

# Consciousness lived through. Husserl's reception of Brentano's inner consciousness

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*Abstract:* The paper aims to examine Brentano's account of inner consciousness and to assess its reception in Husserl's early works. Starting from the preliminary definition of psychic phenomena and some basic distinctions such as those between inner perception and observation, primary and secondary object, etc., I discuss Brentano's later thought in the light of his theory of relation and temporality, revealing a certain inconsistency with his initial assumptions. Subsequently, I examine Husserl's critical reception of inner consciousness in the *Logical Investigations* (1901) and in his lectures up to 1904-05, that is, up to the first in-depth thematization of temporality, to which inner consciousness will be inextricably related. Indeed, Husserl's reworking of the inherited psychologistic lexicon helps to trace a *prehistory of his phenomenology of time* and to better understand the paradigmatic detachment of phenomenology from descriptive psychology.

*Keywords:* Brentano, Husserl, inner consciousness, inner perception.

As it is well known, Husserl's thematization of the question of time in his lectures and manuscripts focuses on the *innere Zeitbewußtsein*. In this sense, he roots his analyses in the notion of inner consciousness inherited from Brentano's psychology. A peculiar blending of synthesis constituting time and self-awareness results from this theoretical choice by Husserl, triggering a major, albeit subterranean, shift in transcendental phenomenology.<sup>1</sup> This paper aims to clarify Brentano's account of inner consciousness and Husserl's critical reception of that crucial theme in some of his early works.<sup>2</sup> In so doing, a prehistory of Husserl's reflections *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*

<sup>1</sup> See my Nobili 2022 for a comprehensive account of the impact of Husserl's analyses of time-consciousness on his understanding of phenomenological idealism.

<sup>2</sup> For reasons of space, I will limit myself to the first edition of the *Logical Investigations* (1900-01) – in which Husserl's preliminary works about logic and psychology are improved – and to the subsequent lectures on the *Allgemeine Erkenntnistheorie* (WS 1902-03) and the *Hauptstücke aus der Phänomenologie und Theorie der Erkenntnis* (WS 1904-05), where Husserl's detachment from Brentano becomes more definite. I will not consider the *Logik-Vorlesungen* (1902-03) as hardly relevant to the topic at hand.

will be traced, elucidating one of its main prerequisites. Moreover, starting from some preliminary terminological remarks in the *Logical Investigations*, the paradigmatic departure of phenomenology from descriptive psychology will progressively emerge on the basis of Husserl's reassessment of inner consciousness, that is through the transvaluation of Brentano's access key to psychic phenomena.

## 1. *Brentano on inner consciousness*

### 1.1 *Perception, observation and judgement*

Since its first formulation in 1874, Brentano's descriptive psychology sought its executive pivot in the inner perception (*innere Wahrnehmung*). On the possibilities and limits of functioning of the latter, Brentano based his philosophical project of clarifying the unspoken assumptions of psychic life, and thus of every other branch of human knowledge related to it. Inner perception was regarded as "the primary source of the experiences essential to psychological investigations" (Brentano 1973: 48; Eng. tr. 26). In the failure to characterize it, that is, the inability to distinguish inner perception from the phenomenon of inner observation (*innere Beobachtung*), lies the risk of rejection of psychological research *tout court* by young scholars.<sup>3</sup>

Even before being a basic heuristic tool for promoting a privileged access to the psychic dimension, inner perception is already employed to define psychic phenomena as such. In fact, Brentano recalls how the latter is characterized by: (1) being or being based "*upon presentations*," (2) lacking, unlike physical phenomena, the feature of "*extension*," (3) the peculiar trait of "*intentional in/existence*," (4) being the "*exclusive object of inner perception*," (5) appearing to us, "*in spite of all their multiplicity, always [...] as a unity*" (136 f.; 74 f.). Let us develop point (4).

"We call – Brentano says – the perception of a mental activity which is actually present in us 'inner perception'," and therefore "the consciousness which is directed upon it 'inner consciousness'" (141 n.; 78 n.). The emphasis placed on the *innere Bewußtsein* is significant in the *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, as it allows a thorny issue in the psychological debate of the time

<sup>3</sup> "I know of examples of young people, desiring to devote themselves to the study of psychology, who, at the threshold of the science, began to doubt their own ability. They had been told that inner observation is the main source of psychological knowledge, and they repeatedly made strenuous attempts at it. But all these efforts were in vain; all they got for their trouble was a swarm of confused ideas and a headache. So they came to the conclusion that they had no capacity for self-observation, which is quite right. But on the basis of the notion which had been imparted to them, they took this to mean that they had no talent for psychological investigation" (42; 22 f.).

to be solved, namely that concerning the presence or absence of unconscious psychic states or acts (143 ff.; 79 ff.). According to Brentano, the hypothesis of an unconscious consciousness, far from constituting a *contradictio in adiecto*,<sup>4</sup> deserved to be examined because it was apparently capable of averting the danger of an infinite regress inherent in the very notion of presentation (*Vorstellung*). If, in an act of presentation, one is conscious both of the content presented (e.g. a sound) and of the act of presenting itself (e.g. hearing a sound), then it seems to be expected that the latter also owes its conscious status to its being presented in a new act of presentation (the presentation of hearing the sound) and so on, according to a potentially unlimited presentations of presentations. Precisely in order to prevent such a regression, it seems reasonable to interrupt the series by resorting to an unconscious presentation (171; 94) underlying the primary level of presentation (the hearing).

However, Brentano argues, since "there are undoubtedly occasions when we are conscious of a mental phenomenon while it is present in us," (176; 97) it is perhaps worth taking a different route to escape such a counterintuitive hypothesis. In the wake of Aristotle,<sup>5</sup> Brentano's loophole finds unwarranted such a proliferation of acts, because it does not take into account the mutual inherence between presentation and presented object.

Rather, inner experience seems to prove undeniably that the presentation of the sound is connected with the presentation of the presentation of the sound in such a peculiarly intimate way that, by existing, it contributes at the same time inwardly to the being of the other. This suggests that there is a peculiar interweaving [*Verwebung*] between the object of inner presentation and the presentation itself, and that both belong to one and the same mental act (179; 98, transl. mod.).

