created universe, until she, incredulous, "bruised his head with her heel, kicked out his teeth, and banished him to the dark caves below the earth." Olkowski suggests that according to the myth of Eurynome, Hades and the Western philosophers are the descendants of the serpent Ophion. This is why their *episteme* begins its surveying, measuring, and calculating on the basis of *shadows* projected upon surfaces, screens, and supports in the caves beneath the earth, while they liken the visible realm of the goddess to a prison dwelling. Olkowski then proposes that the goddess, along with the myth of Demeter-Kore, be taken as concepts that constitute a first philosophy, a description of the nature of reality and of the origin of time as creative and transformational, rather than as the deathly thought of an invisible and powerful destroyer.

This narrative and myth-based account, by expanding the horizons of our concept of time, allows us to move into the center of the reevaluation of the phenomenological tradition, which is based on the Greek tradition and a philosophy of logos, in terms of a philosophy that turns the privilege of death and mortality, solitude and contemplation, into a recognition of beginning and natality, human relation and action, and that is therefore able to thematize gender theory in relation to a philosophy of time.¹³

In order to account for two basic levels of discussion, this volume of *Time in Feminist Phenomenology* is construed in two principal sections: first, a phenomenology of time read from a feminist perspective and focusing on concepts and methods arising out of gender theory; second, a phenomenology of time taken in its ethical and political aspects. The former perspective focuses especially on methodological questions of phenomenological conceptions of time, such as change and becoming, different modes of experiences, and the relevancy of time for feminist phenomenology. A feminist approach always concerns the reevaluations of power relations within society, as, for example, the question of the relevance of time when discussing power relations or asymmetrical hierarchies between men and women. Thus, in a certain respect, feminist phenomenology is always also at least implicitly political and social. In the second section these implicit traits are made explicit. It focuses on temporal structures of the political and the social that affect gender issues, particular female experiences, questions of gender identity,

and questions surrounding our concepts of the body. Thus, the two sections are kept together by specific concerns, which are, however, discussed in relation to varying perspectives and themes.

Overall, several assumptions weave through the collection. These assumptions can be followed up as the central themes of *time in feminist phenomenology*. First, phenomenology concerns *methodological considerations*. Hence, the task becomes, as Sara Heinämaa argues, to explicate the temporal constitution of the experience of sexual difference as well as its pre-predicative foundations. If we want to develop a philosophical account of sexual difference, we need to engage in genetic phenomenological inquiries. We must also raise questions about the differences between the temporal structure of experiences, the self-constitution of time, and the temporal structure of reflective thinking. To this end, Christina Schües shows that they are grounded in very different time structures and that an understanding of these structures is relevant for further research in the political and social sphere, particularly in the realm of power relations, which are held in place by way of domination over time. The implications of this analysis are the subject of the second section of this book. Throughout these essays there is a shared view that we need a clarification and elaboration of the concepts of temporality and sedimentation, and a discussion of the differences between empirical and phenomenological inquiries, and from there a clear account of sexual differences.

Second, central to more or less all authors is the belief in the *intertwining between the temporality of experience and gender*. Experiences are gendered insofar as they are bound to the body and to the world. Experiences, as phenomenologists have clearly shown, are always temporal, and, as feminist theorists have argued, experiences are also gendered; thus, the interrelation between time and gender must be examined. The difficulty of thematizing this relation lies in the fact that neither time nor gender is "something" that can simply be thematized as something. Both are involved in the most extraordinary difficulties, contradictions, and entanglements. Because of these difficulties, contradictions, and entanglements, it may be that philosophical methods and questions utilized to explore time may also be applicable to gender. Martin Heidegger, for example, asked the insightful question "how does time show itself?"¹⁴ As soon as we try to understand time as objective time or clock time, we actually lose it, because we then measure only the movement from now to now and then homogenize the now points. *The same might hold for gender*; as soon as we try to objectify gender and find a list of attributes, the issue disappears or we find ourselves in some ungrounded naturalism. The alternative approach put forward by phenomenologists, and most explicitly by Heidegger, maintains that "time is temporal"; *Dasein*, or existence, is not objective time but is temporality. Alternatively, one could say that "gendered is gendering."

The gender, the woman, and the man are concepts that are as senseless as saying *the* time. Thus, for both we might pose the same kind of question: How does time show itself? How does gender show itself? And: how does gender show itself in relation to time? And how does time show itself in relation to gender? Thus, temporality is gendered, gendering is temporal. Time as an issue in the framework of feminist philosophy requires addressing gender in relation to temporality. Theorizing the relation between temporality and gender in the framework of feminist phenomenology means making use of the phenomenological tradition.

Time and gender, or better *temporalizing* and *gendering*, both force upon the philosopher the task of the thematization of their concrete realization as well as what is known as the *constitutive transcendental realm*. That is, in order to consider the question of “how time or gender shows itself,” we have to look at how experiences are constituted with respect to temporality and gendering. We have to focus on their concrete realization in different realms of experiences.

Time and gender seem to be particularly experienced in their negation or exaggeration. When we lack time or when time seems to flow away, when we do not have time for something, or when we are too late, then—so it seems—time shows itself with all its realistic force. But is this the time that we experience? Certainly our language seems to suggest that time is always passing by and not creating itself, but is this true? What is it that we face when we are too late? The feeling of boredom, or the sense of having free time and nothing to do, seems to suggest a different experience from what is normal, and a sense of time. “Normally” our gender recedes into the background; we are not always conscious of our gender; we experience, speak, or act as somebody gendered, but the gender becomes present to consciousness only when it is a problem, is emphasized, or the like. Hence, the notion of gender is strongly associated with a notion of anonymity and a focus on the body. Here the work by Merleau-Ponty is central to this discussion, since it is in his work that the idea of anonymity has been so clearly formulated. Explicitly taken up is this theme of anonymity by Silvia Stoller. However, her main interest in this paper consists of introducing an aspect of temporality that seems to be widely unrecognized, not only in feminist philosophy and phenomenology, but also in theories of time in general: the anonymous aspect of temporality. She proposes that there is an anonymous temporality that is not yet named or determined, but that lies at the basis of all temporal experiences, women’s as well as men’s. It is an indeterminate sphere from which experiences such as “female” or “male” temporality arise, and it is what makes them possible. Thus, recognizing such a general sphere of lived temporality allows us to think gendered temporality in nonbiological terms while at the same time considering the dynamic dimension of gendered temporality. Intersecting habits and gender, as well as time and anonymity, allows

any biological essentialism to be avoided (Stoller) and the masculine or the feminine to be regarded as different variations of human existence (Heinämaa). The dimension of anonymity must be complemented by further dimensions that are relevant for the constitution of time, namely the body.

Thus, the *third central theme* of this volume is the thematization of concepts of the body. When considering time and the body, the body is interpreted in different senses; it may be taken as lived, anonymous, or habitual. Starting with Merleau-Ponty’s *Phenomenology of Perception*, Linda Fisher discusses how habit, enacted through motility and bodily meaning, mediates between bodily space and spatiality. She then examines how habit, taken as an understanding body, is formed and forms a temporal character, and consequently, gender is read as habitude within a well-developed phenomenology of embodiment. Taking up the argument that embodiment includes both subjectivity and belonging to a genre, Fisher maintains that bodily identity, or more specifically, sexuate identity, is a construction that implies, as Judith Butler argues, an appeal to develop ourselves within the context and restrictions of society. Thus, the embodied self articulates itself within a social context for which it cannot account. This articulation can be narrated, but not entirely. For feminist purposes it is especially the limits of what is narratable that are worth considering, for these limits mark out the futural possibilities for us and for generations to come.

