
DEBORDERING THE BORDERS OF TIME: TOWARDS THE PRIMORDIALITY OF HOSPITALITY

J a n k o M . L o z a r

In his compelling book on Husserl's phenomenology of temporality, Stefano Micali says laconically: "There is an original asymmetry between the presently given appearance and consciousness, which constantly deborders the givenness through protention and retention."¹

What would this asymmetry be? And how is it related to hospitality? What is this debordering, if we try to understand it philosophically rather than solely politically?

The present treatise shall attempt to uncover the possibility of genuine hospitality through the analysis of the nature of time, taking as our starting point Husserl's enigmatic concept of the temporal field of now, and Heidegger's claim about the truth of being, understood through the truth of time.² By confining our attention to the futural aspect of time we shall attempt to show that a more proper understanding of how the "not yet now" enables us to acquire a more proper understanding of the possibility of radically open being with others. The fundamental question to be addressed is whether we can, by uncovering the evidence of the primordially of futurity, come up with a possibility of, at least philosophically, debordering the borders set up by the European (political, legal or intellectual) culture, when facing the seemingly perilous alterity of the other.

Actually, the answer to this has already been provided in great detail, through the discussion on the phenomenology of the gift, by Derrida,

¹ Stefano Micali, *Überschüsse der Erfahrung: Grenzdimensionen des Ich Nach Husserl* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2008), 162.

² See Edmund Husserl, *Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964.) See also Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1962).

Levinas and Jean-Luc Marion. Without venturing a strong interpretation of all three philosophical figures mentioned here, we only need to quickly summarize and put in a tiny nutshell the ingenious analysis of the phenomenon of gift, offered by Jacques Derrida in *Given Time*: to understand the giving of the gift and to be pristinely receiving the gift is to deborder the objectivity of the gift, its donor and recipient – objectivity understood in the temporal sense of the objectivity of the present. In Derrida’s own words: “If the gift appears or signifies itself, if it is presently as gift, then it is not, it annuls itself.”³ The truth of the gift suffices to annul the gift. In other words, the temporal objectification of the gift destroys the very giving of the gift through the economy of exchange. It goes without saying that a mindset of either the donor or recipient, expecting the other to either return or receive a gift in exchange for the one given or received, destroys the very preciousness of the act of presenting a gift, and the gift itself. But the salient point lies of course within this patent obviousness of the self-evident truth. What Derrida ingeniously says here is that economy of exchange involves a (wrong) temporality which abolishes the gift as gift. To put it in a nutshell: we should try and understand the temporal truth of gift not from (representable) objective presence, which can be reproduced either from the past, by way of recollection, or into the future, by way of anticipation, but rather from an elusive presence, which breaks open the (metaphysically fictitious) full presence of the present.

It is indeed a small wonder that such a phenomenal phenomenology of gift was explicated within the context of the truth of time. Not only because the gift is semantically most intimately related to and even synonymous with the present. One should bring in yet another strong analogy into play: if Husserl deborders the present moment, breaking it open into an original temporal field, which so to say rescues

³ Jacques Derrida, *Given Time: I. Counterfeit Money* (Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1992), 26–27. Later, Marion re-appropriates Derrida, but remains, so to say, within the borders of the donor, God. What is at stake here, however, is the potential loss of one’s openness to the radical alterity of the other: for do we not in this way approach the other with reservations and scepticism directed towards the God of the other? Indeed, such a stance endangers the very gift of the givenness of the other.

the otherwise impossible status of the now as the now point,⁴ Derrida does the same, only this time within the context of the onto-logical and chrono-logical truth of the gift. Like Husserl with his analysis on the peculiar nature of *das Jetzt*, Derrida deborders the present, the objectivity of the givenness of the gift, rescuing it from the objectifying logic of economic exchange, from the (temporal) logic of expectation and memory. Of course, the analogy is far from surprising and unexpected, since Derrida drew truly heavily from Husserl himself, despite his severe criticism of Husserl's purported metaphysics of presence.⁵