The retrieval of the Aristotelian insight is very fruitful here. It makes it possible not only to sidestep the two horns of the problem – *aut* unconscious

<sup>4</sup> "We use the term 'unconscious' in two ways. First, in an active sense, speaking of a person who is not conscious of a thing; secondly, in a passive sense, speaking of a thing of which we are not conscious. In the first sense, the expression 'unconscious consciousness' would be a contradiction, but not in the second. It is in the latter sense that the term 'unconscious' is used here" (143 n.; 79 n.).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *De Anima*, III 2, 425 b 12-15: "Since we perceive that we are seeing and hearing, it is necessary that one perceives that one sees either by sight or by some other sense. But then the same sense will be of sight and of the underlying colour, with the result that either there will be two senses of the same thing or a sense will be of itself" (Aristotle 2016: 52; cf. Brentano 1973: 179 n.; Eng. tr. 98 n.). As is well known (cf. *De Anima*, III 2, 425 b 15-17), Aristotle's examination resolves the alternative by ascribing some kind of self-awareness to the percipient sense, precisely in order to avert the regress to infinity: "Further, if the sense which perceived sight were to be other than sight, then either this will carry on into infinity or there will be some sense which will be of itself" (Aristotle 2016: 52; cf. Brentano 1973: 183; Eng. tr. 100).

consciousness, *aut* regress on the side of presentation – but also to root out the presupposition of their bifurcation, identifying the very source of the dilemma. The latter is, in fact, the result of a kind of self-deception or perspective blunder triggered by our analytical commitment. This is how Brentano puts it:

The presentation of the sound and the presentation of the presentation of the sound form a single mental phenomenon; it is only by considering it in its relation to two different objects, one of which is a physical phenomenon and the other a mental phenomenon, that we divide it conceptually into two presentations (179; 98).

If we succeed in overcoming – and emancipating ourselves from – the analytical import of our reflection on the psychic phenomenon, it is possible to grasp its “dual peculiarity,” which consists in having “the sound as content within it and [...] itself as content at the same time.” This also permits to consider, within the same unity, the content presented as its *primary object* and the presentation itself as the *secondary object* of the act. As Brentano notes, the primacy of the presented content over the presenting act is not a matter of temporal order. The two objects would be given at the same time as the act is performed. Rather, the primacy relates to the “nature of the case,” since if the occurrence of the presented in the absence of the presenting appears “inconceivable,” a presenting without the presented would result in “obvious contradiction.” Each presentation thus seems to be directed “in the most proper sense of the term” to the presented content, and only “incidentally and as something additional [*nebenbei und als Zugabe*]” to itself (179 f.; 98, transl. mod.).

In the German term *nebenbei*, Brentano translates the Aristotelian expression *en parergo*,<sup>6</sup> emphasizing how the psychic phenomenon is only incidentally or accessorially self-aware, i.e. by reflex or in a *latere* way, with respect to its own intentional theme, namely the object actually presented. It is thanks to this aspect that Brentano is able to distinguish, as mentioned at the beginning, inner consciousness and the perception associated with it from the phenomenon of inner observation or introspection. Although Brentano does not put too much effort to differentiate one from the other,<sup>7</sup> he does proclaim a “universally valid psychological law,” that “we can never focus our *attention* upon the object of inner perception” (1973: 41; Eng. tr. 22). He repeatedly rules out a direct observation of the psychic phenomenon, as it would imply a thematization equivalent to that of the experience of a primary object (181; 99).

<sup>6</sup> See how Brentano translates *Metafisica*, XII 9, 1074 b 35-36: “Das Wissen und die Empfindung und die Meinung und das Nachdenken scheinen immer auf etwas anderes zu gehen, auf sich selbst aber nebenbei [*ἐν παρεργῶ*]” (Brentano 1973: 185; cf. Brentano 1971: 138; Eng. tr. 215).

<sup>7</sup> On the topic see Obstfeld 1983.

Upon closer examination, therefore, in the observation of a psychic phenomenon, we are dealing with a first act directed towards a second act. This can happen through reflection or perhaps through memory, i.e. recalling a previous experience (61; 32). In doing so, however, by deviating from internal perception/consciousness, one ends up shying away from what more than anything else distinguishes it, namely, evidence (128; 70, *passim*). An evidence, that of internal perception/consciousness, which does not need to be justified because immediate, self-evident, and therefore, in its Cartesian inspiration and against all types of skepticism, the ultimate foundation or guarantee of the entire scope of knowledge (198; 109).

All of this leads to a further aspect of the theory of inner consciousness. If we adhere to what was said earlier about the unity of the psychic act, the latter appears as a "characteristic fusion of consciousness and the object of consciousness." Now, to Brentano, this fusion ensures an "inner knowledge" of the act in question, which "contains itself in its entirety as presented and known, in addition to its reference to a primary object" (196; 107, transl. mod.). The shift is significant. Brentano here begins to progressively enrich the prerogatives of inner consciousness: it will no longer be limited to qualifying the psychic act as the mutual inherence of presenting (act) and presented (content) or as the unitary dimension of appearance as such. The purely (self-) manifestative horizon of the inner consciousness will indeed be complicated by the introduction of the functions of judgement (*Urteil*) and feeling (*Gefühl*) into its domain (203; 111). Thus, by virtue of the enrichment of the functions ascribed to inner consciousness, each psychic act can be seen from four different aspects: (1) "as a presentation of its primary object," (2) "as a presentation of itself," (3) as judgmental "self-knowledge" and, lastly, (4) as "self-feeling" (219; 119, transl. mod.).

In this way, the multifarious determination of inner consciousness ends up tracing the three fundamental species of psychic phenomena identified by Brentano in his *Klassifikation der psychischen Phänomene* (1911): presentations, judgements and the class of feelings and will (1971: 125-130; Eng. tr. 206 ff.).<sup>8</sup> When asked about the relationship between the three psychic types of

<sup>8</sup> This conclusion seems to be derived from the approach adopted by Brentano's *Psychology* as early as 1874. By selecting inner perception as the privileged method of investigation, the entirety of psychic phenomena considered by the subsequent taxonomy must somehow already coexist *within* consciousness, at least as a necessity inherent to their possible examination. This aspect does not apply to Husserlian phenomenology, which does not view various types of acts as merely juxtaposed, but rather according to specific relationships of foundation/stratification. Thus, Husserl is not compelled to overload the notion of inner consciousness from the outset with prerogatives of higher cognitive levels such as those related to judgment, thereby preserving its fundamentally manifestative status.

inner consciousness (presentative, judgmental, affective-volitional), Brentano points out that they “are most intimately intertwined,” so that “there is a certain ubiquity pertaining to each class in all of our conscious life” (125; 206). On the other hand, he also ascertains “the natural order of the three classes,” giving priority to presentation over judgment, and judgment over feeling or will. The presentative function would be the “simplest” and the “most universal,” so to speak, “while judgement and love always include a presentation within them. It is likewise the most independent of the three, since it is the foundation for the others.” Consequently, it might seem that by virtue of a certain order of foundation one can have purely presentative psychic acts. And yet this is not Brentano’s stance, since he does not “want to deny that judgement and love are also represented in some way in every mental state.” The relationship among the classes is not so much concerned with the actual concreteness of the *Seelenleben* as with the logical ordering of the more or less complex degree of their thinkability. In other words, it is merely “for a psychological fiction” that “we can conceive, without contradiction, of a being which has no capacity for judgement or love, equipped with nothing but the capacity for presentation, but we cannot conceive of it the other way around” (127 f.; 207).<sup>9</sup>