So we find Annemie Halsema explaining, in her essay “The Time of the Self: A Feminist Reflection on Ricoeur’s Notion of Narrative Identity,” how Ricoeur’s notion of narrative identity moves in between *idem* and *ipse*, between self-sameness and constancy on the one hand and the flux of time on the other. The narrative itself contains a notion both of time as passing and of time as enduring. For Halsema, Judith Butler exemplifies the position that it is not only in narrating our life story that we refer to time and use time, but that also the process of constructing an identity includes time, or rather *is* time. Moving along these lines of thought, Halsema then turns, with Luce Irigaray, to a bodily account of the narrative self. Not only the aging self—with its body that grows older and the perception and interpretation of the self that change in correspondence or in dissonance with it—but also the concept of the self itself includes time. These three basic assumptions—the concern about methodological considerations, the intertwining of the temporality of experiences and gender, and different concepts of the body—cannot be thought of independently from society and culture.

Precisely put, the experience of time depends upon the habits and the social norms of our society. The political (Fielding, Vasterling) and the social (Weiss) are inherently temporal, and not to be grasped without reference to the experiences, the body, identity, or certain habits. And this assumption about the temporality of

the political and the social is the fourth underlying theme of this volume. So, for instance, psychologists discovered that time, next to money, is one of the major issues in quarrels between couples. Walking too slowly, taking too much time in the bathroom, moving about hectically in the kitchen, or arriving too late or too early for an appointment are all familiar issues that can provide grounds for irritation in our relations with others. This observation about the importance of time holds true as well for intercultural relations. Each culture has its own structure of time, its own speed of time, and its own norms of time. And again, the different time concepts are also gendered in different ways. For instance, in the United States hard work and long working hours tend to be associated with norms of manhood, while family time is associated with women and children. In Japan, hard and fast working is considered to be one of the highest virtues, and it is associated with patriotism and being part of the collective.¹⁵

Particularly in Western countries, most people say that they need more time and that they lack time: many employees complain about the tempo at work; women especially feel that given their different roles as mothers, employees, partners, housekeepers, and caretakers, they lack time for themselves. The fight for balance among the different female roles is a temporal problem. However, paradoxically, one could also argue that people have more time. Officially we are working fewer hours than in the past. We have helping machines, and we live longer than the generations before us. Nevertheless, we can observe that time has sped up. But the faster pace of time might not be the root problem; rather, the question is how time is structured qualitatively, and how it is lived by women and men. Thus, the essays in this volume discuss differences in these time structures. Sociologically speaking, we can observe that we live in a multi-optional society in which so-called multitasking seems required. In this manner, the experience of time has been multiplied. We find several tracks of simultaneous (linear) time: 24-7 open hours, day and night business; every time and everywhere all options are open; everyone must be present at all times via mobile phone, e-mail, Internet blogs, and online groups. Following up on all these demands and communicative options results in stress. Withdrawing from the multi-optional society of simultaneity requires constant decision making, the ability to choose one particular option out of many possibilities. The multiplication of times results, therefore, in a lack of time, which brings stress and contributes to the lessening of the capacity to concentrate.

However, the question of our need for more time is also the question of our point of view: the question is not how much work does one have to do, the question is also what is considered to be work, and how is this distinguished from time filled with activities that I like, as well as time for myself. For example, some women

see time spent with their children as playful leisure time, and their work in the office as duty, and perhaps as stressful. Others might feel the opposite: time spent with their children is a mad rush, whereas life in the office is quiet, peaceful, and communicative, and hence, a relief. Although the images I draw upon might seem rather simple, I think the point is clear. No specific activity can be regarded as the source of time's quick passage, or as the source for stress. The root problem is not a particular activity or a lack of time, but the *rhythm of time*. By the rhythm of time I mean the temporal structure of society and of the way activities are to be carried out. In many Western societies, life is organized according to economic guidelines that can be followed without temporal stress only for individuals without children, without social dependencies, that is, people who can be anywhere whatever at any time. But as implied above, it might be that even if more flexible work hours were introduced, it would not necessarily mean that employees would use the flexibility in order to spend more time, for example, with their families.

The rhythm of time concerns the appropriateness of the time structure of our activities. Who is in control of the rhythm of time, and why? The more somebody else determines *when* and, most of all, *how* something must be done, the more we feel these determinations are not appropriate. We feel more stress, and our need for more time evolves. Hence, understanding the forces and the different structures of time lays the ground for understanding the relations between human beings, between men and women, between different groups and styles of living. To understand the sense in which time can be a powerful instrument to rule others and their activities means to take the first step toward active participation in the constitution of human relations and social norms. Thus, in order to understand these general concerns, the second section of this volume focuses explicitly on political and ethical aspects of time. Here it is important to notice that the political and the social are inherently temporal; it is action that is, in effect, interaction, the speaking and acting before others that gives potency to the act of saying rather than to what is actually said.

These concerns take us, once again, to the understanding of time held by the ancient Greeks, for whom the possibilities of the *polis* are revealed as embodied intermittent relations or spacings. But the *polis* is not just a space as such; it is not a physical location at all, but rather, as Hannah Arendt emphasizes, it is an "organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together."¹⁶ Understanding this relation of speaking and acting together must privilege the "relational and contextual" aspects of language over the "normative, rational and universal" ones.¹⁷ Consequently, the political is temporal in that the potency or power that is generated through interaction is effective only when it is actualized and lasts only as long as there is an active relation.

Helen A. Fielding supports her thesis of the temporality of the political by referring to Yael Bartana's video artworks, in particular *Wild Seeds* (2005). One theme of these videos is the specificity of embodied voices to reveal the fissures in national identity. She shows how videos necessarily involve temporality and, hence, are useful for the investigation of identity. Temporality is woven into its structure not only in terms of sequences, the length of the work, or the user's reception. Even more interestingly, the temporal aspects of video allow for the opening up of time-spaces. The thesis that time-spaces are made up of relational structures is strongly supported by the interpretational context of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Adriana Cavarero, and Hannah Arendt, who push the idea of the primacy of the interrelation among all people, people in their families, communities, or neighborhoods. However, these relations, which are based on an opening of the temporal and special dimension, may also take place when an artwork sets to work in its engagement with viewers, that is, when the video is playing in a public space.

Fielding argues that the intersubjective engagement with the film is based on the intercorporeal relation with the world, and thus, with the experience of haptic sound and vision; hence, she can show how subjectivity is always already relational and an engagement with the world. This subjective intertwinement shapes what is seen and heard in terms of its given temporal structure. With Arendt we know that politics depends on the relational structure of people and their engagement, that is, acting and speaking, in the world and toward the world. Also, for Arendt political action is a space-opening undertaking, that is, a spacing (*ein-räumen*), as Martin Heidegger would also say. Thus, also politics as well as the aesthetics of these videos privilege the temporal structure in the enactment between people. Both politics and video art feature the in-between, whereby a space is rather a spacing, a taking place between people, where they appear to one another. Of course, since spacing depends upon interacting and speaking for Arendt, or aesthetic interaction for Fielding, the place, the in-between people, is always contingent.

