

Original Contributions - Originalbeiträge

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The Perception of Time between Phenomenology and Gestalt Psychology: Edmund Husserl and Giovanni Bruno Vicario's Perspectives

1. Introduction

The issue of time is one of the most puzzling problems in philosophy and psychology. Whereas philosophers ask themselves what is the general nature of time and how it can be conceived of, psychologists are more focused on how we experience time and its related phenomena (duration, simultaneity, succession, etc.). At a first glance, these two approaches have little in common, but the writings of Augustine of Hippo disprove this impression. Augustine is particularly interested in the subjective view of time and defines it as a *distentio animi*: “I have therefore come to the conclusion that time is nothing other than tension: but tension of what, I do not know, and I would be very surprised if it is not tension of consciousness itself” (Augustine, 1997, p. 306). Augustine’s approach is both philosophical and psychological, since it discusses the general features of time and, concurrently, its being experienced by our interiority. For this reason, Edmund Husserl openly states in his *Lectures on Internal Time-Consciousness* that every phenomenological inquiry on time must be preceded by the reading of Augustine, especially Book XI of his *Confessions* (Husserl, 1964, p. 21). Husserl’s work is particularly significant within the debate on time, since it focuses on consciousness and its processes of synthesis. Investigating time means understanding how our consciousness works, thus the problem of time is fundamental for phenomenology.

Giovanni Bruno Vicario, who was a student of Gaetano Kanizsa and a member of the Trieste Gestalt school of psychology, has devoted a significant part of his research to this problem. His studies on temporal dislocation and on the microstructure of psychological time conducted in the 1960s constitute excellent starting points, then broad in the subsequent decades to related issues, such as the slow-motion tunnel effect (Vicario & Kiritani, 1999). Vicario also published a book in Italian, entitled *Il tempo (The Time)* (2005), which contains a well-developed synthesis of the themes addressed in four decades of research. In *Un percettologo legge Husserl (A Perceptologist Reads Husserl)* (2004), he openly confronts the father of phenomenology.

In order to clarify the relationship between the psychological and the phenomenological ideas of time, my argument will be structured as follows. First, I will begin by outlining the general idea of time that emerges from the writings of Husserl, by taking inspiration from his *Lectures on Internal Time-Consciousness* (1905), edited by Martin Heidegger and translated by James Churchill (Husserl, 1964), and integrated with other untranslated texts from the tenth volume of the *Husserliana* (Husserl, 1969). Then, I will refer to Vicario's idea of time, which can be found in multiple writings: from his early texts of the 1960s to his most recent works of the 2000s.

I will particularly highlight how Husserl and Vicario sideline objective time instead focusing on subjective time. I will show how, despite the analogies, they conceive time in two different ways: one psychological, which deals with the empirical experience of the self, and one transcendental, which concerns the conditions of possibility of our experience. I will demonstrate how close are these ideas and that the divergences consist of some conceptual nuances lying in two different methodologies: Husserl uses a purely theoretical method, although starting from our experience of time, whereas Vicario integrates theory with experiments on perception. However, these two approaches can be both integrated into a pluralistic view of time. They constitute valid alternatives to a unified and physicalistic view of time, a view that has its legitimacy and utility in scientific domains but fails to explain the unfolding of our experiences.

2. Time as a Form of Consciousness in Husserl

2.1. The Origin of Time and the *Epoché*

Addressing the problem of time means asking oneself to which time one is referring. Husserl deals with this problem in his *Lectures on the Internal Consciousness of Time*, which were delivered in 1905 and occur in parallel with the development of other significant themes, faced for example in the *Logical Investigations* (1900-1901) and in the first book of the *Ideas* (1913). Subsequently, Husserl returned to this issue at two other points in his life: in 1917-1918, with the *Bernau Manuscripts* (Husserl, 2001a), and in 1929-1934 with the *Late Texts on the Constitution of Time. Manuscript C* (Husserl, 2006). In his *Lectures*, Husserl clarifies that he wants to investigate the origin of time in a phenomenological sense:

The question of the origin is oriented toward the *primitive* forms of the consciousness of time in which the primitive differences of the temporal are constituted intuitively and authentically as the originary [*originären*] sources of all certainties relative to time. The question of the origin of time should not be confused with the *question of its psychological origin*—the controversial question between *empiricism and nativism*. With this last question we are asking about the *primordial*

material of sensation out of which arises Objective intuition of space and time in the human individual and even in the species. We are indifferent to the question of the empirical genesis. What interests us are lived experiences as regards their objective sense and their descriptive content. (Husserl, 1964, § 2, p. 28).

