



## I. META-DISCOURSES ON TRAVELING

### PHILOSOPHY AND TIME TRAVEL

Algis MICKŪNAS

Ohio University,  
College of Arts and Sciences,  
Department of Philosophy,  
Ellis Hall, Room 202, Athens, OH 45701, United States  
E-mails: mickunaa@ohio.edu; amuali@gmail.com

*Received 22 February 2015; accepted 31 March 2015*

The author investigates the topic of philosophy of time travel by explicating how awareness of time helps to understand such time travel, the ways we encounter others, speak with them about the world and events in our world and history. The author discusses aspects of pretemporal life of awareness and discloses philosophical time travel in order to engage in a dialogue with others. The argument of this paper makes the following points: a) empirically it is not possible to leave our chronological position; b) human memory is quite limited; c) yet we dialogue with members of our species through times in terms of our “signitive” capacity; d) we read texts that “mean” events, things and others and thus engage in a dialogue with them. All this implies that we are aware of what other said or saw and made accessible “through” the empirical signs prior to asking a question of “when” – this means “atemporally”.

Keywords: atemporality, indication, meaning, signification.

#### Introduction

The numerous fictional accounts, the fascinating movies, the star ships in television serials, thrill us with time travel. We “go back” in time and come back to our time, we fear to do things while having traveled to the past, because our actions might change history and we would never be able to return to “our time”. We are curious about our future and invent entities which travel to their past and encounter us in our present, but do not tell us anything about our future for fear of changing our present and thus disrupting the possibility of their returning to their present. We create shamanic beings who know all that has been and all that will be, and submit to their will, announced by prophets. Indeed, even scientists have accepted this kind of time travel, not for themselves, since at present they are locked to be here and now, but for other phenomena which, strangely enough, have a contradictory status. The vast technological systems, tracking cosmic events, are also designed to tell us about our past

on the basis of future phenomena. Thus we are waiting for specific phenomena that have not yet shown up on the registers of our technologies; hence they are still in our future, but we deem these phenomena to come equally from the past. In short, we are awaiting messengers who are still to come and instruct us about the past. But how do we speak, communicate with such uncanny messengers, in what language, what semiotic web that connects the vast reaches of the cosmos and instructs of places we have not and most likely shall never visit? This is one of the questions that shall be addressed in this brief journey of a philosopher – addressed most likely in human terms that despite a given language will be accessible to any language. This might seem to be a rash overstatement, given the contemporary preoccupation that all our understanding is bound by a given culture and its various discourses, and hence to be dismissed as usurpation by Western philosophic discourse of the rights of others to have their voice. And yet there is a constant appellation to a cosmic *a priori* – time, such that no claim can be made without involving this *a priori* and its derivative, eternity. Indeed, long ago in India Nagarjuna resolved the debates of the newly formed schools of Buddhism by appealing to time past and time future, showing that statements about either one are empty, since both are not present (Conze *et al.* 1954). And yet their very involvement is required to make a judgment about emptiness. Then we reach modern Western philosopher Immanuel Kant, who is equally adamant concerning the impossibility to say anything, to make any judgment, without involving *a priori* temporal – even if empty – form (Kant 1965). Paradoxically, despite the pronounced emptiness, we communicate with and about the past and future, and make both relevant to understand the sense of present. Indeed, the present can be only captured “too late” as it slips away into the past and, as we shall realize subsequently, it is its very slippage that allows it to be available as present.

Yet it is equally relevant to bracket – exclude – modern explanatory model of a subject on philosophical grounds. This model comprises an invariant, to speak phenomenologically, an *eidōs* which is posited at all levels of such a subject: biological, physiological, psychological and mental. If the subject claims to see, feel, think something, then a cause must be “found” to explain such a claim. No doubt such explanations are pragmatically useful as ways of imposing controls on human activities, yet they cease to be philosophically viable when confronted with their own eidetic invariant: causality. First, causality is not an empirically given structure but is assumed *a priori* – as Kant had noted – and hence cannot be derived from scientific experience. Second, if all claims require causal explanations, then the latter must also be explained by causes and thus would be valid only and insofar as precise causes can be given to show how a particular explanation can be valid. But this would also mean that given other causes, radically diverse explanations could come into being, each valid only within the context of their specific causes. Yet it is precisely that such explanations are used to deal with the past and even future modes of awareness as some sort of empirical presences in an assumed biological subject. Thus the past is in the brain’s specific “memory function”, while an expectation is some kind of an image in psychological state. But how can we speak of memories of events of the past when we were not

around when such events had occurred? Immediate reply: but others were present to such events and transmitted their experience to us by way of texts, images, stories and wondrous accounts. But in this case we are not accessing memories in their brains or psychological states but in an entirely different format. We are not asking what was in their brains but what they said about something, some event, or one another. In brief, our memories cannot reach the others, and we have no access to their memories of psychological states, and yet without asking any questions about such memories and states, we claim to understand what they said, how they saw the world and, indeed, and discovered that their understanding was, in part, a variant of views of even earlier times. In short, all such explanations cease to make sense.

In the presence of such nonsense we must introduce another subjectivity which is not limited to the modern thinking, sensing and feeling self. Such a subjectivity shows up with simple reflective awareness, leading to questions such as who is aware of feelings, of thinking, of senses, who can judge their adequacy, correctness, intensity, who assigns “external” causes to the “internal” sensations, feelings and thoughts? Such a subjectivity does not belong to any of the modern “subjective” states or “objective” causes although it is present in all explanations and in all claims as a “theorist” in science or a “narrator” in a literary art work. This is the subjectivity that we shall explore to decipher our theme of time travel. Hence, in case of Edmund Husserl, what has been his final and ultimate search is a founding awareness which has been called “the living present”. The very phrase suggests a problem of time awareness (and not an awareness of time) that involves an analysis of a “presence” that does not yet have a location “in time”.