Any philosophy that takes time seriously will have to deal with contingency. Even though modern and contemporary philosophy have left the *sub specie aeternitatis* stance behind, there are scant reflections on the impact and consequences of contingency. The work of Hannah Arendt is one of the few exceptions. Contingency plays a prominent role in her work. Important concepts in her work such as natality, action, willing, history, and understanding are explicitly elaborated in the light of contingency. Arendt uses these concepts to shift and transform the history of thought to a different perspective. Not the death and the desire for immortality, but the birth and the consequent natality, which opens the grounding space for beginnings and relations, motivates human action and even feminist politics. Human beings are born to begin and not born to die; this phrase characterizes an

attitude that is extremely attractive for feminist thinking. Furthermore, what is so interesting about Arendt's reflections on contingency is the emphasis on "newness," both in the historical and the political sense of the possibility of a change for the better or the worse, and in the anthropological and the psychological sense of the shock of the unexpectedly new.

"Contingency, Newness, and Freedom: Arendt's Recovery of the Temporal Condition of Politics" is the title of Veronica Vasterling's explorations of the meaning and consequences of contingency in the sense of "newness" in Arendt's work. She relates this exploration to what she calls Arendt's political hermeneutics, that is, to a political philosophy for which the ability to understand and the ability to judge are central. From this we may hypothesize that Arendt's political philosophy resembles a political hermeneutics exactly because of the prominent role of contingency in the sense of newness. The discussion on newness and political beginning is made possible by Vasterling's emphasis on Arendt's deconstructive move from the binary opposition of necessity versus contingency, and its corresponding concepts of timelessness and change. Subversively Vasterling works out along the line of Arendt's work that the opposition of necessity is not contingency but freedom: freedom that is essential to political interaction and foundational plurality. Thus, human *life* is determined by the linear time conception with its possible interruptions, whereas human *nature*, to the contrary, can be described by the circular, repetitive time structure. However, this distinction is not ontologically, but methodologically, important when one focuses on the relation between time and the political realm.

The political realm, so one might argue, coheres with the experience of a common time for its members. The notion of "common time" was introduced by Husserl in the *Cartesian Meditations* and powerfully used by Schutz in order to describe the idea that even though people might not have precisely the same experience, they still may have some common experience and a common past. Schutz understands common time in a Bergsonian sense: the other's temporal duration and my own are to be found in one united act that embraces both courses of time. Because of the coexistence of both durations they have a similar structure, and hence age together. This basic and common temporal ground is seen as grounding the community in the future, allowing members of the community to act in concert. But is this actually real?

Gail Weiss takes on this pressing political and social issue by arguing against such a harmonious understanding of "common time." In her essay "Sharing Time across Unshared Horizons" she draws a different picture of the question of finding one's identity in time. Weiss argues forcefully that real social, temporal, and spatial "barriers" exist between individuals and groups of different races,

bodily capacities, and genders. In particular, disabled persons are frequently excluded from the “common world” and the standard world of working, and their identities are stigmatized accordingly. Often society regards marginalized individuals, as Weiss points out with Rosemarie Garland Thomson, as “misfits” because they are born into the “wrong” race, gender, or body. With this diagnosis in mind, Weiss offers a critical analysis of different theoretical approaches for understanding identity. She discovers that, depending on the philosophical position, different features of identity are emphasized, and accordingly different consequences for the individual ensue. For instance, identity can be seen as unified, multiple, or hybrid; it can be understood as chosen by oneself, imposed by others, referred by a social class, and so on. Weiss claims that we must attend more carefully to the “invisible identities” that help to constitute an individual’s self-understanding as well as other people’s views of that individual because they are actually “just as salient for a given individual and her community” as her more visible attributes such as her race and gender. Moreover, by deemphasizing “the distinction between the visible and invisible attributes of an individual, we could shift the focus to acknowledging the temporal and “interpretive horizons” in which identities are dynamically enacted and transform over time. This focus on the interpretive horizons that situate one’s identity, as Linda Martín Alcoff and Annemie Halsema also suggest, must necessarily take into account temporal experiences, their differences and implications in regard to the possibility or impossibility of interrelating with one another and of having a “common time.” Thus, any study of human interrelation and understanding, of political spacing and ethical acting, is required to account for the inherent structure and concepts of temporality. And to account for the inherent structures and concepts of temporality requires methodological considerations, the awareness of the intertwining of experiences and temporality, close studies of different body concepts, and the insight that life is inherently temporal.

* * *

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Notes

1. Stoller and Vetter, *Phänomenologie und Geschlechterdifferenz*; Fisher and Embree, *Feminist Phenomenology*; Dorothea Olkowski, “Phenomenology and Feminism,” in *Edinburgh Encyclopedia of Continental Philosophy* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 323–30; Heinämaa, “Feminism”; Stoller, Vasterling, and Fisher, *Feministische Phänomenologie und Hermeneutik*.
2. Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*; Irigaray, *Key Writings and Speculum of the Other Woman*; Kristeva, “Women’s Time” and *Revolution in Poetic Language*; Chanter, “Female Temporality and the Future of Feminism.”
3. Augustinus, *Confessions*, 221–45.
4. *Ibid.*, 235.
5. Thus, for Augustinus, the one who has a spiritual life and who is close to God lives most in the present.
6. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*.
7. Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, 22.
8. Bergson, *Matter and Memory*.
9. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 378.
10. *Ibid.*, 426.
11. Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena*, 138.
12. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*; Schutz, *The Phenomenology of the Social World* and *The Problem of Social Reality*; Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomenology of Perception*.
13. In almost all philosophical and political works Hannah Arendt explicitly posits natality as the existential human condition for action and for politics. For a further study on the theme of birth and natality see Schües, *Philosophie des Geborenseins*.
14. Heidegger, *Begriff der Zeit*.
15. See Levine, *A Geography of Time*, ch. 8.
16. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 198.
17. *Ibid.*, 180; Cavarero, *For More than One Voice*, 192.

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4.

THE POWER OF TIME:
TEMPORAL EXPERIENCES AND
A-TEMPORAL THINKING?*Christina Schües*

The question I wish to take up is not whether women and men think or experience differently. Instead, I wish to address a different set of questions, questions such as: Who has his or her own time? What sort of structures of consciousness correlate with what kind of time structures? How differently can time be structured, and in which time structure does one live, experience, or think? Does time have power over consciousness? Do I have power over time?

In order to address these questions I would like to generally thematize the temporal structure of experiences (i.e., intentionality) and the temporal structure of reflective thinking. By way of comparison I try to show that these two acts are grounded in very different time structures and that these structures concern also our relation to temporality. The awareness of these different structures of time and our relation to them is basic to the idea that time is a way to control humans and to expropriate the ego. The length of time a person has for his or her actions determines how s/he can do them, and the way the person structures and fills the time for those who depend on him or her—for example, children—determines, among other things, how the person feels.

First, I address how experiences are temporally structured. Then I turn to the question of the self-constitution of time and its embeddedness in the gendered body and worldly lived experience. In the last part of the chapter, I discuss the concept of thinking and its time structure. I attempt to show that experiences, particularly perceptual experience, and thinking are differently temporally structured and that these differences have consequences for the relation between power and time. A clear understanding of this relation is important for discussions about the themes of gendered activities or gender relations and their structures.

The Temporal Structure of Experiences

Classical phenomenologists such as Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, and Heidegger oppose the idea of a deduction or construction of time on the basis of an a-temporal point or an a-temporal subject. For them, the field of investigation of the phenomenon *time* is the “field of presence” in which time is found neither in things nor in states of consciousness. However, Husserl’s conception of time is not based upon one unifying and identical moment fixed in the present, and it is not only bound up *just* with a metaphysics of being as presence, but is also developed in relation to an absolute time-constituting flux that allows for the present as well as for the absent, for relationships as well as for differences. In this section I consider experiences that are directed toward external objects, and, hence, are bound to events in the world and that have the events’ temporal structure.