The problem of the origin of time is, in other terms, the problem of the transcendental, that which concerns the form of time, underlying the constitution of the temporal object and phenomena of simultaneity, succession, etc. Husserl specifies that this is not the problem of the psychological origin of time, namely whether it has an innate nature or acquired through experience. The debate between empiricism and innatism is not phenomenologically relevant, whereas it is important to investigate the way experiences are configured and apprehended from a temporal perspective.

In the Integrative Text (ET) 51 (1909), Husserl revisits some basic concepts of phenomenology, such as the *epoché*, or the suspension of the natural attitude, to carry out an investigation of the transcendental: even though the *epoché* puts the existence of the external world and all its objectivities in parentheses, phenomenology “retains its soul, its sense”¹ (Husserl, 1969, ET 51). Such a reflection will be resumed and deepened in the *Ideas*, together with the concepts of *noesis* and *noema* (Husserl, 1983). In ET 51, Husserl does not use these exact words, but asserts that, once judgment is suspended, the ego, through its operations, apprehends the object in its givenness: the phenomenon is the actual consciousness of something (in an operational and noetic sense) and the intentional content of consciousness (in an objectual and noematic sense) (Husserl, 1969, ET 51). In this case, one must suspend judgment on the outer existence of what is being investigated. The suspension of judgment does not imply a denial of existence of the object, nor its affirmation, but only the search for how phenomena appear to us. This applies to any transcendental investigation, and particularly to the investigation of time: how do temporal phenomena present themselves to us in their noetic-noematic structure? This is what phenomenologists should ask themselves.

2.2. The Transcendental Ego and the Empirical Ego

The operation of *epoché* excludes from the outset a psychological approach, which for Husserl refers not to the transcendental ego, but to the empirical ego. *Epoché* also excludes objective time, that is investigated by the natural sciences (Husserl, 1969, ET 51). The time investigated by Husserl is not measured by clocks, for which we have chosen conventional measures (hour, minute, second, etc.). These types of measurements indicate units that repeat themselves identically and

¹ The original text says “ihre Seele, ihren Sinn behält Sie zurück.” English translations of the integrative texts (Ergänzende Texte) are mine.

succeed one another at a constant pace. Our consciousness does not work like a clock or a chronograph. The time of consciousness is characterized by now, before, before again, afterwards, etc. In this regard, Husserl asserts that phenomenology does not deal with objective time, but with the givenness of adequate perception, its evidence (Husserl, 1969, ET 12). The time investigated in phenomenology does not coincide with the instant of objective time, or with the “now-point” (*Jetztpunkt*). Time rather reveals itself through perceptual processes and what is given in them. In Husserl’s view, phenomena are given to us in a temporal form, with their horizon of retentions and protentions, with the lingering of what is just past and the expectation of what is about to come. The flux of phases and their sinking into retention is described by Husserl through various diagrams of time. Consider the following (Husserl, 1969, ET 31):

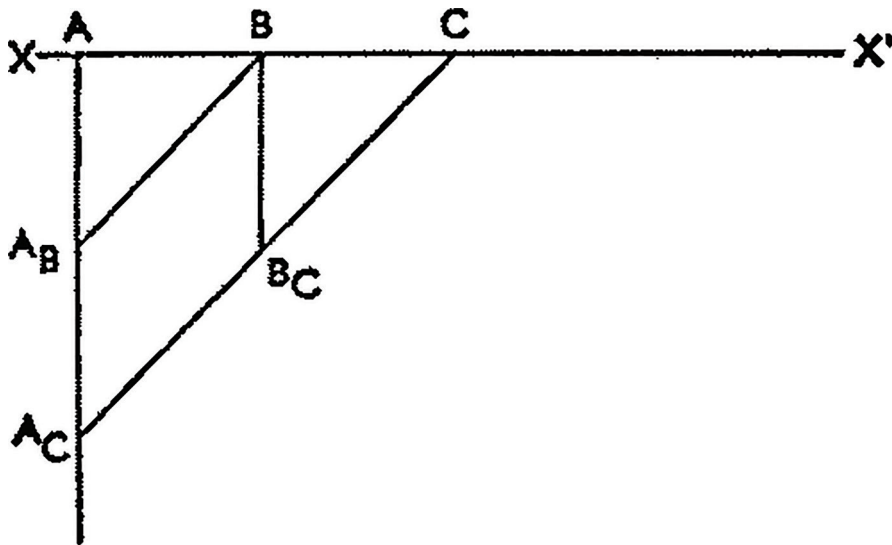


Fig. 1. Husserl's Time Chart.