### The living present

To understand philosophical time travel, the ways that we encounter others, speak with them about the world and events within it, we must first explicate time awareness and even more than that. After all, it is deemed that not all civilizations have the same conceptions of time, meaning that we could not understand them at all, specifically given the unavoidable requirement that all judgments involve time awareness. This means that the philosophical encounter with others, our engagement in dialogue, would be futile if at the very base of our and their judgments, statements are based on radically distinct time morphologies. Granted, but even in cases of our own civilization and its time awareness there are radical hindrances, specifically at theoretical levels. We speak of memories of the past, of projections toward the future as bases for conceiving time. The problem is this: no one can access the memories of anyone else and hence no dialogue is possible. In turn, the position that we communicate linguistically and language offers temporal terms such as “past-present-future” and hence our communication is guaranteed by linguistic mediation. But what does language offer, if not sounds or marks on some surface, none of which disclose time; they all are present, as are present the trees, the stars and the rest of things – there is nothing temporal about them. Of course, sciences might offer a ploy that we understand the past

or the future because we can measure the length of the past or the extension to come. Indeed, we can measure by numbers, as clocks do by seconds – objectively. Fascinating explanation except for the fact that numbers are not temporal, have no extension and cannot be used to grasp duration; moreover, numbers are indifferent to such requirements of time awareness as direction, as past or future. Those aspects are understood *a priori*. All this suggests that time awareness has nothing to do with memories or expectations, with counting or with language. Given this quandary, it is necessary to come to terms with such awareness at another level if we wish to speak of philosophical travels which are always temporal. If I leave one place and travel to another, not only do I go from here to there, but from now to then, and speak to the others, let us say the Japanese, about my philosophical awareness, I do not speak only of the present, but of an entire field of philosophies, their issues as do they. They too recount the ways that Japanese came to philosophy, how they transformed their traditions and my tradition by bringing in a different context that is different from mine. How is this encounter possible without involving time awareness and, more fundamentally, what is transparent through such an awareness?

To access the very basic issue of philosophical time travel and our encounter of others, it is necessary to show the most basic presumptions of what is closest to us as Westerners, our ontological (what is nature) and metaphysical (what is ultimate reality) tradition. Husserlian phenomenology has established that at base, awareness is directed toward the world and its events, and thus our access to such events can be obtained anywhere and anytime “through” the awareness of others. While the description of the events might be successive – sentence after sentence – but the awareness of them is not a succession. I am still talking to someone about the same subject matter. Thus, by a deeper penetration into any awareness we can decipher what the latter points to in its meaning (Husserl 1963: 21). The meaning, suggested here, is a way of disclosing experienced phenomena. Thus the “victor at Jenna” and the “defeated at Waterloo” offer two events, but they are aspects of the same meaning “Napoleon”. While such events and their meaning might be complex, it is possible to explicate them in precise ways. Despite their variations, the meaning of such phenomena has a common feature: they are “stable” and can be repeated as if possessing an identity. The latter, and its variations, will have to be traced from the basic aspects of what shows up in the living present, containing both aspects – identity and variation, appearing with and through any ontological and metaphysical prejudgments (Fink 1957).

Any awareness assumes a fluctuation between permanence and flux, providing, what is called “the living present”. The access to ontological and metaphysical theses presumes *a priori* the necessity of the given as permanent, as here and now, under whatever hermeneutical contextualization. It is a substance, a repeatable *in*, an idea, a formal condition, an atomic substrate or a building block, a number, or an Ego – all counted as tandems that comprise clues to the invariant awareness of permanence as lived. All of these clues instantiate a most general aspect of the living present, but in such a way that the latter cannot be counted as *now*. There are no clues yet as to its temporal status, and indeed, it cannot be offered any particular *here*, since this clue

to permanence has not yet been deciphered within any locus; rather it is a condition, a “region” for localization. This also means that any awareness of *in*, as *in here* or *in the now*, is equally not yet constituted, excluding, therefore, the regard that the living present is *in* time (Held 1966: 63).

Correlatively, the various theses of ontology and metaphysics provide clues to the other aspect of the living present: the flux, the incessant slippage from the permanent, and the constant ontological and metaphysical vigilance against the threats of total abolition of the permanent. Thus substances remain constant, and only their accidental characteristics change, the substances change, but the laws governing the changes remain constant, everything changes, but our modes of organizing the changes remain identical. While the flux may be articulated in numerous ways and metaphors, as an aspect of the living present, it comprises the background on which the ontological and metaphysical clues are comprehensible. As with permanence, flux awareness is expressed differently by ontology and metaphysics. It does not mark a particular pre-given point of departure and point of arrival between which there would be movement. Ontologically and metaphysically conceived movements provide clues to this mode of awareness. These conceptions include such designations as flow of time from now to then, from past to future. A note of caution is in order: the notion of “clue” is not meant as a pointer to, as an intentional meaning, but as being “transparent with” an all pervasive presence of either flux or permanence. This means that whatever temporal articulations there are in different civilizations, they are accessible as transparent clues of either aspect of the living present.

While one is not the other, and yet neither is without the other. Precisely this difference allows them to be co-present and transparent one through the other. This way of explicating the living present avoids the positing of time as an entity with features that led to various paradoxes pointed to at the introduction. This is to say, the flux awareness as primordial, allows for awareness of specific time constitution, wherein the constituting self-enacts both minimal past and future locations, allowing the self to slip and create a distance between the acting and the enacted self. This reading of the living present, with permanent self and temporalizing flux already grants the ontological *in* metaphor with temporal directions – future and past, now and then. What is clear with this time example is the play of transparencies in difference: past and future are co-present one through the other, are transparent one with the other, precisely in their difference. The transparency is the first clue to “time travel” to the extent that the past is seen through the present and the future and the latter through the present and the past.

More precisely, the constitution of temporally distinct phases reveals a specific “deconstruction of deconstruction of presence” as inadequate in light of the constitution of simple temporality. The present, the now, relates to the not yet and the no longer, and these to the now not in their similarity in meaning, their mutual signification of each other, but in their difference and resultantly co-presence. This is to say, the now means only to the extent that it signifies its difference from the no longer and the not yet, and in order to signify, the two meanings must be co-present to the

meaning of now. Here the meaning of the now is deconstructed, its presence is abolished only to reveal the co-presence of other non-deconstructed meanings different from, and yet transparent through it. In this sense, the condition of difference is transparency of co-presence. This is equally the condition for apperception. To see the now is also to co-presently apperceive the differences of the no longer and the not yet, and in turn to reveal co-presence of the differences between perception and apperception as a way of perceiving our position as an apperception through the positions of others. It is significant for time travel that at the outset, any time awareness is not located at any now point, since the latter is always experienced as a field with horizons such that it can be continued as “and so on” in any temporal direction or positioned “anytime” as a source of any direction. For example, a historian might say “I am doing research on the texts of Renaissance from 16th to 18th centuries”. He is a time traveler who, without asking how this is possible, places himself in the horizon of two centuries.