### 1.2 *Relations and temporality*

In subsequent works to that of 1874, Brentano gradually refines his conception of inner consciousness, ultimately achieving results that are in some ways paradoxical, given his initial positions. Such developments arise from Brentano’s reassessment of intentional reference in terms of his theory of relatives (1971: 133 ff.; Eng. tr. 211 ff.; 1976: 124-138; Eng. tr. 74-82).<sup>10</sup> Given certain similarities that I will later discuss, the psychic reference differs from a relation in the proper sense by virtue of the different existential implication it entails. In the comparative relation “Caius is taller than Titus,” the existence of Caius (the *foundation* of the relation) implies the existence of Titus (the *term* of the relation) as a necessary element for the comparison to make sense. This is because, without Titus, the comparison would not be meaningful since the term of comparison would be lost – the relation can be expressed as follows to em-

<sup>9</sup> In an addendum to his *Klassifikation*, Brentano will reconsider the attribution of an “emotional tone” to the inner consciousness of every experience. According to Brentano, there could be visual or auditory experiences detached from volition or feeling (139; 215). However, what remains more problematic from a Husserlian perspective is the persistence of a predicative and thus self-knowing element at such a basic stage as that of inner consciousness.

<sup>10</sup> For a quick overview of Brentano’s theory of relations see Kraus (1919: 43-45) and Volpi (1987: 71-73).

phasize the existential implication: "Caius is taller than Titus is" (126; 75). In the case of intentional reference, however, the term of the relation "does not need to exist in reality at all." If "Caius thinks of a centaur," it is rather the existence of the foundation of the relation that is implied by the intentional connection, insofar as thought, in the Cartesian sense, presupposes someone who does the thinking. This allows to distinguish psychic reference from *relativa* in the proper sense, characterizing the former as a "quasi-relational [*Relativliches*]" (1971: 134; Eng. tr. 212).

The commonality between psychic reference and relations is nonetheless reaffirmed by the fact that in both cases, we are dealing (at least) with a dual objectivity instantiated by the two modes of presentation *in recto* and *in obliquo*.<sup>11</sup> From a strictly relational point of view, the foundation is always grasped *in recto*, whereas the term(s) *in obliquo*. The case of psychic reference is trickier because, according to the new 'relational' assessment of intentionality, the act itself is given *in recto* whereas the object is presented *in obliquo* (1971: 145; Eng. tr. 219). This result, however, fails to comply with the previously mentioned distinction between the primary and secondary object of presentation. After all, Brentano departs from the distinction illustrated in the *Psychology* of 1874 between perception and observation, risking to make inner perception a sort of thematic self-observation.

Other passages testify to this change in thought of the late Brentano. In particular, the possibility of directly perceiving oneself is strongly asserted in a text where the modes of presentation *in recto* and *in obliquo* are used to illustrate the perception of time (1974: 37-52; Eng. tr. 28-38). This connection with temporality allows to underscore a final aspect of Brentano's theory of inner consciousness. At some point, he describes "the situation in such a way that we, as sensing beings, are the only things that are sensed *in recto* while our external objects are sensed solely *in obliquo*" (37 f.; 28). It could be argued that Brentano's suggestion in these pages is to adopt the point of view of the psychologist, i.e. the one who perceives from within, by explicitly addressing his own lived experience. "If we carry this interpretation a little further, we will find that the external object of sensation, in addition to having a mode of presentation other than the *modus rectus*, can exhibit various aspects in its modes of presentation", that is, in the present case, its "*temporal differences*" (38; 29).

<sup>11</sup> "At least" because the oblique mode of presentation can be iterated and thus multiplied indefinitely. For example, I can think *in recto* of Caius thinking *in obliquo* of Titus (first-degree) who in turn thinks of Sempronius (second-degree), and so on (1976: 131; Eng. tr. 78). Similarly, considering a comparative relation, one can say "Caius is taller than Titus who is taller than Sempronius, etc." As Brentano elsewhere notes, "the *modus obliquus* itself is not really one single mode; it is differentiated in various ways" (1971: 145; Eng. tr. 219).

According to this perspective, it is possible to understand how *in obliquo* I experience objects as past, present and future on the basis of an implicit reference *in recto* to myself as present: “I never affirm something as having existed yesterday without affirming myself as existing today, and the latter happens *in modo recto*, while the former *in modo obliquo*” (41; 31). The *modo recto* of presenting myself as present becomes, therefore, the foundation of the temporal determinations presented *in obliquo* as terms of the intentional relation.<sup>12</sup> We are thus witnessing the reversal of the thesis of 1874 regarding the relationship between the primary and secondary object of the act:

the proof that inner perception is limited to the present and does not relate in the slightest to the past or the future [...] makes it immediately clear that mental phenomena, like physical phenomena, can be presented and judged not just in a secondary but in a primary manner as well (1974: 15; Eng. tr. 12).

This line of reasoning implies a significant consequence as far as inner consciousness is concerned. Being called upon to play the role of foundation *in recto* for the grasping of temporal differences *in obliquo*, the inner consciousness has to be limited to the punctual dimension of an instantaneous present: “our inner perception, which perceives with evidence, is entirely restricted to a single now and presents us with certainty only with one boundary which is in the present” (1976: 130; Eng. tr. 77). In order to fully understand this point, we must recover the notion of original association (*ursprüngliche Assoziation*) or *proteraesthesia*, the real keystone of Brentano’s account of temporality.<sup>13</sup> Our intuition of time depends on the fact that the perception (*aesthesia*) of something present (e.g. a sensation) is immediately associated with its modified perception as no longer present. This original modification or association – a fundamental psychological law – takes the name of *proteraesthesia*, which literally means: perception, sensation (*αἴσθησις*) of what comes before (*πρότερος*). To the real content perceived as present is thus associated its *derealizing* aspect,<sup>14</sup> namely its being apprehended now as what was previously present. In this way, thanks to the

<sup>12</sup> See Brentano (1976: 131; Eng. tr. 78), where declinations of time such as “before” and “after” are illustrated by analogy with the possibility of iterating the terms of a relation at will.

