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The Life of the Transcendental “I” in Husserl’s *C-Manuscripts*

1. Introduction

In this text, we are concerned with exploring the life of the transcendental “I” as a specific synthetic connection in Husserl’s late phenomenology, more specifically in the form it took in the investigations of the so-called *C-Manuscripts*.¹ The life of consciousness is not exhausted, in particular, mental experiences alone. The pure “I” is not a mere moment of mental experience, but mental experiences are its performance (*Vollzug*), and it is through the mental experiences that the “I” focuses the ray of consciousness on the object. At the same time, mental experiences are the medium in which the “I” lives.² In the stream of mental experiences, the immanent stream of the ego’s life is constituted. I live, for example, in the mental experience of seeing a tree. Seeing the tree is not my life, but,

¹ On the shift of the issue from early analyses to *C-Manuscripts*, see the synthetic work of Toine Kortooms, *Phenomenology of Time. Edmund Husserl’s Analysis of Time-Consciousness* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2002).

² Hua 4, 99. Where English translations are not available, we provide our own translation. We work with the *Husserliana* edition and refer to volume and page, so the reader can find the original text. The reader will find full citations in the reference list.

at the same time, I live in seeing, and it is therefore part of the constitution of the immanent stream of my life; it belongs to it as a mental experience that I have (also) lived. Life is not an individual *cogito* but rather an overall, universal *cogito* that unfolds through the individual *cogito* as an ever-evolving total unity.³ This total unity is not a unity of concept under which particular mental experiences are subsumed. No generalities flow in the stream of *cogitationes*; on the contrary, any repeatability as the foundation of the constitution of the general is only constituted in the immanent stream. Life itself takes the form of a stream, centered in the Now, from which it is constantly being born. It is thus a whole that is being continually enriched in further *cogitationes*.⁴ The concept of streaming belongs primarily to the constitutive domain and, in its generality, refers to the retentional-protentional structure known already from early temporal analyses. In our text, we are interested in how the distinctness and unity of these structures of living present, the striving life of the “I” and the stream of mental processes, which constitute the whole of the life of transcendental consciousness, are shown from the perspective of Husserl’s late analyses, that is, primarily the ground of the stream of living present obtained by reduction.⁵

2. Acts and life

When dealing with the transcendental life of consciousness, it must be emphasized that the transcendental level of constitution is, as it were, “inside out” compared to the empirical level, which is closer and more familiar to us. On the level of the empirical experience – at least in the everyday life – as the word itself says, it is enough to experience. By contrast, the transcendental level is difficult to reach, for it requires uncovering the *pure possibilities* of our experience. These possibilities themselves cannot be experienced in the same way as what is made possible by them. The title “(transcendental) life of consciousness” must not be understood empirically as a kind of birth, living, and aging, but, on the

³ Hua 1, 81.

⁴ Hua 1, 81.

⁵ It should be stressed that analyses of the streaming living present fit into the more general problem of the constitution of the intersubjective world. Let us recall that the manuscript with the signature C1 concludes the last, third volume of texts on the *Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity* – see HuaMat 8, 1, note 1. We cannot follow this connection in the limited space of our paper.

contrary, as the ground on which these empirical possibilities are constituted. Transcendental consciousness itself does not age or grow younger; it remains constantly in the Now. However, a movement takes place within it, through which empirical living and aging, and anything in general, reveal themselves in their being.

The transcendental "I", as the pole of mental processes, is not identical with the stream of life. However, the streaming life is a form of being (*Seinsform*) in which only the "I", as the I-pole, acquires its temporal concreteness: "I am in my streaming life, I am, as becomes further obvious, not this streaming life itself; but only in this form of being of streaming life and the abilities, strivings, realizations only related to it, I am who I am".⁶ What is it that I am "not this streaming life itself"? To understand the distinction between the "I" and the stream, it is necessary to consider that the pure "I", as a pole in the stream, does not have a duration, it is unchanging, and it has no distance from itself.⁷ Or rather, it has distance from itself only through the stream of immanent temporality (being) constituted by the I and the multiplicity contained therein, in which it only acquires concreteness, the enduring content of its "who I am".⁸