Husserl understands such a present as originating in the “living now”. The latter is a field of perceptual components that do not yet include any memories or future aspects, although it has an open and indefinite horizon. It is purely a presence of a “field” replete with possibilities to focus on something, on some theme. The living now is the opening up of awareness to the perceptual world prior to any question of time or space or a positional individual Ego. In this sense it maintains itself in a passive way as originary upsurge of a field that cannot be denied without denying the ground of all other layers of selective perception. While focusing on the primal level disclosed by Husserl we note that neither stasis nor flow, neither simultaneity nor sequence or any other time metaphor can be attributed to it. Its morphology can be expressed as a wide range of perceptual configurations which, in musical terms, can be called “antiphony” where there is not yet a direction, where sounds rush from different points all at once. When selecting one or another, that is to say paying active attention, we can begin to speak of any possible aspect as past to present and future. But the antiphonic upsurge, the primal living now, does not exhibit any temporal characteristics, and thus there are not yet any indications of intentionality.

What appears, here, is a primordial condition for transparency and awareness: discrimination and co-presence of permanence-flux in and through each other: the living present. It should be noted that this domain is neither ontological nor epistemic, although both, in their varieties, may provide clues to either permanence or flux; rather it is the lived awareness that defies ontological and epistemic parameters. Permanence and flux implicate another event as a condition for their transparency. This condition cannot be explicated by any direct tracing of either aspect of the living present. It may be regarded either as a balance or a shift between the two. The balancing is not a point, since it cannot be located either as flux or permanence; it is a constant shift that manifests flux through permanence and conversely, and thus it is not a motion having directions, i.e. it is not flux. Rather, as a shift, it does not point toward but institutes the *ur-intentionality* of the living present. In this sense, it could not be regarded as our activity, our lived flux that is haunted by permanence. It breaks the limits of anthropomorphic positionality and ontology and metaphysics of inner-worldly designations. In this sense, the living present composes traces of this

*shift* that opens up both aspects of the living present. It is the worldly and not the ontological or metaphysical ground; the cosmic sway that appears in the transparency of the living present. Transcendentally speaking, it is atopic shift that comprises the phenomenality of the phenomena of permanence and flux in the sense that it lends them both the character of being traces of the phenomenon of one another.

At this level all that can be said is that the living now offers a field of presence that comprises a background for secondary phenomena which are selected but whose very continuity of all that has been and still to come does not exhibit intentionality of an individual either. The co-presence in the field of past-present future, as secondary phenomena of the living present – its upsurge – is already “thick” with others, their views that suggest possible acceptance of theirs as ours. The present encounter of others is always required, and opens in antiphonal distance juxtaposed aspects which are present as temporal depth. A caution must be inserted to avoid misunderstandings. If we claim that at this level no intentional Ego is yet visible, it does not mean that we are somehow determined by the others of the past to think, feel and do what they have “caused”. The upsurge is a horizon, replete with indeterminate possibilities whose boundaries we cannot reach. This means that the secondary phenomena as co-presence of past-present future, equally has no force of causality. As we saw above, causal explanations lead to philosophical absurdities.

Let us briefly return to the question of the awareness that shifts between permanence and flux and, at another level, between present-past and future. To ask the question *what* is this transcendental shift is to reduce it to the ontology or metaphysical designation and thus fail to trace its sway. Perhaps it is possible to intimate that it is the awareness of the cosmic in the sense that the cosmic space, time and movement cannot be a container and thus cannot be regarded as topological, dominated by the *in* metaphor. The spatial-temporal movement of the world may be this atopic shift, a play, manifest in the play of the transcendental shift appearing by way of the phenomena of permanence-flux within whose parameters emerges the awareness of ontological and metaphysical and lived world meaning designs. Given this atopic and hence appositional awareness, it could be maintained that transcendental consciousness is less akin to the ontological and metaphysical understanding and more attuned to, and being accessible from, the cosmic. In addition, given that neither permanence nor flux, at this level, are topological, and hence directional, any temporalizing and spatializing reification is *a priori* redundant. Neither the aspects of the living present nor the transcendental shift comprising their mutual co-presence and differentiation exhibit any spatial and temporalizing characteristics; what they exhibit is the worldliness of transcendental awareness.

### Self and other

What then is this pretemporal life of awareness and above all, how does it disclose philosophical time travel in order to engage in a dialogue with others? After all, the mentioned historian of Renaissance will pose questions to the others found in texts, stories, monuments, political discourses, metaphysical traumas of Blaise Pascal, and

so on – an open horizon. Indeed, he will recognize others as having something to say about the world and thus will be co-present with them. It is therefore necessary to explicate the presence of the other as sensible, as making sense to us and our questions to them, demanding answers from their texts, indeed contesting our understanding of Renaissance and offering unsuspected possibilities within the horizon of Renaissance. It is possible to agree on one view: we must abandon the “natural” and “psychological” notions of time and access a domain of pretemporal life of awareness that is anonymous, and yet a directly lived, unmediated and ever present background assuming a variety of activities, including the mentioned transcendental shift. It is at this level that the sense of the other is encountered. Through the protracted controversies whether the other is accessible to a given subject, one thing was always certain – even if not clear – that the sense of the other is always assumed and never disappears from the horizon of any subject. It is also directly certain that we are not speaking in ontological terms, demanding an answer whether the other exists. This is to say, we are not even certain what “existence” means, yet we are certain that we are talking to someone, reading texts by someone, looking at portraits of someone and even asking “who was the painter”. In brief, a question and answer as to the “existence” of the other, in no wise abolishes the awareness of the sense of the other. Indeed, it is impossible to speak of a “self”, and ask a question whether the self is the Cartesian *solus ipse* without assuming the sense of the other to make sense of the “self”. As was argued above, self perception is an apperception in relation to the other and conversely. No argument about existence or non-existence abolishes the co-presence of the sense of self and other.