Let us consider a timeframe developing from X to X' . After phase A has passed, phase B comes and retains our experience of phase A , which is sinking into the recesses of our consciousness. Then, phase C comes and retains phase A through the mediation of our lived experience of phase B , whereas both phase A and phase B are sinking deeper, and so on. Phenomena occur in a retentional-protentional structure. In order to find this structure and the transcendental present, past, and future, it is necessary to perform the *epoché*. This means not only putting in brackets the empirical experiences of the investigating consciousness (mine, yours, etc.), but also individual and cultural prejudices. Among these prejudices

are scientific ones, deriving from the adoption of a model that is not based on transcendental principles: the scientific model carries out analyses in the third person, not in the first person, and relies on idealization (Husserl, 1970).

What is the inherent problem in adopting the empirical or scientific approach? In the first case, the purely empirical perspective of temporal phenomena offers us a view limited to the perceiving individual. My time is full of “empirical encrustations,” which obstruct the knowledge of what time is for people who are not me. In the second case, the scientific view does not answer the question about what time is for us: it tries to explain what time is for the universe and for all the entities populating it. It cannot, therefore, be investigated in the first person, but exclusively in the third person. The phenomenological *epoché* can therefore help us, by putting in brackets both a model that is not suitable for investigation, namely the scientific one, and the empirical encrustations of individual experience. This leads us to investigate the form of time for human consciousness and to understand what the present, the past, and the future are at a transcendental level, that is, as conditions of possibility for any phenomenon to appear to our consciousness.

2.3. The Double Intentionality of the Internal Time-Consciousness

Husserl writes about the temporality of the phenomenon and of the temporal form of consciousness. Does this mean that even consciousness is subject to temporality? Is there a present, a past, and a future *of consciousness*, as well as *in consciousness*? To this question, Husserl answers that consciousness, together with all its intentional modes (perception, reminiscence, etc.), is not in immanent time (Husserl, 1969, ET 50). Does it mean that subjectivity is timeless? The issue turns out to be more complex, since Husserl refers to a double intentionality of time-consciousness:

Consequently, like two aspects of one and the same thing, there are in the unique flux of consciousness *two* inseparable, homogeneous *intentionalities* which require one another and are interwoven with one another. By means of the one, immanent time is constituted, i.e., an Objective time, an authentic time, in which there is duration and alteration of that which endures. In the other is constituted the quasi-temporal disposition of the phases of the flux, which ever and necessarily has the flowing now-point, the phase of actuality, and the series of pre-actual and post-actual (of the not yet actual) phases. This pre-phenomenal, pre-immanent temporality is constituted intentionally as the form of temporally constitutive consciousness and in the latter itself. (Husserl, 1964, § 39, p. 109).

To understand the internal time-consciousness, we need to grasp its duality: it consists both in the constitution of the time of the enduring object, and in the pre-phenomenal constitution of the form of time-consciousness. For Husserl, the

object is transcendently grasped at a temporal level by a transversal intentionality (*Quer-intentionalität*), whose unity is the synthesis of past phases, conceivable through a retentional-protentional horizon. On the other hand, consciousness is quasi-temporal, pre-reflective (Zahavi, 2003), and characterized by a longitudinal intentionality (*Längs-intentionalität*), as Husserl writes in several texts (Husserl, 1969, § 39, Bl. VIII, ET 54).

Husserl further specifies: “The self-appearance of the flux does not require a second flux; but *qua* phenomenon it is constituted in itself. The constituting and the constituted coincide, yet naturally they cannot coincide in every respect” (Husserl, 1964, § 39, p. 110). Although the temporal flux is the same, consciousness is grasped differently as constituted and as constituting: in a certain sense, it splits. As in the case of objects, there is a retentional-protentional horizon through which consciousness grasps itself temporally. However, while in transversal intentionality, which is directed at the object, the constituent and the constituted do not coincide, in longitudinal intentionality, the constituent and the constituted coincide. In the former case, consciousness is solely constitutive and grasps the temporal object as other than itself. In the latter, consciousness is directed towards itself, therefore it is simultaneously itself and other than itself. Consciousness, when grasped as an object, needs to be included into a horizon of retentions and protentions. This does not occur when it is seen as a subject. Furthermore, it is the series of moments withheld in the operation of retention that ensures the identity of our subjectivity: the retentions of me perceiving, desiring, etc. sediment and can be grasped with an intentional act guaranteeing that it is *me* who has perceived, desired, etc. Time is therefore not only a form through which we grasp what is other than ourselves, but also through which we grasp ourselves as *sui generis* objects. The possibility to grasp ourselves is for Husserl a necessary condition through which we grasp what is other than ourselves: the constituted cannot be constituted if the constituting has not been constituted first.