Life as the "life of the I" (*Ich-Leben*) takes place as a continuity of the efforts of this "I" in its affections and actions in the medium of experience. The pure "I" lives in the stream as the medium of its life.⁹ The "I" itself neither arises nor ceases but is the pole of the changing experiential manifolds in and through which it lives.¹⁰ From the context of life, which has its source in the living presence of the seen, the "I" is interpreted as "at first only the original pole of 'its' life, of its original stream, in which all the unities, which are called existing, show themselves as persisting unities".¹¹ The life of the "I" does not merge with the streaming life of mental processes, with the existence of the mental experience of "I am", which is constituted as an immanent stream. Hence, Husserl speaks of the "I" as the "subject" of consciousness, further explicating the notion of "subject" as the very centering of life as the life of the "I".¹²

Life is not an act; at least it does not fully coincide with any single act-consciousness. An act begins and ends, but the transcendental life

⁶ HuaMat 8, 33.

⁷ Hua 15, 577.

⁸ HuaMat 8, 30.

⁹ Cfr. Hua 4, 102[99].

¹⁰ Hua 4, 102[99] cfr. Hua 15, 577–578.

¹¹ HuaMat 8, 3.

¹² HuaMat 8, 35.

of consciousness does not begin and end. It has its primal life, its origin (*Ursprung*) in the primal streaming of the living present.¹³ Acts have their time, their original Now, or a continuity based on the original Now, which itself fits into the past. Yet the living “I” stands and remains “ever anew” in the living Now and lives in the act-consciousness in ever new acts with their new living present. Against this, the past act sinks continuously further and further into the past.

3. The living present and original life of the transcendental primal “I” (*Ur-Ich*)

What does the constantly repeated “Ur-” in the *C-Manuscript* texts actually mean? Generally speaking, Husserl uses the prefix “Ur-” to denote the unmodified starting point for possible modifications, so that these modifications are themselves non-independent, founded moments that presuppose what they modify. Seen from the level of an *already constituted immanent consciousness*, presence is a non-separate part of the overall structure of the retentional-protentional continuum. It is itself one of the modes of the whole of the appearance of time. Nevertheless, the living present in its core, that is, in the original continuity of intentional modifications, in the original streaming, is always a new starting point for the constitution of immanent time. In this sense, as admittedly non-independent in the overall structure of constituted immanent time but, at the same time, always a new starting point for all further constitution, the level of living present is a primal mode (*Urmodus*).

This characterization is confirmed when Husserl says that the living or also original present (*urtümliche Gegenwart*)¹⁴ is the core of the life of consciousness in the sense that all higher constituted formations are grounded in it.¹⁵ As Husserl points out, the living present is a present in the improper (*uneigentlich*) sense.¹⁶ Husserl makes this clear with respect to the being of the living present; it is not a stable piece (*Zwischen-*

¹³ HuaMat 8, 3.

¹⁴ Husserl uses different titles for this initial constitutive core according to the way in which he takes it into account: living presence, *nunc stans*, standing-flowing presence. Cfr. John Brough, “Some Reflections on Time and the Ego in Husserl’s Late Texts on Time-Consciousness”, *Quaestiones Disputatae* 7(1) (2016): 89–108.

¹⁵ HuaMat 8, 4.

¹⁶ HuaMat 8, 6.

stück) between the past and the future.¹⁷ In its totality (with all its components), the living present is the original perception itself, in which what is conscious is conscious in its originality.¹⁸

Husserl starts from the insight that the original givenness in which all other phenomena of the experienced world are constituted is the original phenomenon of the streaming (*Urphänomen des Strömens*).¹⁹ In this sense, the original stream is the "phenomenon of all phenomena".²⁰ This original stream is, according to Husserl, the ultimate origin (*Ursprung*) of the spatiotemporal world.²¹ In the original stream, a living present is constituted as the present of the living transcendental "I".²²

Let us start with the problem of living present from this characterization: "Its [the living present's] fundamental essence is to constitute itself as the *nunc stans* of a unified stream through an anonymous continuity of intentional modifications of a primal mode, which itself is not solid but streaming. In this streaming, a lasting and remaining primal Now [*Ur-Jetzt*] is constituted as a solid form for a content streaming through and as the primal source point of all constituted modifications".²³

Let us first note the paradox contained in the first sentence: the essence of living present is to constitute itself as lasting now, *nunc stans*. The reflexive pronoun "self" (*sich*) indicates that the living present as *nunc stans* is not the result of any prior acts of consciousness distinct from itself in which it is constituted. On the contrary, the living present is that original "act" of consciousness in which it constitutes itself as lasting now, *nunc stans*. This original "act", which is really no act at all insofar as any act already presupposes temporal syntheses, is precisely the streaming of the original streaming present.