So far it is certain that even self-awareness is also self as other awareness and thus at the outset the priority must be given to a “we awareness”. At this level the self-acting is equally other-acting, and the other acting is equally an apperceptive self acting (Held 1966: 63). This means that the field and its horizon awareness is mine, yours, Plato’s, Kant’s, our friend Victor’s and Augustine’s in heaven (or hell). This means that common understanding of the other as being in a different time, say the past, presupposes a we-subjectivity as a necessary background that has not yet been ontologized into a time sequence and thus, as a horizon, it is atemporal. This sense of self and other leads to the notion that each experience of the other, in its originary appearance, constitutes a horizon wherein the experience of all others as co-present, discloses the living present as an indefinite horizon encompassing the totality of all selves and their horizons accessible – even if partially – to all others. What is to be noted is that such an encompassment is given in the originary reflection upon the self. In brief the functioning of the transcendental subjectivity is the ground of common sedimentations that are not past but remain coextensive with and play a role in the horizon of awareness of anyone. They are not yet ontologically temporalized, neither metaphysically eternalized. Once again they are atemporal. The term “atemporal” has been used to avoid both the purely formal sense of eternal, and the pure concept of succession. It is neither one nor the other, but involves the shift between them. Thus how something is “given” and becomes “mine” points to this atemporal field wherein

one finds one's contributions and correlatively one's place. Awareness is a compilation of sedimentations of a polycentrically comprised objectivity.

### Horizon and depth encounter

What was said so far is a necessary condition to what follows in fundamental human awareness and temporal travel to meet others whose significance plays a role in our expanding horizons, their constitution of our awareness not in sequence but in depth. What clues does the horizon thesis offer, and what is the source of such a thesis? This complex question leads briefly to a glance at the understanding of horizon, life-world and the correlative prejudgment of life-world in temporal depth. Horizon suggests that every perceived thing, a quality of thing, or a mode of perception, is open to further possible perceptions. It is understandable by the rule *and so on*, constituting an indefinite spatio-temporal “surrounding” of every perception. In this sense, there is always more to any perception, a *plus-ultra*, requiring apperception. Yet what is implicit in the horizontal structure of awareness, is the reconfiguration of intentionality into horizons of meaning. The open horizons are not a sum or a composite of acts but of events having meaningful connections in a field of changes and recognizable themes that can be repeated and shared. In this sense, some encountered meanings may suggest a flux in whose context human actions may be either specifically identifiable themes, depictions of events or recognizable durations, providing grounds for the meaning of temporal specifications. Given this shift to horizon, the question of world becomes a transcendental issue. Yet to understand how this issue appears concretely, we must begin our philosophical time travel.

Traveling to other regions, nations, and civilizations is equivalent to going from here to there and from now to then and, despite the increasing speed of transportation, the journey takes time. I go there to attend a philosophical conference and to meet friends and colleagues – to a place called Niigata in Japan. Having landed in the airport I am searching for the host of the conference whom I have met perhaps two years ago. And there he is, looking much livelier than his “usual self”, indeed making transparent through his liveliness his usual self. In this sense, I encounter him at present in terms of temporal depth prior to sequential time and engagement of some sort of subjective function called memory. What is significant is that the transparent lively visage does not disclose his past, but a horizon that has not yet revealed any temporal directions. My action of speaking has no use of temporal terms of “past” and “future” which might have a clear indication of temporal direction; the present is an open and indefinite horizon, and fits precisely our position of not having any particular future result, specifically since I am not cognizant of when such a result will occur. This present has “thickness” since it is not a formal now with past and future but a depth that includes the very beginning of my trip and the uncertainty of the thick present. The suggested “thickness” or even density of my encounter with my colleague can be recognized by anyone acquainted with his / her own encounters with others. The depth of the “past” from the planning of my trip can be seen as meant possibility and

maintained as present from the moment I received an invitation to attend the conference. In turn, all the projections for the trip are to be seen as possibilities that belong to the same thickness of the horizon. Just as the writing of this sentence seems to have a beginning in words that require more words to continue the meaning of this writing, the writing of the sentence persists, has a background permanence, as does the paper on which it is written persists as well as the theme of the writing. As the writer, I am the active narrator who maintains the presence of the beginning of the writing and expects to complete it at some indefinite horizon that is uncertain although as an aspect the writing is required for my present activity.

This present originates in the “living present”. As discussed above, the latter is a field of perceptual components that do not yet include any memories or future aspects, although it has an open and indefinite horizon. It is purely a presence of a “field” replete with possibilities to focus on something, on some theme as a secondary activity that consists of aspects that can be permanent or flowing. The living present is the opening up of awareness to the perceptual world prior to any question of time or space or a positional individual Ego. In this sense it maintains itself in a passive way as originary upsurge of a field that cannot be denied without denying the ground of all other layers of selective perception, including the above investigated presence of awareness of writing lived by me. While focusing on the primal level disclosed by Husserl we note that neither stasis nor flow, neither simultaneity nor sequence or any other time metaphor can be attributed to it. Its morphology can be expressed as a wide range of perceptual configurations which, in musical terms can be called “antiphony” where there is not yet a direction, where sounds rush from different points all at once. When selecting one or another, that is to say paying active attention, we can begin to speak of receding of all other aspects and an emergence of a focus. But the antiphonic upsurge, the primal living now, does not exhibit any temporal characteristics, and thus there are not yet any indications of intentionality. It is here that any philosopher is emerging as time traveler. Taking on a task of writing an essay, the upsurge of the antiphony offers a flood rushing to fill the horizon with options to speak with Plato, John Locke, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz, Heraclitus, Husserl, Rudolf Carnap, A. J. Ayer, Aristotle, till some of them recede and the others become a primal dialogical partners in a composition of the essay.