When considering experiences, the most important notion to understand here is *intentionality*. Experiences are intentional: someone perceives something, feels something, thinks something. Intentionality constitutes objects in an act of objectivation by ascribing an ideal identity to a sensible diversity, a manifold, given *across* time: “Temporal consciousness is . . . an objectivating consciousness. Without identification and differentiation, without now-positing, past-positing, future-positing etc., there could be no duration, no rest and change, no successive being etc. That means: without all that the absolute ‘content’ would remain blind, would fail to mean objective being, duration etc.—Something is in objective time. Something!”¹ What this implies is that the field of presence, that is, the field of appearing appearances, which is the perceptual field of an objectivating consciousness, is intentionally structured in horizons of retention and protention. Hence, experience has a triadic structure.

The idea that time is structured as past, present, and future would not make any sense without the assumption of a subjective standpoint in the world. From such a standpoint every experience has a temporal structure as a formal-transcendental fundamental structure that constitutes itself as well as the temporal experience in consciousness. This fundamental structure shows the concretization of the particular contents of my experience, which are always organized in the triadic perceptual structure of co-presented retention (primal memory), the “now” (presentation), and co-presented protention (anticipation).

According to Husserl, retention is the grip one has on the “just having been”; presentation is the experience at the “now point,” which is understood as the border between retention and protention, and protention is the anticipation of that which has-not-yet-been and which is-yet-to-come. Strictly speaking the “now” is made up

of impressions; however, impressions do not flash up in the moment of the "now," but rather they flow continuously.² Retention is a "sinking down into the past (the pull of death)," "a certain falling off from the greatest peak of sensation in the now to the point of imperceptibility."⁴ Thus, sensation, and the whole of perception, goes through a decline of evidence in this flowing from "here" to "there," from "the top downward" in a "cone" of retention. In the end "every perception disappears as an *obscura et confusa perception*,"⁵ and can be sedimented in the "dark of consciousness" and brought back to mind in the future.⁶

Protention is the intentional ordering of possibilities with the tendency of continuing the experience just-had. The imaginatively, retentionally, and habitually founded anticipations are directed into the future, which is "an intentional modification of a past" within a field of indeterminacies, possibilities, and probabilities.⁷ In other words, it is a *fictionally* anticipated field of possible perceptual objects or of ways of perceiving an object. This description of the temporal structure of experiences presents *only* an instantaneous moment of time. It shows the triadic structure from a subjective standpoint. Therefore, talk about past and future still presumes a standpoint in a "field of presence." However, the perceiver is conscious of the perceptual object *in* and *through* retentional and protentional intentionality; therefore, every experience is essentially removed from the moment of presence, which would be the "now." "These retentions are characterized in themselves as modifications of primal impressions which belong to all the remaining, expired temporal points of the constituted durations. Each is consciousness of the past of the corresponding earlier now-point and gives this point in the mode of the before corresponding to its position in the expired durations."⁸

Retention is thought of ambiguously. On the one hand, it is a modification of the impressional "now," which is discrete; on the other hand, it is a differential repetition of the primal impression, which is continuous, and in which a now-consciousness is conscious of itself for the first time.

The temporal structure of experience is built upon two directions of intentionality: a "transversal" and a "longitudinal" intentionality (*Quer- und Längs-intentionalität*). The former intentionality is responsible for "holding on to" the object through all its retentional modifications, and the latter, the longitudinal intentionality, is responsible for the unity of the object throughout the passing time. This characterization of the two intentionalities is particularly apparent in the perception of the motion of a physical object. The transversal intentionality is responsible for the constitution of the same object through its movements and modifications, and the longitudinal intentionality constitutes the linear flow of now points, that is, of the "differences" in the temporal flow. This structure of transversal intentionality means that perceptual experiences are presented in a

"juxtaposition" (*Nebeneinander*) of objects and aspects.⁹ One can distinguish two directions of temporal constitution:

- (1) The objective direction of the constitution of an object where we can phenomenologically distinguish the appearance of an object from the consciousness of experiences itself. The experienced object constitutes itself in its temporal triadic structure.
- (2) The subjective direction, the absolute flow of consciousness, which is constantly time-constituting. The inner consciousness as transcendental self-consciousness is not in possession of itself in an objective (*gegenständlichen*) experience. It situates itself in a pre-intentional continuous possession of itself, which means that the inner consciousness lives as a temporal consciousness through its self-temporalization (i.e., it develops its own temporality).

However, the pre-intentional self-possession of the inner time flow (2) is dependent on the experience of intentional objects (1), and vice versa; that is, the continuous time-constituting flow of consciousness is responsible for the constitution of appearances, which takes place in its conscious structures. "The appearing thing is constituted [constitutes itself, my translation] because unities of sensation and homogeneous apprehensions are constituted [constitute themselves, my translation] in the primordial flux; therefore, there is always consciousness of something."¹⁰ The absolute flow of temporality must be continuous because the discontinuity that arises when something is lifted out as a *difference* presupposes continuity, in the form either of constant duration or of constant change.¹¹

Temporal Self-constitution, the Unity of the Temporal Flow, and Its Anonymity

The temporal time flow constitutes the unity of itself, and this constituting is anonymous.¹² This is accomplished by its coinciding with that which it constitutes as itself, that is, that which was called longitudinal intentionality, an intentionality that goes through the temporal flux itself and that is, thus, in a "continuous unity of coincidence with itself."¹³ Thus, self-constitution means that "the constituting and constituted coincide."¹⁴ Hence, experiences are bound to the world and experiences are temporal. Therefore, temporality *is bound to the world and to the self*.

The transversal and the longitudinal intentionalities are responsible for the self-temporalizing of consciousness. The former grounds the identity of the object throughout any modification, and the other, the longitudinal intentionality, is responsible for the flow of now points that were presented in terms of the actual (phenomenal) "difference" between their pre- and after-actuality.

The constituting temporal flow and the constituted temporal experience do not coincide in every respect, because the self-constitution of the flow is not only the self-appearance but also the essential adumbrating—*differing*—of the flow itself through which it can appear to itself. The coincidence is not total because the original impressions immediately transverse into retentive modification by virtue of which the original impression is then objectified, that is, differentiated, in its immanent unity. Thus, in certain respects the longitudinal intentionality is privileged because it is responsible for the continuous identity of the flow of temporal consciousness. This longitudinal intentionality, which is the continuous temporal flow in its unity, can be brought into a self-appearance only in self-reflection, whose temporal structure I will discuss in a moment.

The appearance of the temporal flow belongs to the immanent structure of the temporal self itself; that is, the ego presentifies itself, that is, appears to itself as being temporal. Thus, only *because* the constituting and the constituted do not fully coincide with each other is it possible that the flow of consciousness appears to the self. However, this flow is not something temporally objective; it cannot be objective because it is that original consciousness which is responsible for the flow. We *know* about this flow through the impressions we receive from already constituted objects when, for example, we perceive objects that move or we experience the passage of time in feelings of boredom or attention to the unfolding of music. However, it is not only that we know about the temporal flow; even more, *we are taken by it*, we are taken by the object, the situation, or the action we are experiencing.

I can try to reflect upon my experiences or my action. However, in self-reflection I can grasp my empirical self only as an *anonymous* temporal stream. I can never intentionally objectify my own functioning self or its self-temporalization because I always “come too late.” That is, my own functioning self is given for me only retentively and not in its self-temporalization. Thus, as a constituter of time, I remain anonymous.