How does this constitution of the living present as lasting now take place? As a form of being, we can capture the original present in general as follows: "streaming and consuming itself in the streaming, and

¹⁷ HuaMat 8, 6.

¹⁸ HuaMat 8, 6–7. With respect to the *Bernau manuscripts*, we can cite Husserl's standard example of the perception of a just-sounding tone: "An event, let's say a sounding of the tone, continues vividly, it takes place as a living present" (Hua 33, 140). In a later deepening in the form of an apodictic reduction, Husserl more strictly distinguishes presence in the "narrower sense" (Hua 8, 117), which alone is apodictically given.

¹⁹ HuaMat 8, 1.

²⁰ HuaMat 8, 1.

²¹ HuaMat 8, 4.

²² HuaMat 8, 4.

²³ HuaMat 8, 8.

yet always present again". The "lasting" of the lasting now is constituted in the streaming, so that in the flowing away we have "always a new present"²⁴ and with it always a new streaming. This streaming is "always again" centered in the new presence. This "always present and always again present" in the streaming is constituted as lasting now.²⁵ So "lasting" is not really lasting at all, if what is meant by lasting is the persistence of a thing identical with itself.

As Husserl says, to constitute itself as *nunc stans* is the fundamental essence (*Grundwesen*) of living present. What does "fundamental" mean here? Husserl does not make this clear, but we can find some hint in the preceding sentence: "It [living streaming present] has a wonderful structure to be followed in different directions, especially the one that characterizes it as streaming".²⁶ With this sentence in mind, we interpret the fundamentality of *nunc stans* to mean that it is the lasting now of the unified streaming that gives rise to the "various directions"²⁷ within its structure that can be traced. The reference to the inner richness, the "different directions" within the structure of the living present, is important in terms of the recognition that in the text we are currently following, Husserl is focusing primarily on that feature of the constitution of the lasting now, leaving other features aside. The title *living present* denotes a constitutive level, not a particular structural moment. It cannot be identified with original impression, for example, although original impression is its prominent moment.

The lasting now is constituted in the stream in the form of "present and always present again".²⁸ However, this "always again" cannot have the sense of repetition. For the "new" present is not a repetition of the old, already past present. The more original is the original streaming, not the original present as a unity in the sense of lasting now. How to understand this paradoxical, pre-temporal originality of the original streaming? In order to understand this paradox, we need to take into account the specificity of a time-constituting consciousness that is not

²⁴ HuaMat 8, 6.

²⁵ In his now classic work, Klaus Held, referring to Aristotle's *Physics*, 217b30nn., says that Husserl stands in the tradition of the distinction of the two-fold "now" (Klaus Held, „Lebendige Gegenwart“. *Die Frage nach der Seinsweise des transzendentalen Ich bei Edmund Husserl, entwickelt am Leitfaden der Zeitproblematik* (Köln: Un., 1963), 45. Aristotle distinguishes between the now that "always remains one" and the now that is "always other and other" (*Physics*, 218a9–10).

²⁶ HuaMat 8, 7–8.

²⁷ HuaMat 8, 7.