At this level all that can be said is that the living now offers a field of presence that comprises a background for secondary phenomena which are selected but whose very continuity of conversations exhibit various intentionalities by those dialogical partners as meanings toward the essential task – writing an essay on a particular topic. For Husserl this secondary level depends on “passive fusion” that allows perceptual aspects to form a continuity of awareness which can become units for intentional regard. What is remarkable is the appearance of the primal upsurge of a field of presence in my encounter with my Japanese colleague. As already mentioned, I see through his expression the thickness of our other encounters, forming his identity that does not exhibit any boundaries. As we continue out of the airport we engage in a polite dialogue concerning my trip which I recount not from memory but as part of

the thick horizon that is present and makes sense of everything I say. He too inserts comments about his air travels and fits into the field of perceptions that we share. We catch a taxi – a variant of many taxis transparent through this one – and resume our conversation with questions as to “what are we working on now” as our scholarly projects. In a common parlance and without thinking we take for granted that the present is the horizon with its transparent layers of temporal thickness. While discussing what we are working on “now”, we are in a taxi and not writing scholarly papers, yet the work is co-present through our interests and our obscure events that are transparently co-present as “still to come”. What is disclosed in the appearance of persons we cannot initially recognize are the remote traits which offer a glimpse of their identities, covered over by the present appearances as temporal layers that made them look totally different. For me, my colleague still exhibits the good natured look of a Japanese scholar. Yet the look has a thickness and it lurks in depth of the white streaks in his hair and a little droop under his chin. And precisely the transparency, disclosing the thickness, allows me to see him as “the same”. In all cases, the awareness includes “the same”. The present encounter opens in antiphonal distance juxtaposed aspects which are present as temporal depth. To speak in Husserl’s terms, I do not first meet a stranger and then traverses in my memory numerous past images in order to settle on the most probable one. There is never a doubt that this is my colleague, despite the apparent fact that he has changed and this change discloses itself immediately to me not yet as a retention from the present but as given all at once. Only with this immediacy in the lived present that I can engage retentional and protentional modifications, and even here not yet as memories, but as fusing syntheses.

As we arrive at the conference center in Sendai, my host guides me into a reception room full of conference participants, where I encounter, in immediate perception, many changed faces, flashing a smile of recognition and revealing their sameness that endured through their different appearances and our numerous conferences. Of course, my awareness cannot completely encompass theirs, since their participation in the conference, with their presentations resist being totally absorbed in my horizon. They are a trace of my temporal thickness while in their subjectivity they are mostly other. In brief, what appears in the field of perception has a resiliency that cannot be absorbed and in turn created by a solipsistic subject. The living present, as an upsurge, is not a fortuitous creation of a solipsistic Ego. The mode of appearance of what is given in the living present is an opacity against which protentional awareness opens up and can never be satisfactorily fulfilled. Just as my discussion with anyone about my ultimate friend, Socrates, can never do justice to Socrates, and yet we find a partial overlapping and mutual transparency that discloses Socrates.

At the time of my encounter with the other participants, I realize that I cannot hope to completely absorb or know them in their own horizons and must accept the apperceptive illumination their presence casts upon my own horizon. What is altered by their presence for me is that while my horizon as temporal thickness has materialized in them, I no longer maintain the hope that such a horizon can be all encompassing. As a living present we have a vector or a moment of refraction that is uniquely ours

and thus allows us to account for our ambiguity of others, our inability to have a complete transparency of their presence and also account for the distortion between what we expect from, or see in others and what shows up. Thus in direct and concrete encounter there is never an eidetic fullness that would give us all at once what the other is, apart from what we read from their awareness of something, some theme, some explanation and even some mistakes. This means that to a certain extent there occurs a creation of awareness, to a certain extent, since the resiliency of what is present in the other delimits the range of what protentions can be fulfilled. What my colleague and the others I encounter disclose is that the other, revealing my temporal thickness, is as a matter of awareness, also myself; he materializes my temporal depth very explicitly and very inadequately. I realize that the other is myself, is the world as I have lived with him, my lived world, with my resonances, thick with all the sediments of my own opened protentions, thick with my retentions which at present are my own protentions. That is the reason why the materialization of my own past, in the transparency of him as “little older” and his past, are not identical, are not completely compatible.

The living present reveals a depth not only of my life, but, in the traces of the other, exhibits the presence of generations. At any rate, we disclose phenomenologically the lived presence, a perceptual and apperceptual depth field whose evidence cannot be argued away. It should be beneficial to address another important aspect of such awareness. We must give a brief sketch of what comprises a “sphere of one’s own” as distinguished from those of others. The delimitation of such a sphere involves the question of the awareness of the other and thus a constitution of intersubjectivity. Husserl’s entire *Cartesian Meditations* was regarded as the most problematic of texts, since it attempted to show the existence of the other self. There is no need to get into the protracted debate whether he succeeded or failed; what is important is to show that my encounter as temporal traveler of others handily resolves the issue of intersubjectivity at the level of the living present. We have hinted at this solution above in my encounter with my colleague, but now a more basic explication is in order. A concrete self is anchored on a pole that organizes in a stream of awareness some of the lived experiences into a sphere of ownness, calls them and recognizes them as his own. For this pole the world is a lived world, and as oriented consciousness this pole has passively synthesized the unity of its own flux of experiences into a primal self-apprehension, into a permanent aspect to be repeated and re-recognized. Husserl’s analyses of the genesis of a concrete Ego do not go beyond eidetic general terms when compared to the concreteness of an actual, living, concrete Ego, personalized in its own history. Nowhere does Husserl take up the task of the challenge of capturing the unique moment of refraction through which such an Ego lives the world and encounters the others. Of course, Husserl provided the eidetic framework within which the personal experiences take place. To capture and depict such experience proper means must be found to disclose the immediately present, in immediate co-presence enough of the stream of live awareness for the manner this particular self-lives the world. It is the way the world resonates in him

and through him that makes him who he is. It is this particular resonance that distinguishes the sphere of ownness of this particular one from any other and makes his constitution of the other within his awareness equally a constitution of himself – no matter when and where or who the other is as encountered time traveler. He may be my favorite constant companion – Socrates – whom I consult daily, and even cite to my Japanese colleague, by saying “Socrates would not let us get away with such easy answers”. If Socrates was completely absorbed in my sphere of ownness, I would not be engaged in philosophical “time travel” to dialogue with anyone. This is to say, the resiliency of the other, the impossibility to completely include the other within the activities of a given self, allows for the latter to recognize his singular self-presence and a unique sphere of ownness. This is precisely what appears in my encounter of others in my living present, constantly tracing my own awareness through others only to discover that such awareness is not identical with those of others. Indeed, in my encounter with my Japanese colleague there is delimited very strictly the moment of refraction which both encounters him within my time thickness and discovers that the refraction is at variance with his presence in the very simple recounting of “what he is working on”. While I might have all sorts of psychological states, my living present demonstrates the genesis of this very refraction and in turn a genuine intersubjectivity where my colleague is a presence in his own right.