3. Psychological Time According to Vicario and the Critique of Husserl

3.1. Physical Time and Psychological Time

Vicario shares with Husserl the exclusion of time in a physical sense. In 1969 Vicario states that he aims to understand the relationship between events that endure and psychological time, namely our awareness of duration. In this regard, he believes that the nature of psychological time is better understood “by investigating the ways in which events are structured” (Vicario 1969a: 294)². Vicario’s intent is

² English translations of Vicario’s passages from Italian are mine.

immediately framed within a Gestaltist framework, as demonstrated by his focus on how events are structured for our consciousness. This intent can be realized only through experiments questioning our visual perception, which are very different from experiments made by physicists. Vicario notices that issues arise when we try to apply physical time to perceived phenomena. The relations of before and after, in the phenomenal realm, can be different from those in the physical realm. To have a better understanding of what Vicario asserts, it is helpful to describe the stroboscopic movement, as shown in Fig. 2 (Vicario, 2005, p. 186). Consider two lights (l_1 , l_2) placed horizontally next to each other. Initially, both lights are off (phase *a*), then l_1 is turned on (phase *b*), then l_1 is turned off (phase *c*), then l_2 is turned on (phase *d*), then l_2 is turned off (phase *e*).

Phase *c* is crucial and is called ISI (interstimulus interval): if it lasts less than 10 ms, two stationary lights can be seen, one on the left, the other on the right; if it is longer than 500 ms, lights are always stationary but alternate (l_1 on the left, l_2 on the right); if it lasts about 50 ms, only one light moving from left to right is seen. The cause of the movement of l_2 is the turning on of l_1 (otherwise we would see only one stationary light), but it is also true that the cause of the movement of l_1 is the turning on of l_2 (otherwise we would also see a stationary light). Vicario asks himself: "What kind of time is it when what happens afterward influences what

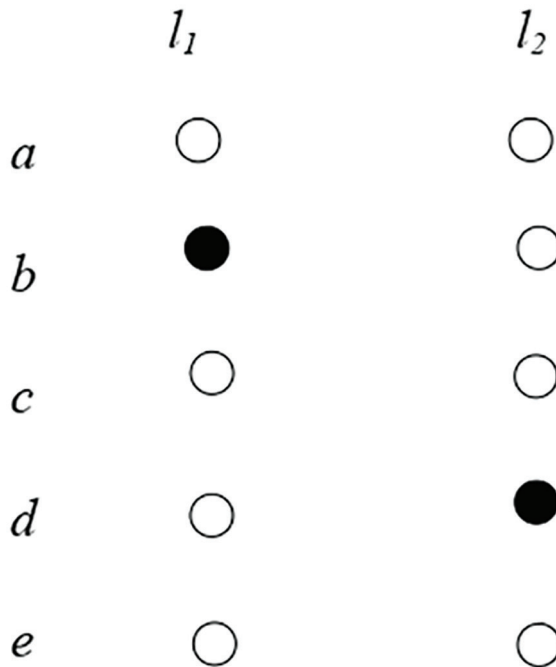


Fig. 2. Stroboscopic movement.

has happened before?” (Vicario, 2005, p. 187). Such a boundary phenomenon questions the nature of perceived time and highlights that it does not coincide with physical time (Taddio, 2023, §2). Vicario also notices that an analogy at the relational level should not be taken for granted: the phenomenal experience is not a “projection” of physical events, since such a projection turns out to be unfaithful (Vicario, 1969a, p. 316).