The ego which is the counterpart [*gegenüber*] to everything is anonymous. It is not its own counterpart. [That which I see, for example,] the house is my counterpart, not vice versa. And yet I can turn my attention to myself. But then this counterpart in which the ego comes forward along with everything which was its counterpart is again split. The ego which comes forward as a counterpart and its counterpart (e.g. the house it was perceiving) are both counterparts to me. Forthwith, I—the subject of this new counterpart—am anonymous.¹⁵

Since the ego cannot grasp itself in its actual functioning, it is *anonymous*. This fact of anonymity, and the fact that it springs from itself, are one and the

same. Thus, the ego in the anonymity of its functioning presence and the constant streaming of time are the same. The self-possessing universal flow of constitution is indicated by the *manifold* appearances of the constituted time structure of the experienced objects. The temporality of consciousness is characterized by a *presence and by an absence* in presence, as also by the unity of the absolute flow of time, which is in principle anonymous.

However, as soon as one realizes that the transcendental ego is also an embodied self and, hence, a generative self that is born, then it is possible to understand that the self does not so much temporalize itself as *it is temporalized by its own ongoing activity in the world*.

Thus, (a) time constitution presumes an embodied self, and (b) the self is temporalized by its ongoing activities in the world.

Time Constitution Presumes an Embodied Self

The notion of intentionality, relevant to Husserl's later texts and to Merleau-Ponty's explorations, is not that of an “act” but rather that of a “functional intentionality” (*fungierende Intentionalität*), an intentionality that bears some resemblance to the notion of the transcendence of human being (*Dasein*) in the Heideggerian sense.¹⁶ And when Merleau-Ponty or the later Husserl speaks of “synthesis,” the synthesis in question is no longer an activity effected by a subject, but assumes the form of a “passive synthesis” inherent in being in the world.

The thesis that time constitution presumes an embodied self and its link with lived experience is grounded on three arguments, which are all more or less linked with the insight that time and gender are not to be thought apart. The *first* argument holds that temporality is subjective and personified. In order to illuminate this argument I have to turn to Merleau-Ponty. With him we can understand Husserl's phenomenology of time as an analysis that undermines any idealism of *sense-giving* and accommodates a reformulation of intentionality and constitution that is in harmony with his privileging of the theme of being-toward-the-world. On the other hand, with Merleau-Ponty's approach, we recognize Heidegger not so much in contrast to a Husserlian phenomenology of subjectivity, but rather as a continuation of the latter, a continuation whereby the issue of time is reformulated in an ontological language. This is so because thinking time as a whole is possible only insofar as time is “personified.” Therefore, temporality and subjectivity coincide with each other. Merleau-Ponty draws on Heidegger not with a view to setting subjectivity aside, but rather with a view to empowering subjectivity with temporality. *Temporality is subjective* only insofar as *the subject is time*.

My *second* argument for the thesis that time constitution presumes an embodied self is based on the fact that my body is the center of orientation in space and time, and this body is gendered. Thus, I temporally and spatially structure the world around me from a gendered orientation. Perspectival (visual) perception originates from the “*difference*” inherent in the “now” (and the “here”). By virtue of being a gendered body, I am situated in a presence that continuously elapses into my past that remains my past, my personified, gendered past. For both Merleau-Ponty and Husserl, the body is the center of orientation: if I had no body, I would not have any time or space. My own spatial and temporal existence is indispensable for me, for it is “the primary condition of all living perception.”¹⁷ My body, being affective, inhabits time and space, perceiving them from an orientation determined by my point of view. Thus, any perception takes place from the particular center of orientation “now” and “here.” This situatedness and the free mobility of consciousness are felt within consciousness in the form of kinesthetic sensations. Kinesthetic sensations are embedded in the relativity of perspectival profiles (*Abschattungen*). As a consequence, the perceptual object appears in their sensible appearances.

Disparate sensible appearances caught *across* different moments of time can be appearances of different sides of the same object because each is an appearance of the object from a different point of view. Each object has an index of orientation. Each aspect refers to other aspects by referring to a center of orientation that, in turn, refers further to a system of other centers of orientation. The constitution of an object requires an intentionality that is situated somewhere within the space it constitutes. The ascription of a multiplicity of sensible appearances requires the variability of the situatedness of intentionality and, thus, its being incarnated in the body.

Duration, and each temporal point of duration, is unique, even though they might be the same for another object. Any predication of, or attribution to, an object is in principle repeatable—and with regard to its temporal form. Such a duplication would have different time points that themselves *may* have their particular location in the (assumed) spatial reference system. “The thing-bodily shape does indeed remain in movement with the object, but it has its individuality in every temporal point with respect to the absolute singularity of the fullness of the piece of space in which it is mementary.”¹⁸ Everything that is constituted through perceptual consciousness is situated in space and has its absolute uniqueness in its spatial position.

The *third* important argument is the following. Experiences, especially perceptual experiences, are sensible because they are located in a temporal field of sensations. The reflection on temporal consciousness reveals that “sensations” as

well as the “original presence” are revealed to us by way of retentive intentionality. We can never grasp the functioning present in the pure impression. Objects are intended *across* the materiality of “sensations” (*hyletic data, the psychic matter*), and *across* their “original presence.”

In *The Visible and Invisible*, Merleau-Ponty argues that sensations are *dimensional*, thus, they exist in stretches of space and time and in *depth*.¹⁹ They have a certain style and density. Each sensation is a dynamic specific filling of space and time. Space here is understood as lived space and as temporal space. Since the pre-intentional sensitivity of the body exists in a certain space and is given in a temporal spread, “my body is to the greatest extent what every thing is: a *dimensional this*. . . . But, while the things become dimensions only insofar as they are received in a *field*, my body is this field itself, i.e., a sensible field that is dimensional *of itself*.”²⁰ In other words, objects are experienced as being sensible *because* they are located in a temporal field of sensations, which becomes meaningful only due to intentionality. The felt temporality of an experience, for example, a tone, a mood, or an action, is personal and subjective *and* also pre-determined *from* the experienced object and its contexts. Hence, intentionality is bound to the sensible world in its order and, therefore, binds the ego to the world by means of a gendered orientation.

The Self Is Temporalized by Its Own Ongoing Activity in the World

The self is temporalized by his or her activities and experiences in the world. Activities involve the body; they are, as Silvia Stoller emphasizes,²¹ more or less *anonymously* gendered, and they need time and are temporally structured because they are bound to particular series of plots and temporal modes of how it is undertaken; experiences need time and they are temporally structured. Since everything cannot be experienced at once, and since, by way of our bodily orientation, experiences are perspectival, they are temporally structured in the sense of before and after, again or concurrent, quiet or hectic, and so on. Thus, the way experiences and activities are temporally structured results in a temporalization of the self as well. The structuring of time is grounded in the relation of intentionality between the self and the world. My temporal experience is embedded in a world that is itself already temporally structured. Temporal determinations (*Vorgaben*) are given; time forms the body and experiences. If children have no time structures they have difficulties adapting in school and in society. Time connects nature and culture; it structures relations between human beings. Certain time structures are presented by certain needs, and natural ones are intertwined with cultural and social ones; this becomes apparent, for example, when we consider

different sleeping behaviors. Women have a monthly cycle, but how they deal with it differs greatly. Babies must be fed, and they need a certain time of caring for their well-being, but how it is done is socially and culturally different. Education is supported by the regime of forming through time; we need to sleep at night, and to take on temporal habits. The order of time becomes like a second nature. Different kinds of experience have different conceptions of time. Experiences are bodily and temporally structured. Time is fundamental to human relations, and the sharing of time is essential for them. For instance, caring for another person means adapting more or less to another person's time structure and time order. A loving relationship can be disturbed if the partners have too different time structures and time feelings. Time is felt through the body. It remains with me all the time: in relation to a day (for example, because I get sleepy), to the time of the year, or to the years that have passed by. Thus, time can be taken as a way to control other human beings and their lives.