I encountered the other in authentic intersubjectivity precisely because through him I recognized a moment of difference from me. Meanwhile having entered the reception room I found others who while recognizable through their present appearance “as the same” friends and colleagues, having permanence, there were others whose resilience I could not completely enclose within my horizon – their resiliency, and other aspects in the perceptual field constantly signify both the inadequacy and overabundance of my meanings attached to them. Indeed, this is a reception hall, and I have attended many receptions, but through this one I co-perceive it is difference from each other and thus this one resists in part my access to it. Even the sphere of ownness, with its time thickness fail to encompass fully the others, because minute details in this conference hall betray their novelty and my insufficient awareness how to find my way around this place. Here the notion of moment of refraction must be extended. Husserl has shown that protentional awareness also contains an open horizon of possibilities some of which may or may not be perceptually fulfilled. But Husserl leaves his analyses incomplete and thus does not get to a genuine sphere of ownness based on the moment of refraction. The latter means that in the lived presence from the open and indefinite horizon certain possibilities belong to this presence and refract, or constitute a chronoscopic view that is expected to be fulfilled perceptually. Yet precisely their non-fulfillment by the others demarcates the limits of my own sphere: the horizon of possibilities that are fulfilled are mine and those that remained unfulfilled for me belong to others. The moment of refraction reveals the self as “parting of the ways” from the others. While Husserl is concerned with the eidetic structures of fulfilled and unfulfilled possibilities, my presence with my colleagues and the perceptual field disclose the unfulfilled possibilities given perceptually by the others for me – in

the very thickness of the living present. It must be emphasized that while the sphere of ownness is opened as distinct from the others, it is not therefore possible to delimit the sphere of ownness of others, specifically when every encounter with them has indefinite horizons. The overlapping of such horizons in their fulfillment of two or more subjectivities is the proper sphere of my continuous philosophical time travel prior to history or culture. The world of others that I enter enriches me as I enrich theirs in mutual and unavoidable understanding, extension and transformation. In this sense, all the efforts to raise the question of the meaning and destiny of life fall by wayside, since such questions are answered before they are asked.

### Signitive space and time

Given the “atemporal” awareness of the living present as permanence / flux, and the world horizons they deploy, we can access events, our friends and heroes by reading texts, monuments, not as empirical data but as various meanings that signify the world and events within it. This is to say that time and space wherein we locate empirical events is accessible only as a signitive framework of sense making to which everyone has access. Since we have no time machines to go from now into the future or the past, the only access we have to both of those temporal components is the immediacy of meaning and sense making awareness. We are not suggesting that signification is something eternal given beyond space and time; rather it is contingent to the extent that sense making systems are embodied in and maintained through the various empirical means as carriers of such systems. When we speak of systems, we are in the same domain as logical or mathematical systems, assumed as given by any modern science. In this sense, when someone reads messages, that someone does not question the presence of such messages, despite the empirical fact that those messages originated three thousand years ago in a remote land. Through the monuments, hieroglyphs, marks on stones, one reads significations at first as temporally and spatially indifferent. In brief, prior to the question of where and when, there is an awareness what the message means and what sense does it make. I am aware what Socrates tells me about his teacher Diotima of Mantinea, and I wonder to what extent Diotima, speaking through Socrates, thinks of the horizon of meanings that she opened – the thickness of atemporal presence that radiates to reach my wonderings.

In our argument, we note that the reading of a message is prior to and pervades the empirical means that transmit the message. A text, a speaker are spatio-temporal entities, but they are transparent with the presence of significations that have no specific space-time positions. This would be analogous to the construction of the non-Euclidean space. The latter has no empirically given intuitive component. It is a pure system of formal constructs that does not point to any material, mental, or other “realistic factors”. Yet non-Euclidean geometry is regarded as an important way of articulating (if not actually constructing) other dimensions capable of transforming life world environment (Stroeker 1965). This kind of non-positional objectivity is a condition for any communication to the extent that it does not require either the senders or the

receivers of messages to have the same mental-physical experience. As we suggested above, there is a variation between the empirical and the signitive such that it is possible to have different empirical factors making the same sense and one empirical factor having diverse senses.

Disclosing the presence of meaning horizons as non-positional, and given that they can be carried by most diverse means, then in principle it is possible to select and to transmit the sense of any event as if it were immediately present to anyone. What is at issue is the process of selectivity that is not implied by the presence of horizon that is thick with meanings. After all, apart from Socrates there are other worthy heroes I could invite to a dialogue, among whom might be an encountered Kantian scholar at the conference ready and willing to help me have a dialogue with Kant and with him concerning the problem of “good will”. Here we encounter the question of selectivity as valuation. What does one select from the horizon’s presence that would allow the very variation of the horizon at its limit, set the permanent horizon in flux? Among numerous events signified within a horizon, showing that at this level, valuation does not have any rules that could be derived from either permanence or flux. The point we have reached is the previously mentioned requirement of an appositional shift between permanence and flux to make them a condition for transparency of any phenomena in their difference as meanings. We now encounter the issue of a field of “time” valuations, such as do I spend my time with this Kantian, or do I join a solitary Japanese in a quiet contemplation? My horizon overlaps with both, but in very different ways. My interest in Kant’s disclosure of the world is one of metaphysics, while the case of Japanese is very different. Through his contemplative stillness I see directly the presence of my Zen practice that opens the thickness of time of my entire life shaded by the permanence of my own emptiness in contrast to Kant’s fullness of transcendental conditions. While still listening to my conversation with Kant through the Kantian scholar, I am also at the point of balance between them such that the Japanese person seems to be part of my experience that needs to be refreshed, rearticulated through his understanding. What I am deliberating is nothing subjective, since all my deliberations are with and through others, as transparent with time depth and meaningful spaces that comprise my atemporal time travel. Even the writing of this essay includes such a travel; after all, the request which I am fulfilling is present and continues to be permanent till I send the essay off. And its permanence will remain even after it has been printed, inviting other time travelers to dialogue with me, to get angry with my style, to wonder about the Kantian who disclosed Kant’s world to me in a different variation that allowed me to ask Kant questions that were never within my horizon.