<sup>13</sup> The reflection on temporality encompasses the entire span of Brentano’s production. Brentano developed an interest in temporality from the outset through a close examination of Aristotle (Fugali 2005: 100-115; de Warren 2018). On this basis, he then embarked on an autonomous path encountering numerous stages of elaboration and reconsideration. Volpi (1987: 77 ff.) reconstructs at least four phases, whereas Fugali (2005: 214-215 n.) even enumerates six of them. Regarding the Brentano-Husserl relationship on the question of temporality, see also Kraus 1930, Albertazzi 1990/1991; Rinofner-Kreidl 1995/96; Benoist 2008; de Warren 2009: 97-140.

<sup>14</sup> The derealizing character of *proteraesthesia* is justified in Brentano’s view as a modification perpetrated by the imagination.

association between *aesthesis* and *proteraesthesis*, the presentation of the object acquires a temporal depth due to the now stretching into the just past.

Relating what has just been said to the theme of our investigation, we can see that the phenomenon of *proteresthesis* only concerns external perception and not inner consciousness (Brentano 1974: 50 f.; Eng. tr. 37 f.). Inner consciousness does not have any *proteraesthetic* character, any temporal depth except that of a liminal present serving as reference point for the temporal determinations of external perception. Without such a point of reference "it would then be impossible to experience outer phenomena as past" (Brentano 1971: 224; Eng. tr. 257). Besides, to attribute a temporal modification to the inner side of the psychic act would lead us back to an infinite regress.

The evidence of inner perception is therefore, wholly limited to the present. This is true for inner sensation in general. It tells me only that I now have this aesthesis together with a continuous proteraesthesia of physical phenomena. If it were itself accompanied by inner proteraesthesia as well, we could easily prove that this would lead to infinite complications, for its object would also have a proteraesthesia and so would the proteraesthesia, *ad infinitum*; this would result in a kind of continuum of an infinite number of dimensions (51; 38).

If, as Blumenberg once said, "the phenomenologist is defined by fearlessness in the face of infinite regress" (1986: 374, my transl.), Brentano seems to abstain and recoil from such a possibility, precluding himself from exploring a path full of consequences. Husserl's way out, *viceversa*, will consist precisely in anchoring inner consciousness to that mechanism of intentional modification of the now, bearing the name of retention.<sup>15</sup> Through the retentive modification, he will accomplish, not by chance, a multidimensional complication of the temporal *continuum* of the stream of consciousness (1966: Nr. 32). The risk of regress will constantly loom like a specter in the most enigmatic depths of Husserl's speculation, repeatedly dazzling every attempt of a solution (1966: 29, 114; Eng. tr. 31, 119).

The aim of this brief and selective examination of Brentano's writings was not to merely reconstruct the theoretical background from which Husserl inherits the notion of inner consciousness. The main intent was indeed to outline the horizon of philosophical dilemmas that the retrieval of such a notion implies. Whether one resorts to the hypothesis of an inner consciousness as an alternative to the existence of unconscious psychic states, whether in attempting

<sup>15</sup> This will lead to Husserl's theory of the double intentionality of retention (*Quer- und Längsintentionalität*) and to assimilate inner consciousness to the question of the self-constitution of the stream of consciousness (Husserl 1966: § 39, Nr. 45).

to philosophically develop this hypothesis one runs the risk of objectifying lived experience or facing the danger of infinite regress, whether inner consciousness seems to entail a wholly peculiar mode of intentional reference (*en parergo*) inoculating the presumed guarantee of absolute evidence, and finally, whether inner consciousness proves to be inherently related to the similarly relational theme of temporality – all of this would have to be reconsidered and debated within the new perspective opened up by Husserl's phenomenology. The nature of the issue is such that, while taking different paths, the problem seems to break down into the same fundamental stages.

## 2. Husserl's reception in the Logical Investigations

### 2.1 Inner and outer perception in the *Beilage*

At the time of the first edition of the *Logische Untersuchungen* (1900-1901), Husserl's position seems to oscillate unresolvedly between intentions of detachment and unconscious adherence to Brentano's paradigm. The fierce critique of psychologism conducted in the *Prolegomena* does not appear to have been fully integrated into the subsequent *Investigations*. Despite the initial declaration in favor of a complete "freedom from presuppositions" (1984: 24; Eng. tr. 177), at the turn of the century Husserl's approach is still tainted by some residual psychological commitments, tied to a conception of the *Erlebnis* understood as a psychic, i.e. empirical, fact.<sup>16</sup>

With regard to the topic at hand, as early as the Introduction to the *Investigations*, Husserl complains of the "false antithesis between inner and outer perception" (1984: 13; Eng. tr. 170, transl. mod.) endorsed by psychologists. As emerging from the *Beilage* specifically devoted to this opposition, the trouble

<sup>16</sup> These aspects can be appreciated by scrutinizing the occurrences, in the first edition of the *Investigations*, of the word *real*, which refers to the factual existence of the *Erlebnisse* and the empirical status of the Ego, in contrast to *reell*, as amended in the second edition, which denotes what is purely effective in the lived experience (e.g. its content) (1984: 15, 57, 129, 357, 362-364). Moreover, in the first edition, the adjective *rein* does not refer to the sphere of pure consciousness as attainable through the phenomenological reduction, but to the strictly *descriptive* psychological analysis, as opposed to the *genetic-physiological* one (cf. 357, 411 n. for some relevant additions to the second edition). The first clear separation of phenomenology from descriptive psychology is attested in 1903, in a review of an article by Th. Elsenhans (Husserl 1979: 206). Besides, as Husserl would say in 1913, it is only around 1907/08, after the refinement of the method of reduction, that the overcoming of psychologism can be said to have been fully achieved (2002a: 324 and n. 4; Eng. tr. 59). For all this, I rely on Lavigne's (2005: 118-129) meticulous examination. As the author aptly notes (143), any attempt to conceal such psychological commitments prevents an understanding of the need for change and development in Husserl's thought in the early years of the century.

lies in the definition of the psychic as a phenomenon proper to inner perception and the consequent identification of the latter with inner consciousness (756 n.; 358 n. 2).<sup>17</sup> Even before Brentano, the critical excursus of the *Beilage* directs its arrows both at the history of modern thought (Descartes, Locke) – guilty of becoming entrenched in dichotomies such as *mens* vs. *corpus* or sensation vs. reflection – and at the naive standpoint of the common sense, in which these oppositions echo in the form of distinctions such as those between *external perception* and *perception of the self*, *sensuous* and *internal perception* (1984: 751 f.; Eng. tr. 335 f.). Husserl's aim, then, is akin to someone preparing to fluidify these oppositions, noting how they intersect with other, more fundamental ones, such as the distinction between perception endowed with *adequate* or *inadequate evidence*, or that, as yet embryonic, between *immanence* and *transcendence*.