²⁸ HuaMat 8, 6.

itself in time. The original impression cannot be understood as a unity in time that is followed by another original impression. For this would require us to assume an already established temporal context in which this alternation of original impressions in the sense of "first" and "second" takes place. The paradox that belongs to temporal consciousness is precisely that it is the original impression that serves as the boundary in which any temporal context (before–now–after) is constituted.²⁹ The difference contained in the original streaming is not temporal: "The primal transformation is, speaking absolutely, in no time, which originates very first in it".³⁰ The living present as a form has no extension. We find extension only in the immanent stream, in which it is possible to distinguish the earlier and the later: "basically, primal time [*Urzeit*] is not yet time in earnest, but only a preliminary stage of time as a form of coexistence".³¹

We can state the problem that is contained in the relation between an original change that is not in time and time itself in the form of an aporia: if there were a time lag between one impressional Now and the next impressional Now, some time would have passed, which would mean that this elapsed time is Now again, and we would go on like this indefinitely. If, on the other hand, there were no time lag between one Now and the next Now, we would still be in one Now, and there would be no time.³² The basis of the aporia is the confusion of the constitutive levels – namely, the level of the original streaming and the constituted immanent stream. Implicit in the question of how one Now relates to the other is the naive assumption of a plurality of Nows. The naiveté of this assumption stems from the fact that it takes the sense of already objectified time in the form of a succession of moments and transfers this

²⁹ Let us recall that the basic operation that makes the ground of temporal consciousness accessible is the suspension of objective time. That is to say, the suspension of the assumption of an objective temporal context, which makes it possible to make this context a problem. It makes it possible to ask meaningfully the question about the constitution of temporal succession.

³⁰ *HuaMat* 8, 12.

³¹ *HuaMat* 8, 117.

³² Aporia which relates to the present is already observed by Aristotle, cfr. *Physics*, especially 218a10–25. Aristotle does not ask about the constitution of temporal determinations in transcendental consciousness. Hence – namely, from Husserl's claim to clarify subjective acts in which objectivities are yet to be constituted – we can understand Klaus Held's thesis that, in contrast to Aristotle and the tradition based on him, Husserl overcomes this issue and that the living present is for him "a title for an area of philosophical experience to be reconsidered" (Held, *Lebendige Gegenwart*, 44).

sense to the level of the constitution of temporal consciousness. Against this naiveté, Husserl shows that the temporal level with the plurality of Nows is not original. Now itself as a streaming is already a differentiation through which only identity and multiplicity, a relation to the same thing in the multiplicity of temporal modes³³ can be constituted. What also belongs to this differentiation is the lasting of the lasting now and the streaming of contents, in which again the streaming of Now as just-being, etc., is constituted.

The “lasting” of the solid (*starr*) form of the Now,³⁴ *nunc stans*, is already itself in the original streaming. In what sense? Let us recall that the original phenomenon of streaming includes the paradoxical “always again present”, which is not a repetition, since the living Now as living does not repeat itself. The Now that has passed cannot return again, except as a reproduced past Now, but not as a living perceptual Now. Yet, the standing solid form of the Now (“Now and ever-again Now”) belongs to the constitution of the living perceptual Now in its livingness. The ever-returning and yet non-repeating original streaming in the form of “always present again” is precisely the “lasting” of the lasting now. In terms of the problem of life, let us add that this original streaming is identified by Husserl with the original life of the primal I,³⁵ out of which all life in the sense of coming into being and passing away is yet to be born. The passage from Now to the new Now carries with it an original livingness (*Urlebendigkeit*),³⁶ so that in the streaming we have

³³ Cfr. HuaMat 8, 9.

³⁴ Why is the fixed form of the original Now constituted “once and for all” and not itself subject to further constitutive modifications? In other words, what is the solidity (*Starrheit*) of the form of the original Now? Perhaps the answer to this question will become clear by means of the following contrast to the constitution of habitualities. The constitution of the solid form of the living original Now differs from the constitution of habitualities in part because the constitution of habitualities takes place on the level of contents, whereas the constitution of form occurs before the distinction between form and content of the stream. This form as form does not yet carry within itself any richness of contents. It is clear from this that the constituted solid form of Now is no longer subject to further modifications or changes. In contrast, habitual sediments are open to such changes. I can, for example, unlearn something, or relearn, or finally forget something already learned, even though that original sedimented core can eventually be revived again.

³⁵ HuaMat 8, 4.