The difference between the time of consciousness and physical time undoubtedly unites Vicario’s and Husserl’s analyses. However, Vicario seems to refer not to transcendental time, but to psychological time, which he defines as “experienced duration as such” (Vicario, 1969b, p. 6). Vicario is interested in experienced duration, not in its conditions of possibility: this is the main difference with Husserl and, more generally, between theoretical phenomenology and experimental phenomenology. Nevertheless, transcendental time and psychological time are not at odds but closely related to each other. This is demonstrated by Vicario’s interest in the phenomenological method, which helps understand “the microstructure of psychological time” (Vicario, 1963; 1964). What does this method consist of? In Vicario’s words:

I therefore believe that in defining psychological time, one must adhere to a strictly phenomenological criterion, especially until we have ascertained the explanatory capacities of the models provided by the physiology of the nervous system. According to this criterion, psychological time would be the phenomenal content common to experiences such as change, continuity, duration, instant, before or after relationship, etc. (Vicario 1963, p. 195).

The overall criterion used by Vicario is the same used by Husserl and other phenomenologists, namely turning to our experience of time. However, what Vicario wants to find is different. He is interested in the “phenomenal content” common to temporal experiences, not in the form of consciousness that experiences these phenomena. The common phenomenal content may, at first glance, seem akin to the conditions of possibility of temporal phenomena: these conditions are revealed in what is common to all experiencing subjects. However, Vicario searches for the content, the experienced time, while Husserl investigates the form, the possibility of experiencing time.

3.2. The Critique of the Retentional-Protentional Structure

This difference between phenomenological and psychological views sometimes leads to misunderstandings in Vicario’s reading of Husserl. For instance, Vicario asserts that, in Husserl’s diagrams of time, there is an implicit one-to-one correspondence between instants of physical time and moments of phenomenal time (Vicario 2004, pp. 62-64). I would be very cautious about this presupposed

correspondence. From Husserl's work it is rather evident that the time of the object is bracketed through the *epoché* (Husserl, 1969, ET 51), and that he considers the individual phases of the flux as different from physical instants. Nevertheless, Vicario's assertion is not unfounded. After studying and experimentally verifying temporal dislocation (Vicario, 1962; 1963), he argues that Husserl's diagrams fail to account this "shift" concerning perception of before and after. Temporal dislocation, or displacement, refers to the difference between the succession of physical stimuli and the perceived succession of events under specific conditions. Vicario (1963) conducted experiments using triplets of stimuli (a1-b-a2), where a1 and a2 represent high tones of 1760 and 1568 Hz respectively, and b denotes a distinct low tone of 82.4 Hz. For tones lasting 100msec, subjects perceived a succession of high notes followed by a low one, with the high notes seemingly overshadowing the low note, making it less noticeable. This effect was more pronounced with shorter stimuli (<150msec). Furthermore, Vicario found that shorter stimuli and greater tonal differences increased the likelihood of temporal dislocation.

Anyway, Vicario's critique of Husserl is mainly directed at the retentional-protentional structure. Vicario opposes the idea of sinking occurring in the retentional process, as it raises the problem of a possible regress to infinity (Vicario 2004, p. 52-53). However, what raises more doubts is the concept of protention: "If indeed the mechanism of retention has on its side a certain number of observations and interpretations of the results of certain experiments, the mechanism of protention does not account for phenomena of non-permanence, such as those described by Michotte" (Vicario 2004, p. 44). Are we sure that Michotte's permanence of anteriority and posteriority correspond to the Husserlian protention and retention? We believe the answer is negative. Firstly, permanence is only one of the effects resulting from protention. In § 25, Husserl precises that protention does not necessarily imply the permanence of something, but can also foresee its change: what is expected is that this change takes a certain direction compared to other possibilities, not that the object generally persists (Husserl, 1964, § 25). In the same point of the text, Husserl asserts that the object fits into the temporal configuration of protention-retention just as it spatially fits into the figure-ground relation. The protentional-retentional horizon is thus a condition of possibility for the manifestation of the temporal object. Michotte's experimental demonstration that the object does not always persist does not imply the absence of a protentional horizon, but rather that persistence constitutes only one modality through which protention is revealed. Phenomena of non-persistence do not therefore disprove the protentional-retentional structure. Vicario also critiques the idea of protention as expectation. He thinks that expectation could be a low-level one, elaborated by the motor system based on

consolidated behavioral habits, or a high-level one, constituted by comparison with past experience. In the first case, protention cannot be performed by the internal time-consciousness, because it takes place in the motor system, and not in the representation of events (Vicario 2004, p. 62). What is instinctive cannot be attributed to consciousness and must be excluded. In the second case, expectation has its roots in the mnemonic traces of the past, which are simply contents to draw from (Vicario 2004, p. 62).