Given the atemporal character of a poliocentric field with its horizons and our constant engagement with others in depth, where we speak with them about some event, some theory, an argument, mythological images, we note the triadic structure of our awareness. We speak to someone about something, and the latter is the theme, the “object” of our concern that becomes a focus drawing in many other participants who expand our horizons, but at the same time remains focused on this “object”. It becomes obvious that the given objectivities are not blind facts but bear meaning and can be

regarded as traces to the constituting activities of transcendental intersubjectivity. The polycentric field which comprises an open domain for dialogical encounters, suggests that any objectivity on which we focus in time is an indice, a trace of the others and the ways they articulate this objectivity, leading to the experience that the whatever facts we discuss, whether they be Plato's "forms" or David Hume's "impressions" are not contingencies but essential traces of the constitutive acts of the transcendental, policentric intersubjectivity.

Every facticity is not only a system of perceptions, but also an indice, a clue. The totality of clues need not stem from present awareness, from the manner of present activity. Yet they can be relived, reanimated as achievements of others and thus open to totality of subjects. Even if forgotten in their uniqueness and singularity, they are sedimented in ruins and institutions, with all the typological structures for continuous reexperiencing. The sedimentations need not be explicitly recollected by a singular consciousness as sedimentations of something past in order to function as typological indices. Mainly, they are acquired quite tacitly through education and enculturation, and already provide a horizon of indices. These passively given accomplishments are not discovered as a substructure, a purely associative mechanism subtending perceptual life, but are accessible as an open horizon of indices of activities to be done because they are both suggestive of her and indicative of my activities. They are given in their sense and phenomenological analyses can show their sense implications horizontally, and their constitutive, pretemporal activities vertically as already accomplished by others, by the policentric field as presence of all consciousnesses. The passive interconnections of indices, bearing every experience, comprise the meaning of phenomenological intentionalities and motivations already found in the atemporal horizon.

The passive indices constitute the field of expectations in a passive mode. It is not necessary to orient oneself to what is expected explicitly. Being in a particular modality of awareness and activity, one assumes a passively open horizon that contains an inherent orientation. The latter can be regarded provisionally as a collective concept of interconnections of indices, a tacit sketch of possibilities of experiencing, sedimented as a field of presence. This presence, in turn, points to a continuous effort of teleological unification, integration, and synthesis of sense. The unification does not mean a system of thought designed to explain all events, but an unexplicated preconception that the most remote and the nearest events can be understood, can make sense in the atemporal field. Even if such sense contests our own, we are able to understand the contestation, and thus extend our awareness by its presence. The indices lead to transcendental intersubjectivity, to the vertical constitutive achievements which are always and already enacted, and are accessible to any intentional consciousness in its noetic activities of reiterating the sense implications of correlative objectivities. In turn, each novel determination of objectivities, each new articulation of world and ourselves, is a new clue for the interrogation of the sense implications inherent in the encountered beings. But this novelty is not free floating; it inheres, and is co-constituted by the field horizons. What is or can become a clue is prefigured by a context of

the field and by our experiential treasury. If all beings, including ourselves as worldly in a specific self understanding of who we are, were taken as clues, then they would no longer function as accidental, contingent facticities, serving to exemplify eidetic necessities, but would be beyond the difference between them. Each being, including ourselves, becomes “contingent necessity” for our time travel. This is exactly where the difference between fact and essence must be surrendered. Whatever is given as a historical facticity is already a perceptual indice of the constitutive achievement. The relationship to the perceptual, the factual, is incorporated into the clues incessantly pointing to the ground of their constitution. Through free variations, as an attainment of essence, the factual is not abolished but unfolded in its complete sense. The simplest case: we look at a pile of stones, having a composition that indicates their being indices of ruins of a palace, fortress, mansion, farm house, or a formation by the last ice age. In this process, the transcendental subject becomes transparent to itself in its horizons.

At this point a last piece of time travel must be introduced to avoid the charge that there is nothing to talk about with our Socrates, because there is nothing identical of which we can speak. Turning back to the briefly mentioned vertical intentionality, it can be stated most broadly, that anything present as an “object”, whether it is a tree or a mathematical system, is maintained as the “same” for explication of its essential composition. This intentionality shows up when I focus on some theme, subject matter, or image and with this focus I narrow down of the horizon and invite participants across the depth of the field to engage in a dialogue with me. This means that while the object remains, constant, the views correlated to it may change. If I am interested in mathematics, and pose a question as to the “essence” of numbers, I immediately invite such thinkers as Plato, Aristotle, Galileo Galilei, David Hilbert, Felix Klein and others to help me unravel this question. We shall maintain the topic of a number as an identical focus, without asking any speculative questions whether numbers are “real” or “where” they are, since it is evident at the outset, that all dialogical partners take for granted that we are inquiring into numbers. Someone else, in our dialogue, let us say, Aristotle, might point out to us that “number 1” is not a number, because it can be attributed as a quality of things. Without leaving the topic, we will have to expand our horizons into the question of the quality of things. The vertical intentionality is prelinguistic in the sense that no question of specific significance is raised. If one were to say that a meaning of an object depends on the meaning of linguistic concepts, one would still assume an orientation to that object. The argument, based on linguistic signification, at times takes a turn toward cultural relativism. Hence the object “cow” might mean “holy” in some of the Hindu cultural traditions, or it might mean “product” in capitalist market economy. Regardless of these meanings, it makes sense for anyone, Hindu or otherwise, to see this object as identical, given from various perspectives and exhibiting different sides, requiring our movements around the object. One cannot transgress this sense making process by a mere linguistic definition and walk through this object, i.e. one may not be arbitrary. The given structure of the object dictates the requisite access to it if the performance of this access is to

make sense. Indeed, one can change linguistic expressions, use distinct cultural semantics to exemplify this object, yet such linguistic usages will have to correlate to the requirements of a given object that at the same time is regarded as a matter of fact, having a generality of presence that is accessible to anyone. Now, returning to the topic of number, we are clear that neither Plato, nor Galileo Galilei, nor others, will have to walk around a number and see it from different sides. Yet, during the dialogue (or polilogue in our case), we are expanding the horizons of our understanding “horizontally” while still maintaining vertically the same intentional object. Here reappears the above discussed lived awareness of permanence and flux, such that the vertically maintained theme appears through a variety “flowing” articulations. Without such a lived awareness no philosophical time travel would be possible.