³⁶ HuaMat 8, 49; cfr. Hua 33, 69.

both a retentional sinking in, so to speak, of the content and, at the same time, a continual renewal of living present.³⁷

The paradox of the original streaming, in which the Now is constantly returning in the differentiation of the lasting Now and the constantly new streaming Now, is understandable from the fact that the impressional Now is the limit in relation to which all temporal relations (now–past–future, etc.) are only being constituted. Consciousness cannot cross the boundary that is Now, since any givenness already presupposes the focusing of the ray of sight from Now. Yet, this paradox is intelligible: the “always again”, which belongs, so to speak, to the livingness of the living present, is not a repetition of a concept in which everything is already included beforehand. The “always again” of the living present includes the “for the first and last time” before all repetition. This “for the first and last time”, which belongs to the bringing into being of life, escapes every conceptual subsumption.

It is necessary to distinguish the streaming living present from the immanent constituted stream, in which the relations of succession and precedence are already constituted: “This streaming living present is not what we otherwise also already transcendental-phenomenologically called stream of consciousness or stream of mental processes. It is not a ‘stream’ at all according to the picture, thus an actual temporal (or even temporal-spatial) whole, which has a continuously successive individual existence in the unity of a temporal extension (individuated in its distinguishable stretches and phases by these time forms)”.³⁸ The original streaming of living present is not itself in time. In fact, it does not have the form of extension or continuity, for that would presuppose already a temporal extension. However, according to Husserl, this talk of the continuous being of the original present is unavoidable. This is, he says, “only because” something of this original phenomenal streaming “enters into the stream in the usual sense”.³⁹ What enters into the stream from the primal-phenomenal streaming? Inevitably, that which is con-

³⁷ We cannot trace here in detail the connection with Husserl's earlier investigations, especially the relation of the absolute stream of consciousness to the original streaming. For a more consistent approach to this issue, cfr. Stefan Gerlach, “Ist das Bewusstsein mit sich und seinen Gegenständen zugleich? Zu Husserls Modifikation der Zeittheorie um 1909”, *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 67(3) (2013): 423.

³⁸ Hua 34, 187; cfr. Hua 9, 310. I adopt here the translation by James Mensch, *Husserl's account of our consciousness of time* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2010), 127.

³⁹ Hua 34, 187.

stitutive of the immanent stream. This is precisely the form of the original streaming, “presence and always again presence”.

4. Transcendence of immanent time

We have seen that in the constitution of the solid form of the Now of the living present, the determination “Now” does not yet have a temporal sense as an intermediate point standing between the past and the present.⁴⁰ It is only in the sinking in of the living Now, in its continuous modification (“just been”, etc.), that the relevant Now is constituted as identifiable, namely, as identifiable in the streaming. Each streaming phase of the Now in which the duration of something appears has its time-point (*Zeitpunkt*), which is distinguishable from other constituted time-points.⁴¹ On the original constitutive level of the streaming of the living present, in the pulsation of life, the relevant act-unity is only born – for example, hearing a tone or perceiving (immanent) sadness or joy. Only retrospectively, as an already constituted whole or part of a temporal extent, is this act as a unity identifiable; namely, as a lived experience that has its own temporal extent with constituted time-points. Time-points provide the foundation for retrospective reidentification in the order of earlier and later.⁴²

The constitution of time-points makes it possible to distinguish the individual streaming Now. In the case of the original present as a form of Now, it is not possible to distinguish individual impressions; this is only possible retrospectively, from the constituted individuation of contents in time-points. In the time-points, which are themselves located in the stream and always sinking in the past according to the successive order, the events of transcendental life are individuated. It is only here, in the constitution of the individual events of the stream, that we arrive at the other side of the aporia of the distinguishability of the individual temporal Nows, which we have mentioned: in the constitution of time-points, we have the plurality of Nows, thanks to which we can distinguish individual moments in temporal relations to one another. From the point of view of the problem of life, let us add that even the continuity of the phenomena of the duration of a thing is characterized by its livingness. For the presence of an enduring thing is not itself already

⁴⁰ HuaMat 8, 6.

⁴¹ Cfr. especially HuaMat 8, 9 and 30.

⁴² HuaMat 8, 9.

finished, as Husserl says, a dead existence (*totes Dasein*), but includes an original life, an original fact of alteration,⁴³ which we already know in the form of "present and always present again".