If the phenomenon of gift can be so fruitfully explicated with and through the explication of the origin givenness of time, we can say the same for the truth of being. One only has to consider the intimate closeness of the "*Es gibt*", literally "it gives", with being (the German "*Es gibt*" means "there is") and the givenness of the gift. We are here obviously introducing another great phenomenologist: Martin Heidegger and his background claim from his *Being and Time* that the truth of being can be understood in and through time only. What is, what has been in its being present, is patently obviously understood as being *in the present*. The truth of being has long been understood from the temporal perspective of the present. Heidegger's task was to deborder such understanding in his very own terms. This, however, is a path we shall not venture here. Instead, we shall ask ourselves the following unsettling question: what does it mean that *Dasein* (as the essence of the human being) is not *in* time, but rather time itself, the timing of time itself? Do we really know, by infinitely repeating this contention of Heidegger's, what is actually implied therein? To acquire the truth of time requires no less than coming to grips with the truth of being – be it the manner or mode of how I am as myself, be it the being of the innerworldly beings, of the world, or of the other self.

⁴ As Aristotle puts it succinctly in his *Physics*: "(...) obviously the 'now' is no part of time." And a bit further on: "In so far then as the 'now' is a boundary, it is not time." In: Aristotle, *The Complete Works of Aristotle* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 373.

⁵ See Jacques Derrida, *Speech and Phenomena* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973); *Writing and Difference* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1962).

What, again, does it mean I am not in time but time itself? Heidegger, like Husserl, wards off the misleading conception of the purportedly objective being of time in itself, as an event, a going-on independent of our own self. Husserl would call this a naturalistic (mis)conception of time, which is prevalent in the natural sciences.

Let us, for the sake of clarity, venture a few examples and rough pieces of evidence here. Provided we all already somehow know what the three dimensions of time are: what does it mean that *I am* the past? Do we have any ontological evidence for this to be read from our own manner of being? Can I be in the manner of the passing away into the past? Can I *be* the very passing of time? Indeed, I can: when I am sorrowful, sad, I *am* in the manner of turning back in time towards that which is no longer there, gone, with the wind of ontic and temporal change.

Of course, what such a claim needs, is to do away with or at least crack open the modern rationalist conception of rationality or cognition or cognitive ability as the underlying essence of the human being as *animal rationale*, to which non-essential, non-cognitive faculties are added as mere accompanying phenomena. We know, thanks to Scheler and his *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values*, that the essential proponent of this view was Kant with his *Critique of Judgement* and his own specific understanding of the faculties of the soul, those of cognition, desire and feelings.⁶

Kant addresses the basic division of the faculties of the soul in the following manner:

For all faculties or capacities of the soul can be reduced to three, which cannot be any further derived from one common ground: the *faculty of knowledge*, the *feeling of pleasure and pain*, and the *faculty of desire*. Now between the faculties of knowledge and desire there is the feeling of pleasure, just as the Judgement is intermediate between the Understanding and the Reason.⁷

For the first time in the history of European philosophy, the faculty of feeling is allotted its own independent dimension, which, according to Kant, belongs to the realm of poetic reason or aesthetic judgment.

⁶ See Max Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values: A New Attempt toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973).

⁷ Kant Immanuel, *Critique of Judgement* (London: Macmillan & Co, Ltd., 1917), 37.

However, in the first division of the critique, where Kant provides the definition of aesthetic judgments or judgments of taste, we immediately find out that feelings as an independent and irreducible faculty of the soul have nothing to do with the faculty of knowledge:

But the subjective (element) in a representation which cannot be an ingredient of cognition, is the *pleasure* or *pain* which is bound up with it; for through it I cognise nothing in the object of the representation, although it may be the effect of some cognition.⁸

The passage corroborates Scheler's insight into Kant's definition of the faculty of feeling: firstly, feeling cannot be reduced to the faculty of understanding, and secondly, feeling has no cognitive power; for it is understood merely as a subjective circumstance, which has no intentional relation whatsoever with the objectivity of objects. As we said before, for Scheler, Kant's analysis of affectivity reveals their independence as a faculty of spirit, which, however, has nothing to do with the transcendental *a priori* of theoretical and practical reason.