Society or individuals structure *power relations* by way of a temporal order. For instance, positions low on the hierarchy are temporally very restricted and controlled in comparison to those that are higher. The question of power is: Who controls whose time? How much time does somebody have? How long does somebody have to wait? Perhaps prisons are the most strictly controlled. Prisoners are not only spatially limited but also temporally controlled at every hour. And when you consider the question of "who controls whose time?" you can determine the hierarchy of a relationship.

Generally speaking, every activity in the world involves a certain temporal order. And every activity and every experience temporalizes the ego in a particular way. So the question may arise, regarding a particular experience, of who decides what sort of experience I have and for how long. In the next section, I will show how the temporalizing of the self can be studied in reference to the process of objectification and socialization of the ego.

Objectification and Socialization

It is not important here whether or not persons relate to one and the same world. What is important is that the world to which they are directed is taken as an objective world. That is, the perceiver needs to *abdicate* her own subjective standpoint in order to be a member of the community and live in a "personal attitude."²² Being a member of the community and living a personal attitude in a temporal sense presupposes three mechanisms by which I am temporally socialized and culturalized: de-perspectivation, de-presentification, and de-centering. All three aspects are fairly intertwined and work together; they merely emphasize slightly

different aspects of the phenomenological description. In assuming my intersubjective identity I have to *de-perspectivize* my own view in reference to an "objective" communal view. A simple example for this aspect is the spatial perception of a coin. Strictly speaking, I see the coin from my subjective standpoint as elliptical. For all that, I refer to it as being round (which is still perspectival) and as having, above all, a monetary function and value within our present society. Already in the perception of material objects we do take into consideration a certain expropriation (*Enteignung*). This expropriation (of my privileged position) in every experience transforms me *locally, temporally, socially, and culturally* into a member of a community in terms of "being in accord" with a certain form of life.²³ The form of life contains the communal point of view: "And they agree in the language they use. That is not agreement in opinion but in a form of life."²⁴ Thus, the expropriation (or de-perspectivation) of my subjective standpoint is a process of socialization that is, however, never homogeneous or totally determined.

Husserl situates the personal ego at the mundane empirical level. However, if we consider that the living course of original consciousness is necessarily a temporalizing course in which the personal ego is taken as an apperceptive form of the pure ego and in which the transcendental ego apperceives itself as a self (in self-reflection), then the personal ego is also understood as being transcendental. In that sense also transcendental consciousness itself becomes personal and thereby social. Thus, the transcendental ego is personalized (i.e., socialized) through its temporalizing self-constitution in the form of a continuous *de-presentification* of the pure ego (through forgetting), and, hence, by a *presentification* of the personal ego by way of retentional and protentional consciousness. The result is that—strictly speaking—the perceptual object includes always a presented and an a-presented (that is, the term "a-presented" refers to the reverse side or the use or value of something). De-presentification and immanent temporal personalization, that is, socialization (presentification of my-self), stand in an analogous relation to each other as well as to the empathic act and the socialization (personalization) process by way of which one becomes one among the (transcendental) others.

Experiencing means, because it is *intentional*, to *put oneself into* over there, "into" the situation and the object of the experience.²⁵ If I transcend myself by way of a de-presentation, then I situate myself in *another* temporal context, that of the experienced event. This means a *de-centering* of my personal standpoint (of the pure ego), of my "here" and "now." In my de-centeredness, which is an expropriation (*Enteignung*), I am not by myself but in the temporal being of the experience. Thus, in a de-centeredness I make myself one among others in the world experienced. That is, the alteration of my standpoint has a socializing effect on me. In becoming-one-among-others, in constituting myself via the temporal

experience, I also adopt a "personal attitude," that is, I *socialize* myself into the "mundane," "objective," "empirical" self that I am in the personal attitude. This goes together with taking myself for granted (*Selbstverständlichkeit*), "forgetting" myself by not self-reflecting on myself. Sometimes, however, this adaption is not possible, for instance in cases when the temporal order is completely alien to me. This phenomenon of temporal disturbance happens, for example, during a journey to another country or another culture. Temporal disturbances may take place also between different social groups or between individuals, as Gail Weiss explains in her chapter, "Sharing Time across Unshared Horizons."²⁶

The result of the temporality of experience is a *socialization* of the ego by way of, firstly, an expropriation (or de-perspectivation); secondly, a de-presentation of the "field of presence"; and, thirdly, a de-centeredness: that is, being here (because of my body) and there at the same time. These considerations hold within an epistemological framework; however, they are also reasonable within a social-philosophical realm. Certainly, people have more or less a choice in how they act and, hence, what they experience. Some experiences are voluntary, others accidental, and again others involuntary. When I like an activity and undertake it voluntarily and with joy, then it does not seem to constrain me or to put much force on me, *even though* I am taken up by the time order of that experience. Every experience I have puts me in the time order of *that* experience, sometimes with my will and sometimes against my will, sometimes with joy and sometimes with abhorrence. Particularly when I am forced into an activity or a situation, and hence into an experience, I feel even more strongly the sense of being taken by a time order that is not mine. For example, waiting is often experienced as a loss of (personal) time. Also, working in an assembly line was a new historical factual experience in the 1920s: As Jeffrey Eugenides describes in his novel *Middlesex*: "People stopped being human in 1913. That year Henry Ford put his cars on rollers and made his workers adopt the speed of the assembly line. At first, workers rebelled. They quit in droves, unable to accustom their bodies to the new pace of the age. Since then, however, the adaption has been passed down: we've all inherited it to some degree, so that we plug right into joysticks and remotes, to repetitive motions of a hundred kinds."²⁷ In another example, integration is the aim of education. A well-educated child, or a well-integrated "foreigner," is a person who is disciplined and who lives in "our" world of values. One important instrument for breaking the rebelliousness of the child or of anybody who is supposed to be integrated is to control their time and to habituate them to the dominant time order.

These considerations are not to be understood as saying that any experiences imposed on someone are a loss of the self. It is rather *because* experiences inhere epistemologically in a temporal structure that is grounded in the experienced

object and activities; *time can be used* as a measure of social control and conditioning. However, if the personal ego were *simply* expropriated, de-presented, and de-centered, then it would be removed from its original presence, which is also the source of its self-temporalization. The result would be the collapse of the ego. Thus, the concept of the protentionally and retentionally expanded presence, linked with the concept of de-centeredness, is central to finding an intermediate position between the two poles of embeddedness in a particular temporally structured community, and it gives the possibility of self-reflection.

Merleau-Ponty summarizes the parallel between the two objective and subjective analyses in this way: "It is the essence of time to be not only actual time, or time which flows, but also time which is aware of itself, for the explosion or dehiscence of the present toward a future is the archetype of the *relationship of self to self*, and it displays an interiority or ipseity."²⁸ In other words, fundamental to time consciousness is the possibility of a *self-reflexivity* of consciousness, that is, the relation of the self to itself. The possibility of such a self-reflexivity is grounded in an explosion, or dehiscence, that is, an opening power of presence (the "upper limit of sensibility") toward the future and the past. Thus, in this deep sense, temporality and subjectivity interrelate reciprocally: this is so for Heidegger as well as for Husserl; and this is essential for the constitution of experiences and their manifold modifications and possibility of self-reflection and of thinking.