Focusing on Brentano, here as elsewhere, Husserl reproaches the master for failing to distinguish between the content and the object of consciousness.<sup>18</sup> Consequently, he argues, Brentano did not realize that the evidence of inner perception can also be attributed to external perception, provided that it is ascribed to the “lived sensuous content” and not to the object. In this respect, Husserl emphasizes that “there are, therefore, evident perceptions of ‘physical’ contents, as well as of ‘psychical’” (1984: 768; Eng. tr. 345, transl. mod.). After all, it is the division between inner and outer perception, carried out by Brentano along the lines of the distinction between psychic and physical phenomena, that must be called into question. To Husserl, in fact, the experience of psychic states is not necessarily evident, “since these are perceived with a bodily location.” The state of pain inflicted by a dental abscess is a psychic phenomenon that contains an implicit reference to a transcendence, even if only of a bodily nature (760 f.; 340 f.). Such transcendence could therefore compromise the evidence of a perception internally directed to the pain suffered. Thus, Husserl concludes, “it is absolutely clear that the conceptual pairs of inner and outer, and of evident and non-evident perception, need not coincide at all” (769; 345).

As well known, Husserl's criticism resolves the false opposition between inner and outer perception, based on the fracture between the psychic and the physical, through the recovery of a more genuine “*gnoseological* difference [erkenntnistheoretischen *Differenz*]” between perceptual modalities endowed with adequate or inadequate evidence. In adequate perception content and object coincide in the immanent fullness of the lived experience, whereas inadequate perception grasps the object as presumptive insofar as the latter tran-

<sup>17</sup> Regarding the *Beilage* see de Warren 2003.

<sup>18</sup> Distinction that Husserl had instead found in Twardowski 1894.

scends the content through which it is apprehended (769 f.; 346, transl. mod.). The argument in the *Beilage* would be far more detailed, but for the purposes of this paper, it is sufficient to suggest the following on the basis of the above. The critique of Brentano's distinction between two perceptual directions (inner and outer) does not lead Husserl to the rejection of the notion of inner consciousness, but to a different way of conceiving it. For the time being, it is crucial to consider that "he [Brentano] has employed an essentially distorted concept of perception in the case of inner perception" (769; 345).

## 2.2 *Inner consciousness and lived experience in the Fifth Investigation*

The *Fifth Investigation* opens with the distinction of three different concepts of consciousness:

1. Consciousness as the entire, phenomenological being of the spiritual Ego. (Consciousness = the *phenomenological Ego* as the 'bundle' or the interweaving of psychic experiences).<sup>19</sup> 2. Consciousness as the inner awareness [*als inneres Gewahrwerden*] of one's own psychic experiences. 3. Consciousness as a comprehensive designation for 'mental acts', or 'intentional experiences [*Erlebnissen*]', of all sorts (1984: 356; Eng. tr. 81).

While the first concept denotes the whole life of the Ego, which in the second edition would be referred to as the *Einheit des Erlebnisstroms*, the second and third represent respectively the inner consciousness and the acts or lived experiences that make up the stream itself. The distinction between these two last meanings can be clarified as the distinction between an *intransitive* and a *transitive* sense of being conscious. Inner consciousness would thus be simply (self-)conscious (rather than unconscious), whereas the lived experience would be conscious of something else.<sup>20</sup>

The first concept reflects, we might say, the general project of the time (of clear Brentanian and, in this case, anti-Aristotelian inspiration) of a "psychology without a soul [*Psychologie ohne Seele*]" (Husserl 1984: 370 f.; cf. Brentano 1973: 16; Eng. tr. 8).<sup>21</sup> This project would consist of an analysis of the succession of psychic phenomena inspired by the empiricist image of the bundle (*Bündel*), free from any (neo-)Kantian assumption concerning an alleged egological principle (pure ego) ensuring the unity of the flow.<sup>22</sup> In the wake of

<sup>19</sup> I have modified the English translation of the first concept, in accordance with the first edition of the *Investigations*.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Zahavi 2002: 52. More generally, on the *Fifth Investigation* see Cobb-Stevens 2003.

<sup>21</sup> As stated by Brentano, the expression was coined by Lange 1866: 465.

<sup>22</sup> Regarding the "psychology without soul," see Husserl's new position (1976: 195 f.; Eng. tr. 206 f.). Also, refer to §§ 4 and 8 of the *Fifth Investigation*, as well as the respective notes, for the polemic

Natorp's *Einleitung in die Psychologie nach Kritischer Methode* (1888), Husserl was also already aware of the distorting effect of reflecting on the psychic act.

We perform the description after an objectifying act of reflection, in which reflection on the ego is combined with reflection on the experienced act to yield a relational act, in which the ego appears as itself related to its act's object through its act. Plainly an essential descriptive change has occurred. The original act is no longer simply there, we no longer live in it, but *we attend to it and pass judgement on it*. We must therefore avoid the misunderstanding which our present discussion has just ruled out, that of treating relation to an ego as of the essence of an intentional experience itself (1984: 391; Eng. tr. 101).

It would be this reflective transfiguration of the *Erlebnis* that triggers the illusion of a reference to the act (thus objectified) by an egological pole. Thus, this reference does not appear to be an essential trait of lived experiences *per se*, but rather a characteristic that overdetermines our conception of the act, once the latter is reflectively placed within an intentional, already polarized context, according to the classical subject-object opposition.

Similar observations are found in the discussion of the other two meanings of consciousness outlined above. A general tendency of the *Fifth Investigation* is indeed a revision of the inherited psychologistic lexicon, aiming at a new terminological refinement. As stated at the beginning of § 11, "while we adhere to Brentano's essential characterization [of psychical phenomena], our departures from his opinions force us to abandon his terminology" (384; 97).

Terms like (re)presentation (*Vorstellung*), phenomenon (*Phänomen*), lived experience (*Erlebnis*), perception (*Wahrnehmung*), manifestation (*Erscheinung*), if uncritically assumed can lead to misunderstandings (*Mißdeutungen*). We could say that the *trait d'union* of these criticisms lies in the constant inability to distinguish, within the phenomenal domain, a sense whereby something *is given or appears* (*erscheinen*) *as an object*, and one whereby a consciousness or a lived experience *lives itself* (*sich erleben*) *as a subject*. A phenomenological critique of knowledge should in fact clarify how: "as belonging in a conscious connection, we live the appearing of things, as belonging in the phenomenal world, things appear before us. The appearing of the things does not itself appear to us, it is lived through [*erlebt*]" (359 f.; 83, transl. mod.).