And we have by and large accepted this truth to be an accurate description and explanation of who and how we are – as the most rational (reasonable) truth of our rational being. First we think, represent cognitively, and then, as an inessential addition, we feel about what we first thought about, judged upon or desired. Cognitive faculty is the cornerstone of what it means to be human, with the feeling of pleasure and pain and faculty of desire superimposed upon it.

Thanks to Scheler, however, we have come to realize that this is not the whole story to be told of modern rationalism regarding the truth of affectivity, since modern philosophy actually holds two differing views on feelings. The first view, which can be attributed to Immanuel Kant, holds that they cannot be reduced to the rational part of the soul and, thus, affirms their independence, but deprives them of all cognitive powers and any possible relation to the essence of the human being and its truth of being. Yet, again according to Scheler, there is the second view, which Scheler rightfully attributes to René Descartes, in that it

⁸ Ibid., 44.

presents affects in their intentional role, admits them full ontological status.⁹

It goes without saying that phenomenological research on affectivity follows the Cartesian rather than Kantian tradition, as can be shown in the case of Edmund Husserl and particularly Martin Heidegger. Heidegger upsets Kantian truth and actually turns it upside down, further radicalizing the Cartesian truth on affectivity. Without the prior opening up in and through *Stimmung*, or *Befindlichkeit*, mood or attunement, without this primary movedness, motion, commotion, or emotion of *Dasein*, there would be and could be no intentional relatedness to any entity and no possibility of cognitive object-intentionality.

So for him, the primary openness of our own being is our emotive, moved (in both spatial, temporal and emotive sense) self-attunement, which is not only the being of our being, but also the timing of our time.

It is time we give it another try. Let us repeat what we said above: what does it mean that I *am* time – in my very being moved, in attunement? Do we have any ontological evidence for this in our own mode of being? Can I be in the mode of the passing away into the past? Indeed, I can: when I am sorrowful, sad, I am in the manner of turning back in time towards that which is no longer there. *To be sorrowful now means to be the very passing away of time, the dying out of the present moment.* Again and again, do we really know what it means that we are time? In being sorrowful, we are the timing of time, we are the passing away of ourselves and of the happy moment.

To introduce yet another, perhaps clearer token of evidence: being bored. What mode of time are we, when we are fundamentally bored? *We are* the collapse of the future into the past, of the past into the future, the collapse of the three dimensions of time, past / present / future, into all-the-sameness, into indifference. *We are* the indifference, the undifferentiatedness of the past, present and future.

⁹ See René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1951). See also Paola L. Coriando, *Affektenlehre und Phänomenologie der Stimmungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2002).

Intimately related to the attunement of boredom, and essentially related to the present topic of debordering borders, is the attunement of resentment: we are the hurtful, horrific past, coming from the potentiality of the future as horror expected in advance, we are a specific marriage of future and past, which imbues the present moment with the dreadful expectation of being with dreadful others.

After this preliminary sketch, having realized what potential lies in the truth of time, going back to Husserl opens up a huge wagonful of possibilities. Husserl's phenomenology of time is, to our humble – or ambitious – opinion, far richer and more elaborate than that of Heidegger. So diving into and delving into Husserl's complex structures of time may equip us with better tools of understanding or own truth of being, without of course having to set aside Heidegger's ingenious insights into essential interrelatedness of being and time.

So let us now return to the initial statement from Stefano Micali on debordering the present moment: "There is an original asymmetry between the impressional presently given appearance and consciousness, which constantly deborders the actual givenness through protention and retention."¹⁰

What Husserl deborders through debordering the time, is actually or own existence, our very mode of being. The mode of givenness of the present – understood in both senses – is the truth of our own being.