Reflective Thinking

In the context of temporal constitution I have referred to self-reflection. Now, I shall look at it in order to discuss how the ego relates to the temporal structure of thinking. Is the ego taken by the temporal structure of thinking in the same way as it was taken by an experienced object?

The text from Husserl also cited above points to the fact of the splitting up of the object of thinking, and in order to consider the anonymity of the ego. "I can turn my attention to myself. But then this counterpart in which the ego comes forward along with everything which was its counterpart is again split. The ego which comes forward as a counterpart and its counterpart (e.g. the house I was perceiving) are both counterparts to me. Forthwith, I—the subject of this new counterpart—am anonymous."²⁹

The possibility of self-reflection is the ground for consciousness both to become aware of its temporal structure and to be aware of a self as it appears. Even though or just because my ego is anonymous, I can confront myself in an inner dialog. The structure of an *inner dialog*—the splitting up of I and self—is the structure of

thinking. "Thinking—the two-in-one of the soundless dialogue—actualizes the difference within our identity as given in consciousness."³⁰ Thus, without self-reflection, the presentification (*Gewahrwerden*) of one's own self, thinking would not be possible; hence, self-reflection is necessary in order to initiate thinking. However, cognitive acts are distinct from thinking; that is, thinking itself has no results. Rather, as Hannah Arendt suggests, judging as the product of thinking realizes thinking and makes it manifest in the world. Thus, thinking *liberates* us from experiences and activities in the world in order to *release* the faculty of judging. Therefore, judging in fact needs thinking. The activity of thinking examines whatever happens to come to pass or to attract attention, regardless of results and specific content. Thus, it is also a condition for acting according to a decision and against "thoughtless" actions.³¹

How does thinking function? Thinking is not intentional but rather *dialectical*, which means that thinking is like a dialogue *about* something. *About something* could mean that thinking means a "flying over," a "*pensée survolante*," in a neutral way, but this is not how I understand it. *Thinking is bound to the world, yet it destroys boundaries!* It destroys the boundary and the relation toward the world and its temporal order. When I think, then, I have to *withdraw from* the world. I interrupt my activities in the world; thinking is out of order, and I can question positions, opinions, or beliefs which I have. The result is that when I think I am by myself, I am able to think about that which I have experienced: I may think about what is right or wrong, activities that I have done or am about to do. I am able to move my thoughts back and forth in time by memory or anticipation, turn them around, think about "things" from different perspectives. Thus, thinking is not de-perspectivation in the sense of bringing me over there; it is rather the destruction of one particular perspective. It opens variations and possibilities of perspectives about something.

Secondly, as Valéry said (and Merleau-Ponty, as well as Arendt, refers to him): "At times I think, and at times I am."³² Anyone who takes thinking in this way contrasts thinking and reality in an analogy to death and life, as though we are alive only when we are in the world. Others, such as Cartesian rationalists, might take the relation the other way around. Being seems so faded that it does not seem to be alive, but thoughts are clear and, therefore, real and alive. I don't think that either extreme is correct: anyone would feel a kind of death if the world were destroyed, if the world of beliefs and understanding were withdrawn and became unreal, or if the world-belief were destroyed. If such a destructive situation were to occur, the individual would be silenced. But this is not the situation of thinking. In thinking I withdraw from the world, and am by myself; that is, I have the feeling of the *liveliness* of myself (and liveliness can also be part of our

experiences). However, the inability to think about "something" turns a human being into a "sleepwalker."³³

Thirdly, thinking "deals always with absences and removes itself from what is present and close at hand."³⁴ This means that reality, which we experience in space and time, is spatially and temporally suspended; it means that we de-sense, or de-materialize, the products of our thinking. These thoughts become meaningful, and they are distillations, but not necessarily abstractions—rather, "essences." The understanding of thoughts as (mostly) meaningful "essences" (and not only as abstract identities, such as, for example, numbers) is grounded on the observation that we can be sensually touched by thoughts. Being touched by thoughts can even result in bodily changes, such as, for instance, the heartbeat changing, or the face turning red. The location of the thinking ego is therefore "nowhere" *but* still located in the sensitivity of the body, which threatens to break into the train of thoughts: "The thinking ego, moving among universals, among invisible essences, is, strictly speaking, nowhere; it is homeless in an emphatic sense (—which may explain the early rise of a cosmopolitan spirit among the philosophers)."³⁵ When we think we *are* nowhere, but we are also still in space and time insofar as now, in reference to Kant, time determines the relation of representations to each other. Representations are taken from memory, from anticipations, from present ideas, and so on.

Fourth, if time determines the relation of thoughts, then thinking must transform experiences. The temporal structure of thinking forces representations into the order of a sequence; these sequences become "thought-trains."³⁶ Thinking is discursive, and, insofar as it follows a train of thought, it could by analogy be presented as "a line of progressing to infinity."³⁷ Thus, in order to create such a line of thought, thinking must transform the juxtaposition in which experiences are given to us in a succession of words. Thus, we have de-sensed and de-spatialized the original experiences.

The Time Structure of Thinking

Where is the thinking ego located temporally? Arendt illustrates where the thinking ego is located in time by citing a parable by Kafka (out of a collection of aphorisms entitled "HE"):

He has two antagonists; the first presses him from behind, from his origin. The second blocks the road in front of him. He gives battle to both. In fact, the first supports him in his fight with the second, for he wants to push him forward, and in the same way the second supports him in his fight with the first, since he drives him back. But it is only theoretically so. For it is not only the two antagonists who

are there, but he himself as well, and who really knows his intentions? His dream, though, is that some time in an unguarded moment—and this, it must be admitted, would require a night darker than any night has ever yet been—he will jump out of the fighting line and be promoted, on account of his experience in fighting, to the position of umpire over his antagonists in their fight with each other.³⁸

This parable describes the “inner state” of the thinker in regard to time and, especially, in regard to being captured by the governance of time. The previous argument concerning the description of the temporal experience was that the experiencing ego *is taken* by the structure of the time of the experience. Thus, thinking means jumping out of the determination of a time structure (but only for the moment of thinking). Now, when the ego turns to thinking, then the experience of the past is transformed into something that lies *behind* us, and the expectation of the future is transformed into something that *approaches us from ahead* (German: *Zukunft*; French: *avenir*). The forces are “his” antagonists; they are not simply in opposition, and they fight only because “he” is there.³⁹ The in-between is the “he,” the now, the eternal moment, the battleground where the thinking ego is at home. This time construct is totally different from that of experiences in ordinary life. Thinking is interruption, and interruption is beginning. Thus, in this thinking the three senses do not simply nor smoothly follow one by one; rather, the thinking ego is a presence that is surrounded, pushed, and attacked by the past and future. This ego withdraws from daily life, from “business as usual,” or from any worldly surroundings or bodily necessities. The thinking ego debates with itself; it is a hungry ego, hungry for meaning and making sense.

The thinking ego in the parable is not our self as it appears; it seems ageless, nowhere, liberated from concrete contents, timeless (?), yet it is real: the thinking ego senses as his dual antagonists time itself. The ego is time, is temporal, and, therefore, is constantly transformed from being into becoming. In its fight it constantly destroys its own present: “As such, time is the thinking ego’s greatest enemy because—by virtue of the mind’s incarnation in a body whose internal motions can never be immobilized—time inexorably and regularly interrupts the immobile quiet in which it is active without doing anything.”⁴⁰ But Kafka’s “HE” wants to jump out in an unguarded moment. Does he become the uninterested, undisturbed spectator and judge outside of life? I do not think that the lonely spectator above the world would make much sense.