With regard to the different meanings of the notion of appearance (*Erscheinung*), it is significant that for Husserl it denotes both the object that manifests itself and the *Erlebnis* through which it appears, *although not in the same sense*;

with Natorp concerning the pure ego and the reassessment occurred in the second edition of the *Investigations*.

finally, the *Erscheinung* does not concern, except in a misleading way, “the *real* [reellen] *constituents* of appearances” such as sensations (762 f.; 341 f.). As a result, in § 5, Husserl can charge Brentano the conflation of two senses of consciousness (as lived experience and as inner consciousness), equating them as if they were two different directions of the same act of perception (a primary one, directed towards an external object, and a secondary one, directed towards an internal object). As Husserl surmises, Brentano’s misconception could be traced back to “the equivocation which pushes us to treat consciousness as a sort of knowing, and in fact of intuitive knowing” (366; 476).

Such knowing, if I may further elaborate, would be the one stemming from an immediately cognitive and therefore not simply manifestative conception of the *Erlebnis*, a conception conveyed more by Brentano’s lexical choices than by his real intents. I have previously outlined Brentano’s original intention to trace a distinction between the purely presentative character of *innere Wahrnehmung* and the objectifying character of *Beobachtung*. Nevertheless, we have seen how, in later works, the inadequacy of this purpose has led to a turnaround, namely the possibility of perceiving the *Erlebnis* no longer *en parergo* but *in recto*. One could therefore venture, given the importance of lexicon, that such a conclusion was already inherent in Brentano’s terminological choice to qualify the presented and the presenting as two objects, one external and one internal, of perception.

Beyond the lexicon, however, it is Brentano’s stance, which conceives inner consciousness as *cognitively mediated* by an act of perception (albeit understood only as an internal inflection of lived experience and not as an additional act), that proves to be questionable for Husserl. In fact, what the remarks in the *Fifth Investigation* and the *Beilage* tend toward is a preliminary characterization of the immanent, subjective dimension of experience.<sup>23</sup> Husserl begins here to discern one of the fundamental structures of phenomenal experience: phenomena are not only intended as bearing their own sense (*as* an object, *as* something), but they also presuppose the reference to a consciousness for which this sense acquires a possible meaning. Phenomenal appearance is thus always an appearing *to/for* someone, but (self-)experiencing this someone cannot be the same as experiencing something as an object. The act is innerly and immediately *lived through*, it is conscious (in the intransitive sense of the term) without the need for any perception directed towards it that reifies it as an *immanent object*.<sup>24</sup> “It is in this sense – Husserl says – that *what* the ego or consciousness lives, is its lived experience” (362; 85, transl. mod.). As stated in the *Sixth Investigation*: “To be lived is not to be objective [*Erlebtsein ist nicht*

<sup>23</sup> Cf. de Warren 2003: 156; Zahavi 2002: 58 f.

<sup>24</sup> *Immanente Objekt* is another misleading expression criticized in § 11 of the *Fifth Investigation*.

*Gegenständlichkeitsein*]" (669; 279, transl. mod.).

Now, what has been noted allows for a correct assessment of a couple of passages in which – at least apparently – Husserl seems to throw the baby out with the bathwater, that is, he seems to dismiss *tout court* the idea of inner consciousness, and not merely reject Brentano's terminology and the conception it conveys. In the first passage, it is stated that "the need to assume the continuous activity of inner perception cannot be phenomenologically demonstrated" (367; 87, transl. mod.). In the second, Brentano's view is reported only to be openly denied: "every psychical phenomenon is an object of inner consciousness.' We have already mentioned the grave misgivings that keep us from assenting to this" (384; 98). Both passages aim not so much at the rejection of the notion of inner consciousness – its relevance will always be upheld in subsequent works – but at the rejection of a certain way of grasping and conceptualizing it, i.e. *as perception* and *of an object*.

In fact, Husserl remolds here expressions such as 'inner perception' and 'immanent object.' They end up more appropriately denoting the kind of *reflective* thematization of the *Erlebnis*, abstracted from the concreteness of the stream and objectified, that Brentano had reserved for the *Beobachtung*: "'reflection', however, implies that what we reflect upon, the phenomenological lived experience, is rendered objective to us (is inwardly perceived by us)" (669; 279, transl. mod.). Husserl's goal is not to banish reflection and the perceptual thematization of lived experiences from the realm of phenomenology. On the contrary, reflectivity will turn out to be a core element of the method and before that a constituent of objectivity itself (14-16; 170 f.).<sup>25</sup>

On closer examination, Husserl's aim is twofold. On one hand, he seeks to safeguard the *Gewahrwerden* of inner consciousness, stripping away Brentano's heritage of all its terminological ambiguities (internal perception, immanent object, etc.); in so doing, he maintains the genuine meaning of the *Erlebnis* as a form of original living, prior to all derived modes of perceiving, attending to, noticing, and reflecting upon lived experiences. On the other hand, these derived modes of intentionality are not banned from phenomenological research – as Brentano instead claimed to dismiss observation from descriptive psychology – but are rather included as steps of a graduated path of objectification. Similarly graduated should be understood the subjective aspect of this path<sup>26</sup> – hence Husserl's ambivalence towards the ego, now deemed superfluous, now necessary, depending on the level, the context of analysis

<sup>25</sup> Cf. also Husserl 1976: § 77.

<sup>26</sup> In 1908 Husserl (2003; 70) will eventually and properly distinguish the two interrelated processes of *Objektivierung* and *Subjektivierung*.

at hand. Pointing out, however, that the subjectification of the ego is clearly distinguished from the objectification of thingly (*dinglich*) reality, Husserl concludes:

As well as the turning of noticing to a thought, to a sensation, to a feeling of unease, etc., makes these lived experiences objects of inner perception, without making them objects in the sense of things, so well would that centre of relationship, the ego, and every particular relationship of the ego to a content, as noticed, also be objectively given (1984: 373; Eng. tr. 92, transl. mod.).

### 2.3 *Beyond the Logical Investigations (1902-1904)*

In the years immediately following the *Investigations*, Husserl's commitment to a renewed "inner gnoseological work" (2001: 10) seems to confirm the path taken in his "break-through" book (1975: 8; Eng. tr. 3): the advancing erosion of the paradigm of descriptive psychology, despite the seemingly unchanged adherence to it. The course held at Göttingen and titled *Allgemeine Erkenntnistheorie* (WS 1902-03) provides a striking example of this trend. In these lectures, Husserl undertakes a first development of his own method which will culminate in the overcoming of the idea of phenomenology as descriptive psychology. Although the latter still represents the foundation of the theory of knowledge (2001: 69) we see a redefinition of its prerogatives.