Retention and protention stick to the present moment of the now – they are, Husserl is strict here, *not* to be understood through expectation and memory. They relate to the lived experience of the present moment rather than to the closed off past or future. In sense perception, and this is Husserl's genius happening here, retaining the momentary no longer perceived / given and protaining the momentary not yet given, are not to be understood as being without the borders of the now point, but as intrinsic elements of the moment itself, now understood in the sense of the temporal field (*Zeitfeld*) rather than as a point in time (mathematical fiction).

And retention and protention are also *not* to be mistaken for representational recollection and expectation, which stands aloof from

¹⁰ Micali, *Überschüsse der Erfahrung: Grenzdimensionen des Ich nach Husserl*, 162.

the present moment, but on the level of primary presentation of the peculiarly debordered present moment. It is, therefore, a mode of time and being prior to the expectation of the future or the recollection of the past.

Debordering time as the now point into a broader original temporal field actually implies debordering most intimate borders of our being. By opening up the punctuality border of the now into an open field of the present, Husserl opens up the borders of our subjectivity: in relation to the other, other subjectivity, and eventually also cultural borders.

Broadening the perspective, we now have to ask ourselves: what is to be debordered through Husserl's emphasis on the debordering quality of the truth of protention and retention, if we are to come closer to the possibility of genuine openness to the other in pristine hospitality?

We should deborder love of God, because it requires prior hateful recollections of the earthly misfortunes and uncertainties, as well as hateful expectation of the perilous coming of devil's disciples. On the other hand, however, we should also deborder the modern love of humanity, because the condition of its possibility is its prior hateful recollection and reaction to the wrongdoings of the one's with the love of god. And, further on, we should also deborder the expectation that we are to love the wretched fugitives, because this expectation is smeared with the hateful recollection of the inhumane wrongdoings of sceptic ignorant nationalists around us.

A true openness to the other in his troubled coming requires a debordering of all these borders: love of god, love of humanity, love of expectation of love. Debordering needs borders to deborder: and the true culprits guilty of setting up borders between me and you and me and them lie in the heart of the faculty of memory and expectation.

In the sentiment toward the other lurks a sentiment against some other other. In fewer words: our sentiment is soaked in resentment. This is not to say that resentment should be cured by clinical psychology, or that it is some kind of a character flaw. It should be addressed philosophically, as was done so magnificently by Nietzsche. Resentment, as shown above, has a very long history. It is embedded in all the greatest cultural movements of our cultural history. Be it Platonic, be it Christian, or modern socialist. Whether we like it or not, we have been

long taught that to love life is to hatefully escape some specific form of life, burning vividly in our memory and disappointed expectation. The hospitable and the inhospitable are all defined by expectations, be they positive or negative. And expectations of both are bordered by the recollections of the wrongdoing of all possible kinds.¹¹

A difficult task indeed, to deborder borders. Relieve sentiment of resentment. Yet the task is not impossible. The futural aspect in expectation is bordered through recollection. If we are to draw nearer the possibility of pure sentiment of hospitality, we are obliged to think toward the possibility of pure futurity, relieved from the (expected) past: sentiment beyond calculation. Not as nolongerness, but as notyteness of notyteness, as pure futurity without the past, and beyond the future to be expected.

Therein lies the possibility of the most vivid and lively possible hospitality as conviviality: the joyful being with others, in the temporal and existential mode *prior to* calculative, expectational, recollectional mode of being. Put in Husserl's terms: protention as the notyteness of the present moment; or in Heidegger's terms: the presencing of presence.

And we have a name reserved for this pure futural mode of being and co-being, which is the affective primary openness of the human being: joviality. If we *are* time, can we be the movedness of joviality as pure futurity? Of our-selves, others and the world?

Indeed, we can. We only need to draw attention to a highly rewarding English verb "to pop", which hints heavily in the desired direction: butterfly popping along, friend popping in, a mouse popping out of the shirt pocket, the popping up of a giant elephant from the children's pop-up book, a toast popping up from the pop-up toaster, a flower popping open, people popping up, the world popping open, myself

¹¹ That the power of resentment is truly tremendous, we only need to look more closely at the present situation: when faced with the arrival of the wretched fugitives, those in the sentiment of complete openness to the fugitives betray a resentment against the conservative distrustful. On the other side, the sentiment of the inhospitable ones betrays a resentment against some weird phantom called the elite, which has an evil design to destroy our good old national substance.

popping up in the popping up of others – in the con-vivial, merry conviviality, always necessarily – popping up.