“He” does not fight against some indifferent antagonist, but against *his* antagonists: it is his past that fights against the future (and “he” is in between), and it is his future that fights against his past. He is needed to make the difference between past and future; without him there would be *only* change. His fight is in the present; it

is now. The antagonistic forces and the thinking effect the clash between past and future, and thereby they are transformed into my *personal, gendered* behind and ahead. *She has her past and future and he has his past and future.* Thinking emerges out of the clash between (the gendered) past and future, almost as though it would be timeless. But thinking is certainly not timeless; rather it takes the not-anymore and the not-yet, the behind and the ahead, in its own presence.

Thus, time is the “antagonist” of the thinking ego in a double sense. The positive sense is the following one: time constrains the ego from the past and from the future, from my “behind” and from my “yet to come”; they force me onto the battlefield of the in-between and initiate thinking. And here we have to understand that my past and my future are generated and gendered in a very concrete sense. I have lived as a girl, then as a woman in a particular context, with particular experiences, feelings, and thoughts. I have grown up in my family and in a particular generative context; I have my female and male friends and colleagues, and so on. The force and style, how the behind and the yet to come “attack” my ego and the present depends *also* on my gendered being. Not that the thinking itself can be regarded as “typically” male or female, but the battleground between past and future is personal, and hence female or male in its concrete sense. Thus, “he,” in the aphorism, can be a “she”; I remember my past and I anticipate my future. The act of remembering and anticipating are fundamental to feeling the antagonism of the behind and ahead. In particular, the remembering, but also the anticipating are specifically gendered; when I remember myself I cannot remember just a neutral person. I always remember myself as a girl or as a woman in a particular context and in specific relations.

The negative sense of the “antagonist” of the thinking is the following: if an order of time is forced upon me by the external world or by the other who interrupts my train of thought, then the activity of a thinking ego is hindered. This happens also if one of the antagonists is too strong, that is, if the ego is captured by, for instance, past experiences. Then thinking may be disturbed, go in circles, or not even “take place.” This happens if my time is controlled by a strict order. If I cannot even have a “battlefield,” if I cannot reflect upon myself, if the dialectical principle, which is fundamental to thinking, is destroyed because time is controlled, then the plurality of the world is reduced to one understanding, one opinion, and one dimension. The one-dimensionality of a monological consciousness destroys the ability to think and to experience, and it eliminates the possibility of considering other perspectives and horizons. Hence, it would be the elimination of the being of human beings.

Yet, time is not only the antagonist; it must be made to be our friend because *thinking needs leisure time*, spare time; this is a time that is not controlled, valued

with money, or interrupted by worldly necessities. If thinking is like a dialog, then it must be construed in open horizons of time. Thinking withdraws the thinker from the world: it disrespects given time orders; it liberates; it destroys doctrines. Therefore, the time in which we think means the empowerment of our own time and an entering into the world of thought, which is different from the world of facts. Most dictators know about this force of thinking, and thus know they have to control space and time—and this holds true, I believe, for all power relations.

It is my goal to lay some basis for the idea that reflective thinking (with its necessary leisure time) is necessary as one source for finding “our” paths in the world and in the future. The ability to think, and its liberating aspect on judging, brings about a multidimensional reality. It refers to the different perspectives of different human beings; it is open to making sense of the world. Without thinking we are lost in experience; we are lost in time without having our own time. And without experiences we have lost the world. Having the power over one’s own time order is based on the freedom of choice and is necessary for reflective thinking.

Notes

1. Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewußtseins* (1893–1917), 297. “Das Zeitbewusstsein ist also ein objektivierendes Bewusstsein. Ohne Identifizierung und Unterscheidung, ohne Jetzt-Setzung, Vergangenheits-Setzung, Zukunfts-Setzung etc., kein Dauern, kein Ruhen und Sich-Verändern, kein aufeinanderfolgendes Sein etc. Das heißt: ohne all das bleibt der absolute ‘Inhalt’ blind, bedeutet nicht objektives Sein, nicht Dauern etc. . . . *Etwas* ist in der objektiven Zeit. *Etwas*!”
2. See *ibid.*, 324–26. Some of these descriptions I have formulated in my *Changes of Perception*, 165–97.
3. Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewußtseins*, 365. “Herabsinken in die Vergangenheit (Zug des Todes).”
4. Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, 86. The English translation of *Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewußtseins* does not include all appendixes and supplements.
5. Sommer, *Lebenswelt und Zeitbewußtsein*, 157.
6. Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, 161. “When a primal datum, a new phase, emerges, the preceding one is not lost but is ‘retained in concept’ [‘in a grip,’ my revision] (i.e., ‘retained’ exactly), and thanks to this retention a looking back to what has expired is possible. Retention itself is not an act of looking back which makes an Object of the phase which has expired. Because I have the phase which has expired in hand, I live through [*durchlebe*] the one actually present, take it—thanks to retention—‘in addition to’ and am directed to what is coming (in a protention).”
7. Cairns, *Conversations with Husserl and Fink*, 84.
8. Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, 105.

9. Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, 202.
10. Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, 120. Original version: *Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewußtseins*, 92. “Das erscheinende Ding konstituiert sich, weil sich im ursprünglichen Fluß Empfindungseinheiten und einheitliche Auffassungen konstituieren, also immerfort Bewußtsein von etwas.”
11. See Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, 113.
12. For the anonymity in the structure of temporal experiences, see Silvia Stoller’s chapter in this volume.
13. Husserl, *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, 107.
14. *Ibid.*, 109–10.
15. Edmund Husserl, Ms. C 2 I, p.2, Aug., 1931, quoted in Mensch, *Intersubjectivity and Transcendental Idealism*, 220.
16. For example, Husserl, *Analysis Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*; or *Cartesian Meditations*. For Heidegger, the notions of “transcendence” and transcendental are related neither to subjectivity nor to consciousness; rather they are determined from the ecstatic temporality understood by “Dasein.” See Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, § 69 b, c.
17. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 109.
18. Husserl, *Analysis Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*, 589.
19. Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and Invisible*, 260.
20. *Ibid.*
21. See Stoller, “Gender and Anonymous Temporality,” in this volume.
22. The “personal attitude” (or natural attitude) is seen in contrast to the “naturalistic attitude” of science (physics, chemistry, etc.), in which the scientist analyzes an “objective” world. We are in the personal attitude when we see our environment as replete with cultural objects and persons to whom we speak. See Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*.
23. Spatial perception is perspectival because of my local position, and vice versa; the spatiality and social determinations and the meaningfulness of the sphere of experiences (*Erfahrungsraum*) determine my local position.
24. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §241.
25. “. . . to put oneself into” could also be construed as Bergson’s notion of a “leap” (which resembles Kierkegaard’s notion of a “leap of faith”). See Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, chs. 2, 3.
26. In this volume.
27. Eugenides, *Middlesex*, 95.
28. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 426.
29. Edmund Husserl, unpublished manuscript, C 2 I, 2, Aug. 1931, quoted in Mensch, *Intersubjectivity and Transcendental Idealism*, 220.
30. Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, 193.
31. *Ibid.*, 5.
32. *Ibid.*, 198; See Merleau-Ponty, “The Philosopher and His Shadow,” 174.
33. Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, 191.

34. Ibid., 199.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid., 201.
37. Ibid., 202.
38. Ibid., 202–12.
39. Remember also the allegory in Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*.
40. Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, 206.

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