Having shown that the stream of the living present includes the connection of streaming towards (*Zuströmen*), streaming (*Verströmen*), and streaming away (*Abströmen*), Husserl continues in the next paragraph: "We have here also the present, past, and future, we have a 'stream of consciousness' – but the 'living streaming present' is not a stream of consciousness. In the living streaming present, a memory of the present can occur, and 'I' can construct a unity of time as time of lived experiences, acts, etc."⁴⁴ How do we understand that in the streaming of the living present we have a "stream of consciousness" and that at the same time the living present is not a stream of consciousness? What distinction is meant here?

On the foundation of temporal loci (*Zeitstellen*) in the immanent stream, the possibility of representation is constituted, in which the respective temporal unity of the past life is reproduced as repeatable (and always repeatable again). Against this, the stream of living present is characterized by Husserl as pre-temporally pre-existent, as Husserl says in another text from the same period:⁴⁵ "Constituting activity, however, presupposes passive time-constitution, and we are led back to such a passive constitution, which already carries temporality in itself as pre-temporal, pre-being".⁴⁶ In the individuation of the identifiable and the reidentifiable, the immanent stream as being is constituted.⁴⁷ In this constitution of past life as being in the form of immanent time with its before–after temporal relations, life transcends itself.⁴⁸ The stream of consciousness, consciousness as a stream, shows itself in the present–past–future connection, and this connection transcends the centering of the living present. The transcendence in which the continuity of the immanent stream is constituted is called by Husserl the first transcendence (*erste Transzendenz*) and is distinguished from the second transcendence

⁴³ HuaMat 8, 79.

⁴⁴ HuaMat 8, 12.

⁴⁵ It is a manuscript with the signature B III 3, dated January 1931.

⁴⁶ Hua 39, 470.

⁴⁷ Cfr. "now, for me, 'being' means in general that which can be brought back to temporalization from explicitly constituted being, in my free 'I can' and 'can again and again'" (Hua 39, 470–471).

⁴⁸ Hua 34, 171.

(*zweite Transzendenz*), in which the sense of the worldly present (*weltliche Gegenwart*) is constituted.⁴⁹

The constitution of the first transcendence, namely, the transcendence of the immanent stream, occurs only in representation. Let us recall here that this transcendence in its structure presupposes the living presence. In the immanent stream, my past presence is constituted as distinct from my living presence. The representation itself is a spontaneity that is founded in the unfolding of the living streaming presence. Transcendence must appear *as transcendence* again, that is, as a presence already lived or yet to be lived. Representation is itself in the Now, it has the structure of “I perceive that I am representing” (remembering or anticipating). The “I” relates to itself as past in the transcendence of immanent time, in which it also has its content, its “who I am” and, at the same time, the anticipation of its “who I will be”.⁵⁰

5. The second transcendence and living in the world as a striving life

Considering the problem of the second transcendence (that is, the transcendence of the world), let us first note the analogy that governs the whole constitutive structure.⁵¹ Just as the “I” relates to the object poles and to itself in the medium of immanent time as an immanent temporal unity constituted in the transcendence of the living original present – the “someone” constituted by the life already lived – so in the transcendence of the world, the “I” relates to the object poles as transcendent unities and encounters itself as a transcendence of the “person in the world”. In this sense, the stream of living in the world passes through the transcendental life of consciousness.⁵² If we follow further the analogical constitution of the world, we can see that every “here” is a zero point that functions as the centering of the surrounding world for my

⁴⁹ Hua 34, 170.

⁵⁰ Husserl’s analyses from the early twenties already deal with this issue (cfr. especially Hua 11, 204–206).

⁵¹ A consistent analogy in the constitutive construction of consciousness has already been demonstrated by Alwin Diemer, *Edmund Husserl: Versuch einer systematischen Darstellung seiner Phänomenologie* (Meisenheim am Glan: Anton Haim, 1965), 169ff. He understood the constitutive structure as a parallelism of formal-ontological structures in different domains of being, that is, in different material ontologies.