However, neither of the two types of expectation fits the Husserlian definition. Protention is not understood in a purely physiological sense: in phenomenology, there is no sharp separation between body and psyche, and the subjective body, the *Leib*, is a psychic body (Husserl, 1989, § 18). Therefore, speaking of purely motor impulses disconnected from consciousness is objectable. Even when Husserl speaks of the object-body (*Körper*), he states that, in our experience, its relation with the subject-body is very close, as in the case of the two hands touching each other (Husserl, 1960, § 44). A purely motor temporal mechanism with no consequences for consciousness is not conceivable. At most, it can be rooted in processes of passive synthesis and not in those of active synthesis, as is the case here. The subject can actively direct itself towards a temporal object, can recall it, can analyze and reflect on it, but the temporal constitution of consciousness is part of the passive syntheses (i.e., Husserl, 2001b, §§ 40–41).

Vicario's second idea of expectation can be directed to Husserl's concept of recollection, but not to retention. Husserl states that recollection is a mode of presentification (*Vergegenwärtigung*) of past lived experiences, whereas retention is a perceptual process which consists in withholding some preceding phases of the temporal flux (Husserl, 1964: § 17). Retention has nothing to do with the recovery of contents "stored" in memory, Vicario's second objection cannot thus be applied to retention. Neither of the two types of expectation considered by Vicario has anything to do with expectation in the phenomenological sense, nor with the original process of protention. In Husserl's view, protention is the intentional halo that surrounds the object in the phenomenal present and projects it towards the "afterwards," in a process of persistence or change.

The problem with Vicario's criticism toward Husserl lies on a different idea of time: "The only experience that we rightly can call 'time' is just a tiny 'present' that seems to move in one direction, in which we can perceive simultaneity and succession" (Vicario 2004, 64). Vicario's definition of time refers only to the present moment, thus excluding other processes relative to change. Moreover, he offers a very restricted definition of what is phenomenal: "It indicates what appears at the level of consciousness: perceptions, memories, emotions, and thoughts as they appear to us, and not how they are generated" (Vicario 2005, 13). This definition is partially accepted by phenomenology, as it investigates phenomena in

their modes of givenness. Vicario excludes the genesis of phenomena from both the physical-physiological side and the transcendental in consciousness. However, the latter is significant in Husserl's later works. Static phenomenology can be conducted for a long time, but, at a certain moment, the need to address the genetic question arises. This is probably the reason why, in his *Lectures on passive synthesis*, Husserl returns to the issue of time-consciousness. Investigating time means also investigating its genesis, not just immediate experience. The psychological-experimental approach is rather focused on the value of immediate experience (Taddio, 2014), thus proving that Vicario chooses to adopt an empirical approach rather than a transcendental one.

3.3. Objective Time and Time of Consciousness

Despite the differences in understanding time, Husserl and Vicario converge on other points. As previously stated, they both emphasize the difference between physical time and phenomenal time: the time of the object is different from the time of consciousness. To define the time of the object and its appearances, Husserl calls it *phansiologische* and asserts that it does not necessarily coincide with the immanent time of experience (Husserl, 1969, ET 47). Moreover, the form of the objective time is not absolute but categorical: it is "a form of individual objects" (*eine Form der individuellen Objekte*) (Husserl, 1969, ET 44, p. 329). The individual position of objects comes after absolute consciousness (Husserl, 1969, ET 39), a concept developed by Husserl over years of reflection and definitively affirmed after 1909 (Brough, 1972). Consequently, the temporal form of consciousness is the condition of possibility for the existence of objective time, not vice versa.

This failure to prioritize objective time over our perception implies the possibility of a mismatch between external stimuli and our perception of objects and events, as demonstrated by Vicario and Kiritani's (1999) experiment on the slow-motion tunnel effect. They prove that the stimulus impressed on the retina does not always correspond to perceptual experience. Even when two distinct series of stimuli are impressed on the right and left, we do not always perceive separate objects; under specific conditions, we perceive only one (Vicario, 1969a, pp. 294-295, 316-318).