First of all, Husserl points out the merely empirical character of psychology, which only deals with "facts of consciousness," drawing them from individual experiences and generalizing inductively (27). On this basis, a proper phenomenological method aimed at the clarification (*Aufklärung*) of cognitive operations through a renewed understanding of the *Erlebnis* stands out (60). The latter will no longer be understood as a psychic-empirical fact, but elevated to a "single case [*Einzelfall*]" of a true "essence analysis" (66, 77).<sup>27</sup> For the first time, the descriptive tenor of psychology undergoes here a rudimentary purification. The *Erlebnis* is examined as such, abstracted "from all empirical objectifications" and presuppositions, that is from everything that transcends its real (*reell*) content, including the reference to the empirical ego or the objective time<sup>28</sup> still found in

<sup>27</sup> All excerpts from Husserl's untranslated works are my translations.

<sup>28</sup> The question of temporality is telling about the development of Husserl's thought. Whereas at the time of the *Investigations* (1900-01) the analysis is carried out "under the presupposition of the objective time in which psychic experiences flow" (1966: 160; Eng. tr. 164), in 1904 Husserl's point would be "the complete exclusion [*Ausschluß*] of all suppositions with respect to objective time" (187; 193). As we shall see, this change stems from the purification of phenomenological analysis due to a first form of reduction, which resolutely purges all the empirical-factual presuppositions that, more or less implicitly and despite their *Voraussetzungslosigkeit*, still tainted the *Investigations*.

the *Investigations*. A “purely immanent description” is now directed to the lived experience, which is raised “as generality,” as “lived-experience-idea [*Erlebnis-Idee*] or lived-experience-essence [*Erlebnis-Wesen*]” (2001: 77 f.).<sup>29</sup>

The purification of the empirical character of the *Erlebnis* is due to a form of eidetic reduction already at work in the WS 1902-03. The term *Reduktion* makes its appearance here in two distinct occurrences belonging to the same page. First, when speaking of the “ideal possibility of an adequate fulfillment” of the object, Husserl writes: “this reduction to the ideal possibility is the foundation for our theory of knowledge” (2001: 198 f.). A few lines below, however, we find the meaning attributed here to the reduction clarified:

It is not about the person or their current act – there is no question of it at all, it is excluded [*ausgeschlossen*] by the phenomenological reduction – but about the general essence of this presentation, of its general species, and to this belongs the idea of fulfillment as a general possibility independent of all empirical things (199).

Although Husserl qualifies it as “phenomenological,” what one finds here is a reduction that, following Lavigne (2005: 295 ff.), can be defined as “restrictive.” In fact, it does not open the view to phenomenality as such, as will be the case with the proper phenomenological reduction from 1906-07 onwards. On the contrary, it rather significantly reduces it, by narrowing the field of inquiry to only those components that are truly immanent (*reell*) to lived experience.<sup>30</sup> Besides, a specific task is thus fulfilled. Emancipating Husserl's analysis from all the empirical implications (the factual nature of the *Erlebnis*, the reference to the transcendent object, to the empirical ego, to objective time, etc.), this kind of reduction distances phenomenology from descriptive psychology and opens the door to the “eidetic”

<sup>29</sup> As observed by McDonnell (2011: 103, 108), it is precisely this eidetic tenor that constitutes the scientificity of the phenomenological endeavor as opposed to the psychological-descriptive one, which relies on the conveyed evidence of inner perception. Since the latter, to Brentano, is a non-attentive and merely incidental type of self-awareness, it is unclear what methodological contribution it could represent for a scientific enterprise of any kind. However, as McDonnell (99) suggests, Husserl's landing on transcendental phenomenology will also be due to a radicalization or a fully “transvaluation” (*Umwertung*, cf. Husserl 2002a: 272; Eng. tr. 16) of inner consciousness conducted in his time analyses (see my Nobili 2022: §§ 1.3, 2.2 for these developments).

<sup>30</sup> At the time, Derrida (1990: 148) had already emphasized the “privative” character of the first kind of reduction practiced by Husserl. Costa (1994) and Lohmar (2012) suggest that this type of reduction is already at work somewhere in the *Logical Investigations*. However, this interpretation seems to be supported only by the retrospective account that Husserl provides with the revision for the second edition of the *Investigations* (Husserl 1984: 368 f., 413 n.; Eng. tr. 88, 354 n. 26). In the first edition, the occurrences of the verb *reduzieren* (370, 381, 395) in no way denote a technical use of the term. Even where it might appear to be the case, namely where Husserl speaks of a “*phänomenologisch reduzierte Ich*” (364 n.), what he has in mind is the distinction between the psychological reality (*Realität*) of the ego and its bodily component, and the emphasis on the former as a specifically phenomenological (i.e., for the time, psycho-descriptive) field of research.

and “immanentist” researches of the years immediately following (1904-1905).<sup>31</sup>

With regard to the main topic of *innere Bewußtsein*, the course on the *Allgemeine Erkenntnistheorie* does not make any significant changes compared to those found in the *Investigations*. The purpose of a “return to inner intuition” (2001: 60) is reaffirmed as the foundation of phenomenological analysis, as well as the cogitative evidence of such intuition and the capacity of inner perception to reflect on one’s own lived experience. Yet, keep in mind, that “in this, we are not pursuing thingly knowledge; we are also not exploring the soul as a supposed thing to which lived experiences adhere as accidents” (80). Rather, the reflective import of inner perception must be understood as a “mere acknowledgment of what is actually given” (94).

Husserl will similarly expound two years later in the first part of the course *Hauptstücke aus der Phänomenologie und Theorie der Erkenntnis* (WS 1904-05). In §§ 5-6 he carries on the revision of the psychological lexicon inaugurated in the *Beilage* (to which he expressly refers: cf. 2004: 22). The methodological development initiated in the meantime allows Husserl a greater awareness both conceptually and expressively. The eidetic-immanentist turn is fully affirmed here insofar as “we abstract from the transcendent intentions, ‘we exclude them’” (20 n.). The immanentist restriction of phenomenology to the real (*reell*) component of lived experience, to the content of consciousness, reveals a coincidence between the presenting and the presented that is lacking in the case of external perception (19). It is only this coincidence and not the nature of the object in question that ensures the (adequate) evidence of *Wahrnehmung*. The restriction of phenomenology to the lived content is what in fact enables inner “perception,” dictating its peculiar modes of exercise. Its reflective tenor must indeed be distinguished both from the perception of a thing-like nature and from that attributed to the inner sensory experience within the act.