⁵² Hua 34, 171.

living body. However, this centering is only possible through centering in the living present, the living Now, which is the foundation for the establishment of the relations of "before" and "after". It is on this foundation of the stream of immanent life with its temporal order of the represented past and future that the world is only constituted in unities of repetition as an overall continuum of "from where – to where".⁵³ In this sense, every "from where – to where" in the world already contains within itself the living present and the already lived immanence of the past and the expectation of the future. Every movement in the world takes place in the medium of life, the "I", so to speak, "pays" for its freedom to act in the world by falling into time (*Verzeitlichung*), and this temporalization again determines "who" this "I" is. From here, from tracing the streaming ground of the living present to the transcendence of the world, it is understandable that and in what sense the world is a lived world (*Lebenswelt*) and life is a life in the world (*Weltleben*).⁵⁴

Here, we come to the structure of that "originally I am living", which we highlighted at the beginning. Most primordially, the "I" does not live in the immanence of past and future consciousness but lives in the transcendence of the world, in the form of living-in-the-world (*In-der-Welt-Leben*).⁵⁵ How are these two levels, the immanent life and the life of the "I" in the world, related to each other in the constitution of consciousness? The pure "I" lives as the "I" of affections and actions that do not primarily take place in immanence but are related to the field of the world (*Weltfeld*). We are already aware of the distinction between the "I" as a pole and mental experiences, or the stream of mental processes. In the concrete living, Husserl expresses this difference by saying that lived experiences are the performance (*Vollzug*) of the pure "I".

On the one hand, the pure "I" lives through mental experiences; on the other hand, through mental experiences it focuses the ray of intentional consciousness on objects.⁵⁶ We have already seen that mental ex-

⁵³ We cannot pursue here in detail the problem of the constitution of the world in the transcendental exercise of protodoxa. We consider it crucial that the transcendental thesis of the world already presupposes the constitution of immanent temporality. And this serves as the foundation on which a form of coextension with repeatabilities in the sense of "here I am", "here I have already been", and "here I will go" can only be constituted.

⁵⁴ On this interplay between *Lebenswelt* and *Weltleben*, see Jarosław Rólewski, "Husserl's conception of the lifeworld (*Lebenswelt*)", *Ruch Filozoficzny* 73(3) (2018): 183.

⁵⁵ *HuaMat* 8, 16 and 229.

⁵⁶ *Hua* 4, 97.

periences themselves, together with the corresponding “I”, are individuated in the immanent stream through the constitution of temporal loci. However, the “I” as a pole is not focused on this immanent life; rather, it lives its life in the world through this immanent life: “Through the whole immanent life, as far as it is at all overlookable for me, goes the stream of world-experiencing life”.⁵⁷

The focusing of the ray of consciousness on the intentional object is not exhausted in a separate intentional experience, but the very living through mental experiences is transcended in the higher whole of striving life (*strebendes Leben*) in all its modifications.⁵⁸ The whole of the life of the “I” is thus not made up of individual mental experiences in the form of a stream of consciousness but is internally interconnected by a higher synthetic unity of the “I” striving in the modes of affections and actions on the level of the world. The striving life is not a fixed unity; it is itself changing in its goals and systems of goals.⁵⁹ Life is primarily focused on the becoming of life.⁶⁰

The striving life in the world includes a substantial finitization (*Verendlichung*) in the sense that every effort is directed towards a goal, and every goal becomes itself the starting point for further striving. For no reaching of the goal is the last, it is only a relative standstill.⁶¹ The striving life, then, has essentially the structure of means and ends. Within this structure, the individual relative ends change, but the structure itself remains unchanged. Finitization, then, does not imply that there is a final, ultimate end; rather, it belongs to the structure of striving living that some final, ultimate end never occurs.⁶²

⁵⁷ Hua 34, 171.

⁵⁸ HuaMat 8, 35.

⁵⁹ The context in which emotional and evaluative performances are constituted in the immanent stream is explored by Kristina Montag, *Transzendente Genesis des Bewusstseins und der Erkenntnis: Studie zum Konstitutionsprozess in der Phänomenologie von Edmund Husserl durch wertende und synthetische Bewusstseinsleistungen* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2013).

⁶⁰ HuaMat 8, 19.

⁶¹ HuaMat 8, 19.