It is noteworthy that other Gestaltists, such as Michotte, seem to align to Husserl's assertions: distinguishing between external time, where the object is simply located, and its own time (Michotte, 1962, p. 361). The latter pertains to the permanence of the object, influenced by various factors. Michotte conducted several experiments suggesting that the permanence of the object depends on perceptual factors (mainly change, illumination, and screen effects) rather than past experiences (Thinès et al., 2014, pp. 117-168). For instance, a blue disc is

projected onto a screen, and its color, shape, or size is suddenly altered. Under these conditions *the same object* appears changed. However, if modifications are more significant or affect multiple properties of the object, *a new object* emerges (Michotte, 1962, pp. 351 ff.). This experiment illustrates that the proper time of the object is maintained throughout its phenomenal permanence (in this case, the permanence of continuity), irrespective of the external time in which it exists. Husserl also theorizes, in the *Bernau Manuscripts* and in *Manuscript C* (Zahavi 2004), a time of the external object. Drawing inspiration from Husserl and Michotte, one can say that the time through which consciousness grasps itself and its own experiential flux (related to Husserl's longitudinal intentionality) presents itself differently from the time of the immanent object (Michotte's proper time or Husserl's objective time grasped by transversal intentionality). The latter does not coincide with the time in which the transcendent object is inserted (Michotte's and Husserl's external time) according to the perspective of physics. We can thus distinguish the experiencing flux (constituting), the flux of immanent experiences (relative to immanent objects), and the time of the world (relative to external objects) (Husserl 2001a; 2006).

In this respect, Husserl raises a fundamental question: "It is indeed evident that the perception of a temporal Object itself has temporality, that perception of duration presupposes duration of perception, and that perception of any temporal configuration whatsoever itself has its temporal form" (Husserl, 1969, § 7, p. 42). When studying temporal phenomena, therefore, we must consider both how the object or event appears temporally to us and how our perceptual processes unfold over time. The temporality of the object and the temporality of the flux of consciousness must both be considered from a phenomenological perspective. Vicario focuses on Husserl's assertion and considers two images, namely that of the stationary window and that of the traveling window, as shown in Figs. 3 and 4 (Vicario, 2004, p. 36).

Vicario states that Husserl seems more inclined to adopt the metaphor of the traveling window (Vicario 2004, pp. 36-37), considering that, just as there is

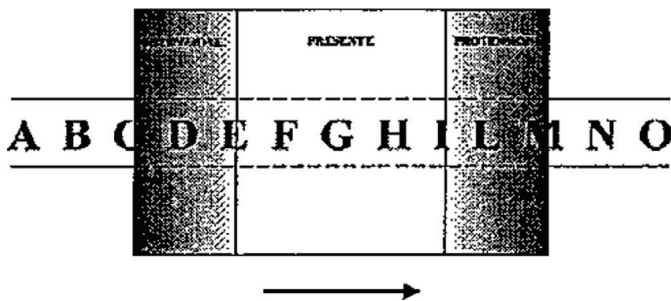


Fig. 3. Metaphor of the traveling window.

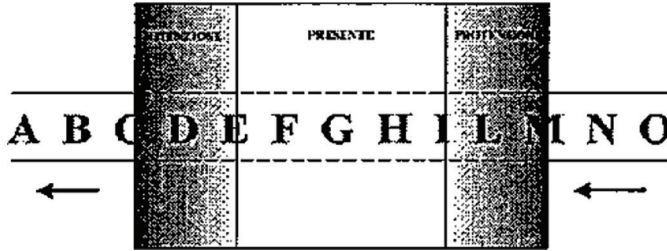


Fig. 4. Metaphor of the stationary window.

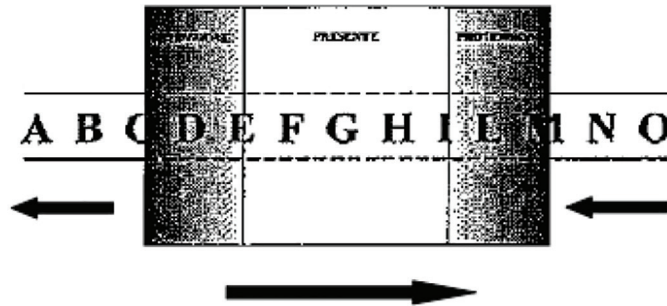


Fig. 5. Metaphor of traveling window and events.

perception of duration, there is also duration of perception: the subject becomes in time. However, Vicario should consider that even the object becomes in time: as the window moves, we must add the movement of the object with its own temporality. I would reconfigure Vicario's image as in Fig. 5.

Notwithstanding Husserl's crucial intuition on the temporality of events and consciousness, he faces some difficulties in realizing proper diagrams. Some phenomena, such as temporal displacement, *tau effect*, and *kappa effect* (Vicario, 1969b, pp. 6-7, 61-66), do not fit in them (i.e., consider Fig. 1). Vicario's criticism of Husserl's diagrams is due to this incapability to capture the depth of time-consciousness. After all, schemes are simplifications and do not account for all the complexities of a phenomenon. For the same reason we use a map to navigate the territory, knowing that the former will never exactly equate to the latter. It is understandable that Vicario may not like Husserl's schematization, but this does not lessen the importance of his transcendental theory of time.