<sup>31</sup> As one of the anonymous reviewers of this paper (to whom I am grateful) pointed out, it is probably true that some of the analyses in the *Investigations* may aspire – before Husserl’s revision – to this eidetic and immanentist status. However, I am persuaded that *before* the explicit theorizing of the reduction some residual psychologistic commitments still corrupt the purity and the truly immanent status of the phenomenological *Betrachtung*. See however Husserl’s ambivalent self-criticism in 1913: “*De facto* the analyses [in *LI*] were carried out as *analyses of essences* but not everywhere in an equally clear, reflective consciousness. The entire refutation of psychologism is based on the fact that the analyses (especially those of the *Sixth Investigation* but also the others) are claimed to be analyses of essences, hence apodictically evident analyses of ideas. In general, however, I did not want to concede to myself that what I for many years had looked upon as far as psychology was concerned as derived from inner ‘adequate perception’ should now all be a priori, or, be comprehensible as such” (2002a: 312; Eng. tr. 51).

If, however, in phenomenological analysis, we look purely at sensations, then they are valid for themselves. A new perceptive direction is constituted, which aims [reflectively] at what is lived as it is given. It is indeed important to understand clearly that sensations, in external perceptions, are lived but not perceived, and that moreover, when we direct our gaze to them, this takes place in new [reflective] perceptions that have a totally different character from that of the original perceptions, the external perceptions (19 f.).

The restricted account of the act redirects reflectively the gaze towards the immanent components of the *Erlebnis*. Thereby, the unique dimension of sensing (*Empfinden*) becomes manifest. Sensing cannot be regarded as an act of perception (whether external or reflective) that intends something immanent in a thematic, attentive manner: "we do not turn our gaze 'intending [*meinend*]', 'attentive' to the contents of sensation." This new dimension is not that of an intentionally performed act: "sensing [*Empfinden*] <is> not a giving 'act'" and, indeed, precisely "on it the apprehension is built, the consciousness of transcendence, in which the 'intending' lives." The sensory content is rather that upon which apprehension exercises its animating function; it is what substantiates the life of intentionality: "in 'adequate perception', intending is addressed to the contents of sensation, it lives into the sensing [*es lebt sich ein in das Empfinden*]" (20 n.).

In light of the above, it should be noted that the use of the term "perception," even in quotation marks, is entirely equivocal here. We have seen that the dimension proper to sensing, given the indistinction in force between the presenting and the presented, does not conform to the structure of an act of perception. However, what truly matters here is the qualification of the term perception – the meaning of which varies in correlation to the type of object perceived.<sup>32</sup> It is the contextual specification of the term that allows to finally distinguish: (1) the adequate "perception" of sensory contents (the sensing) from (2) the inner "perception" of the act (the reflection), and thus to discern both from (3) the external perception of a transcendent thing (perception commonly understood).

Let us recap the movement of thought that led Husserl to this outcome. The necessity to free phenomenology from the conceptual equivocations conveyed by Brentano's terminology promotes the epistemological rupture triggered by a form of reduction coinciding with the (reflective) turning of the gaze and the consequent *purification* and *restriction* of the inquiry to the immanence of lived experience. This latter reveals, in turn, the original dimension of the intentional living (the *Erleben*), which, if taken *per se*, is independent of any act

<sup>32</sup> "Perception and object are concepts that cohere most intimately together, which mutually assign sense to one another, and which widen or narrow this sense conjointly" (Husserl 1984: 666; Eng. tr. 277).

structure or reference to an ego. Moreover, the *Erleben* is independent of any thematic knowledge directed towards it (at the risk of unnecessarily proliferating the number of acts involved):

If sensing means the intentional living [*das Erleben*], then the content of sensation or sensation [*Empfindung*] means the content itself, in and for itself, without regard to the ego and the nexus in which it stands in the ego. Of course, there is no difference between the act and the object of the act. *The intentional living is not an act*, but expresses the being of the content in the nexus of consciousness. And this being is not *being-conscious as being-known* [Bewusstsein als Gewusstsein] (infinite entanglement of act [*unendliche Aktverwicklung*]) (Husserl 2004: 23 f.).

Here, one should appreciate how the eidetic-immanentist refinement of the analysis – the reduction to the purely immanent (*reell*) components of the *Erlebnis* – allows Husserl to solve the critical issues regarding the Brentanian legacy raised since the *Investigations*. Radicalizing Brentano's conception that still conceived inner consciousness according to the subject-object opposition, Husserl discloses a more original dimension of intentional life.<sup>33</sup> Ultimately, the *Erleben* is characterized by (1) the fundamental indistinction between the presented content and the presenting lived experience, (2) the rejection of any objectifying declination of this coincidence (inner consciousness as a secondary object), and finally, (3) the priority over a fully structured intentional act. Indeed, Husserl is here delineating a level of consciousness preordained with respect to that of the act, a level that is not already structured according to the polarity of a dual reference: to the object and to the ego. The *Erleben* then corresponds to a pre-intentional dimension, upon which it becomes conceivable the unfolding of the properly called act-intentionality (*Akt-intentionalität*). The thinkability of such articulation will arise, from the standpoint of Husserl's phenomenology, by penetrating the realm of inner time-consciousness with its stream-“intentionality” (*Strom-“Intentionalität”*).<sup>34</sup> But here another story begins and our prehistory ends.

<sup>33</sup> If, on one hand, Brentano's conception of *innere Bewußtsein* avoids the harmful consequences of a reflective model of self-consciousness – specifically, avoiding the Scylla of an act reflecting on another act and thereby conferring upon it the character of self-consciousness (and triggering a reflective regress of acts directed towards other acts) – on the other hand, this conception falls into this very model by failing to avoid the Charybdis of a conception based on the subject-object opposition (cf. Zahavi 1998). In contrast to this, Husserl's proposal manages to avoid both aspects of the reflective model, thereby dodging the critiques levelled by the opponents of such a theory of self-consciousness (D. Henrich, K. Cramer, M. Frank, U. Poethast); see the classic study by Zahavi 1999.

<sup>34</sup> For this distinction cf. Husserl 2002b: 183.

## Conclusions

As we have seen, the way Husserl ends up transvaluating the notion of *innere Bewußtsein* is part of his critical appraisal of the inherited psychologistic lexicon. Since the first edition of the *Logical Investigations*, his endeavor tends to overcome Brentano's view, in which inner consciousness directly relies on the inner perception of mental states. By virtue of this reappraisal, a certain confusion among different cognitive objects (primary and secondary) and performances (self-awareness, perception and reflection) is avoided, thus attaining a better evaluation of the intentional life. According to Husserl, inner consciousness has to be sharply severed from inner "perception." Whereas the latter turns out to represent the reflective thematization of the *Erlebnis* – attributed by Brentano to inner observation and banned from the realm of descriptive psychology – the former denotes the true inner life of consciousness. This is what Husserl calls the *Erleben*, i.e. that original dimension of sensing or living through its own contents, which is logically prior to the actual, properly intentional perceiving of any objects. Stemming from an early improvement of Husserl's own method, able to split the project of phenomenology from that of descriptive psychology, this outcome would be crucial for his later time-analyses.

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