This does not suggest that language is irrelevant, but implies that co-expressions can be regarded as means of signifying the vertically maintained subject matter. As is well known in phenomenology, the term “objectivity” includes anything to which we orient ourselves, inclusive of cultural objectivities such as works of arts, mythical figures, scientific theories, and spring rituals. These expressivities are to a great extent linguistic, and articulate the focus of vertical intentionality. In order to accommodate any vertical intentionality, language must be regarded as significative and dialogical, i.e. to speak is to speak to someone about something. Language, taken concretely, makes sense as dialogical, and despite the variety of its cultural types and rules, it follows the triadic structure of dialogue. No doubt, dialogical structure can be expanded to include more than two persons and more than one linguistic level. This extension of dialogue can be called *policentric*. We perceive with the intentional orientations of others as they do with ours. One can address a crowd about some issue; one can even argue with members of one’s own or of other traditions who lived in a remote past. Thus one can say “I disagree with Plato’s argument about justice” without being regarded as somehow making no sense due to the empirical absence of Plato. We know what Plato said in his works about the given subject matter. Even if we claim that Plato was mistaken, we still claim that he was mistaken about the subject matter such as justice. In turn, we are able to recognize not only the subject matter of discourse, but also the various levels of speaking and can make appropriate judgments concerning the fitness of a given terminology.

This suggests that discourses can be addressed in their own right and investigated in their own structures and rules. This is to say that our intentional activity is shifting to expressive compositions comprising the horizontal significations of a given objectivity or a subject matter. This is an argument concerning the priority of intentionality over culturally available means of expression. Only the granting of this priority opens the possibility of articulating these means. Without the intentional correlation to a specific structure of objectivity, there would be no criterion by which to judge the appropriateness of a given structure of expression, nor a particular communication with persons of other cultures. Questions, such as “what do you mean by this gesture or this word” would not even arise.

All language is *about* something, and is equally capable of articulating that something in various ways and at different levels of human engagement with the objects of the environment and culture. Such signification embodies meanings, designed to extend and to complicate the sense maintained in any vertical intentionality. At one level language could be structured as a predicative judgment, at another it might be an explication of some pragmatic function of the object, at yet another, it would place the object in a system of exchange values, or aesthetic appreciation, sacred objects, or ritualistic functions. Yet the horizontal variety of “interpretations” maintains an identity of the topic, of the object to which all this variety points. Once again, the field is narrowed, the horizontal flux of articulations restricted, and communication established atemporally across indefinite variety of partners; we are back on the temporal trip.

## Conclusions

It ought to be obvious that human awareness is not some internal box, full of concepts, ideas, even feelings, but is a way of reading the indices that lead to transcendental intersubjectivity, to the vertical awareness of some permanence which is always available and accessible to any consciousness in its engagement with a topic, an object, a mythical figure, a theory, or an argument which can be reiterated in their sense implications into horizons of options unsuspected by us or even by them. In turn, each novel determination of objectivities, each new articulation of world and ourselves, is a new clue for the interrogation of the sense implications inherent in the encountered beings, the objects of our interest. While we emphasized numerous figures of our dialogical engagement stemming from our tradition, such figures also comprise a field of challenges from issues posed by those who “prognosticate” the events still to come. Yet such events also are an aspect of our field with its horizons and with vertical focus on some significant issue: currently, for example, astronomers are analyzing the trajectories of asteroids to warn us of impending disasters, making transparent our fragility on this planet, and setting in motion technological innovations to deflect such disasters. In brief, the vertical theme of “our survival” may be a focus of a great variety of horizontal articulations and technical productions. The relationship to the perceptual, the factual, is incorporated into the clues incessantly pointing to the ground of their presence to everyone. We understand what a disaster means through many variations, and we can extend this understanding horizontally through a great variety of discussions with our dialogical time travelers. In this sense, philosophy maintains the horizon open for a continuous and most intriguing journey across the cosmos, taking along others who wish to be co-present in yet unknown regions.

## References

- Conze, E.; Horner, I. B.; Snellgrove, D.; Waley, A. (Eds.). 1954. *Buddhist Texts through the Ages*. New York: Philosophical Library, Inc.
- Fink, E. 1957. *Zur Ontologischen Frühgeschichte. Raum – Zeit – Bewegung*. Den Haag: Nijhoff.
- Held, K. 1966. *Lebendige Gegenwart*. Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff.

Husserl, E. 1963. *Erfahrung und Urteil*. Landgrebe, L. (Ed.). Hamburg: Claassen.

Kant, I. 1965. *Critique of Pure Reason*. New York: St. Martin's.

Stroeker, E. 1965. *Philosophische Untersuchungen zum Raum*. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann.

## FILOSOFIJA IR KELIONĖS LAIKU

Algis MICKŪNAS

Santrauka

Remdamasis filosofiniais argumentais, straipsnyje autorius interpretuoja filosofiją kaip keliones laiku. Aiškina, kaip dėmesingumas laikui padeda suprasti šį reiškinių, užmegzti filosofinį dialogą su kitais žmonėmis. Šio teksto argumentai suponuoja tolesnes tezes: a) empiriškai neįmanoma peržengti gyvenamosios dabarties laiko taško; b) žmogaus atminties gebėjimai yra riboti; c) žmogus su savo rūšies atstovais komunikuoja „per laiką“, pasitelkdamas savo gebėjimą reikštis; d) žmogus skaito tekstus, kurie „reiškia“ įvykius, daiktus ir kitus fenomenus, taip užmezga dialogą su kitais žmonėmis. Tokie komunikaciniai ypatumai reiškia, kad žmogus „patiria“ tai, ką kiti regėjo ir komunikavo kaip per empirinius ženklus prieinamą dalyką, dar „prieš“ tai, kai buvo iškeltas klausimas „kada“, kitaip tariant – belaiikiškai.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: belaiikiškumas, tarpiškumas, nuoroda, intencija, reikšmė.