4. Conclusion

In concluding this examination, we emphasize that, despite the differences between Husserl and Vicario in conceiving phenomenological time, which for the former is transcendental and for the latter is psychological, there is a detachment from physical time in both cases. Vicario also makes this a matter of method,

highlighting that perceptual facts can only be explained by referring to other perceptual facts, not through psycho-physics (Vicario, 1993a, pp. 110-111; 1993b). If explanations of a psycho-physical nature were resorted to, one would fall into the stimulus error, that Gestalt psychology has long warned against (Köhler, 1947; Taddio, 2011; Bozzi, 2018; Soranzo & Taddio, 2023). In this respect, Husserl's and Vicario's positions are extremely close.

In order to somehow reconcile their divergences, we can draw inspiration from Vicario's reference to Julius Thomas Fraser (1987), who conceives time in six different ways. Vicario particularly focuses on the last three of them (biotemporality, nootemporality, and sociotemporality) and develops a different time table, articulated on three modes (physical time, phenomenal time, and social time) and five total levels (reflexes homeostasis, learned responses, perceptual processes, thought processes, and interpersonal behaviour). The first two levels are explainable with our notion of physical time, while the third and fourth are only explainable with the concept of subjective or phenomenological time. The time of the fifth level is social instead (Vicario, 2004, pp. 69-73). Vicario's schematization lacks a differentiation between psychological and phenomenological time. If there was, it would occur between the third and the four level, which could be renamed as "empirical processes" and "transcendental processes", or something similar. Notwithstanding this little remark, it can be asserted that all three types of time (physical, phenomenal, and social) are valid and that, depending on the level analyzed, different processes are involved.

In this paper, we have touched on the issue of time in classical phenomenology, through Husserl's analyses, and in Gestalt experimental phenomenology, thanks to Vicario's considerations. Two different ideas of time, one transcendental and one psychological, have thus been outlined. However, there are intersections between these conceptions and it is not surprising, since time understood in a transcendental sense underlies our empirical perception of time. This transcendental aspect also underlies physical time, although the latter is the result of a further process of idealization, which objectifies time and inserts it into a third-person perspective on reality. The issue of time opens to other questions, for instance the relationship between discrete phases and continuous flux, or between figure and ground, or even the unitary perception of the temporal object. I hope to develop effectively these issues in the future.

Abstract

This study examines Edmund Husserl's and Giovanni Bruno Vicario's perspectives on time. Husserl's work focuses on consciousness and its processes of synthesis, thus on a transcendental concept of time. Vicario, a member of the Trieste Gestalt school of psychology, rather explores the issue through an experimental perspective. This difference leads Vicario to criticize Husserl, reinterpreting and, sometimes, misunderstanding

his texts. Through a careful textual analysis of Husserl's and Vicario's works on time, it is argued that, despite methodological differences, their views can be integrated into a pluralistic understanding of time. This includes both phenomenological and psychological perspectives, and offers valid alternatives to a unified and physicalistic view of time.

Keywords: Edmund Husserl, Giovanni Bruno Vicario, Time-Consciousness, Phenomenology.

Zusammenfassung

Diese Studie untersucht die Perspektiven von Edmund Husserl und Giovanni Bruno Vicario zum Thema Zeit. Husserls Arbeit konzentriert sich auf Bewusstsein und dessen Syntheseprozesse, folglich auf ein transzendentes Zeitkonzept. Vicario, ein Mitglied der Triester Gestaltpsychologieschule, untersucht das Thema eher aus experimenteller Perspektive. Dieser Unterschied führt Vicario dazu, Husserl zu kritisieren, seine Texte neu zu interpretieren und manchmal zu missverstehen. Durch eine sorgfältige textuelle Analyse von Husserls und Vicarios Werken zur Zeit wird argumentiert, dass ihre Ansichten trotz methodischer Unterschiede in ein pluralistisches Verständnis von Zeit integriert werden können. Dies umfasst sowohl phänomenologische als auch psychologische Perspektiven und bietet gültige Alternativen zu einer einheitlichen und physikalistischen Zeitan sicht.

Schlüsselbegriffe: Edmund Husserl, Giovanni Bruno Vicario, Zeitbewusstsein, Phänomenologie.

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