Can we now perhaps understand better what it means *to be on the spur of the moment*? Or better put, what it means to *be* the spur of the moment? We know what a spur is: a short spike attached to the heel of a rider's boot, used to urge a horse forward. Being on the spur of the moment of objectivity, through protention and its not yet now, incites the spur of our being in primordial openness, *prior* to any expectations, as the unexpected itself.

The revealing, the giving, presenting of the not yet now, the protentional character of time is the revealing of our mode of being as joy, fundamental joviality: the notyetness of the other, the notyetness of the world, the notyetness of me, but beyond expectation, as the unexpected, as the always surprising, in the groundless surprise of the presenting of present.

This is the story of being joviality, which is the truth of time as coming, as the vivacity of the notyetness, as primary futurity. It is about being on the trace of the best possible hospitality, of embracing the other in his/her/their surprise-ful *notyetness*.

But our culture, as we all know, and as Nietzsche has shown bluntly and patently enough, has for millennia been looking back as well as ahead into the *nolongerness* of being and time. Into death, decay, destruction, be it natural or cultural, be it past or future, the dark side of time and being. From whence the prevalence of fear and anxiety not only in philosophy, but also in our very everyday way of *being*.

In and through hospitality towards the fugitives, our *first* impulse and instinct still whispers in our ears: they are coming, they are different, we will *no longer* be what we are, we will *no longer* have what we own; they are bringing *nolongerness* itself.

What does this slightest, yet almightiest shift from retention to protention bring about? What does this commotion in the truth of time invite into our very midst? The shift in the truth of our being?

Perhaps turning our soul's face from anxiously looking into *nolongerness* to looking into *notyetness*, here only provisionally advocated in philosophical terms, might contribute its tiny little gift to the renaiss-

sance of groundless jovial conviviality. Perhaps. Who knows, and only time will tell.

The truth of time as pure futurity, advocated here, is not something new. We have great role-models in our culture, who live the same and advise the same: Dionysus with his rushing through being and Jesus with his blushing rushing in love. They both deborder borders: the one with joviality as conviviality, the other with love as *amortisation totale*.

In these wretched times of growing homelessness, it is our primary philosophical duty to attentively lend our ears to what pops open amid the present moment. The present contribution starts and ends in this ungraspable midst. May the wretched times come back to its fathomless roots, which can be grasped only as the purest possible hospitality, shining forth from under the edges of all borders imaginable. Undoubtedly, this essay is but a provisional and improvised attempt at uncovering the primordial temporal and ontological magic of existence. Yet, is not improvisation in this sense the best virtue possible? As the genuine *im-provisus*, as the unexpectedly unforeseeable of time, being and conviviality?

B i b l i o g r a p h y

1. Aristotle. *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.
2. Coriando, Paola L. *Affektenlehre und Phänomenologie der Stimmungen*. Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 2002.
3. Derrida, Jacques. *Given Time: I. Counterfit Money*. Chicago and London: Chicago University Press, 1992.
4. Derrida, Jacques. *Speech and Phenomena*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973.
5. Derrida, Jacques. *Writing and Difference*. London and New York: Routledge, 2002.
6. Derrida, Jacques. *Edmund Husserl's Origin of Geometry: An Introduction*. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1962.
7. Descartes, René. *Meditations on First Philosophy*. New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1951.
8. Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1962.

9. Husserl, Edmund. *Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1964.
10. Kant, Immanuel. *Critique of Judgement*. London: Macmillan & Co, Ltd, 1914.
11. Micali, Stefano. *Überschüsse der Erfahrung: Grenzdimensionen des Ich nach Husserl*. Dordrecht: Springer, 2008.
12. Scheler, Max. *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values: A New Attempt toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973.