⁶² Husserl places the striving life in the problem of universal teleology, which runs through all layers of constitution (cfr. Hua 17, § 60). What belongs to the life of the I is essentially not only “my unhappy, untrue and contradictory existence, facticity” but also “the idea of my true being” (HuaMat 8, 18). Thus, for Husserl, the life of the I is essentially an ethical life (*ethisches Leben*) (HuaMat 8, 39). This issue would take us too far from the main topic. We will only point here to the fact that Husserl, in the context of the opposition of facticity and true being, interprets the *unum-bonum-verum* transcendentals as infinitely

In relation to the immanent stream of *cogitationes*, however, the question now arises: how, seen in the overall context of the constitution, is the continuity of the striving life transcending individual experiences temporalized? Moreover, in relation to the structuring of means and ends that we have just observed, how does this structure belong to the temporalization of individual experiences? To answer these questions, we need to pursue the issue of the pure "I", which through intentional experiences focuses rays on objects in the world. According to Husserl, these rays are themselves internally structured in bundles (*Strahlenbündel*). The ray bundles have one main, controlling ray, in which the "I" focuses on the main object, or target.⁶³ This main ray, however, contains within itself several subordinate rays. From this complication of rays structured into bundles, we can understand that the individual mental experience itself, as part of a more complicated unity in the stream, is transcended by higher experiential unities. Likewise, we can see that the controlling ray and subsidiary or subordinate rays are foundational for the structure of mental experiences in terms of means and ends.

Returning now to the problem of the living present and immanent stream, another question arises: how does a striving life structured in a bundle of mental experiences belong to the life of the pure "I" and to the living present? It seems to belong to the striving life essentially in that we have a governing intentionality in it, which transcends the living present. For we already know that the living present is limited in its range: the retentional and protentional continua emanating from the source point of originary impression end in the dark horizon.⁶⁴ The main ray may cross in its focus the range of visibility from the living present. How then is it thinkable that this main ray belongs to the living present after all, even though it also transcends this living presence in its range?

Let us look at the particular phenomenon of the striving life. I am on my way to the library, so I live in the guiding intention of this decision, to which all other activities are subordinate. The variability of the journey is constituted in the stream of perceptual manifolds centered in the living Now. On the level of the second transcendence, this corresponds to the stream of the givenness of the world⁶⁵ in the constituted

distant poles, which, however, being poles, are components of the transcendental constitution (Hua 37, 375; cfr. HuaMat 8, 19–20).

⁶³ HuaMat 8, 45.

⁶⁴ Hua 34, 168.

⁶⁵ Cfr. HuaMat 8, 50.

fixed form of spacetime⁶⁶ centered around my Here as my perceptual environment on the journey.⁶⁷ However, this main destination surpasses the horizon of the living present; the journey to the library takes perhaps half an hour. The goal is not given in the flesh, it is available to me only in representation, and yet it guides my actions in the living present. I do not have to think thematically about the destination during my journey at all because I live in a decision that illuminates all the activities that I am carrying out. Still, in my living present, the presence of my destination can come up again when I remind myself of where I am actually going. In this representation, I have transcended the living present to the order of immanent time (I am here now, I will be there in the moment when I finally reach the library). Recall the analogical context of memory: “In the living streaming present, a memory of the present can occur, and ‘I’ can construct a unity of time as time of lived experiences, acts, etc.”⁶⁸

We can somehow see from the other side of the constituted world that the transcendence of the living present belongs to it essentially. This is because the total form that passes through the constitution of time-consciousness is the form of the living “I” of affections and actions that lives in interests and striving on the ground of the world. In this sense, the intentionality of reproduction is as original as the intentionality of perception. The form of centering in the living Now founds the structuring of the means and ends within the bundle of intentional rays. Each new Now is an opportunity either to further advance towards the goal

⁶⁶ HuaMat 8, 66.

⁶⁷ In this example, we would have to distinguish between primary rays and acts, that is, those that belong to the realization of the main goal, and secondary rays and acts that do not belong to the main goal. In this distinction, a variation of attention in different directions is imaginable. For example, I may perform extraneous activities on the way to the goal, which are then experienced as procrastinating or delaying, and the extreme would be abandoning the main goal altogether and focusing on a completely different goal (for example, instead of going to the library, I decide to go to the pub halfway through). Further, within the main intention, there may be variations of rhythmization from a leisurely walk to a hurry, whereby the hurrying would be dominated by a focus on the main goal, while the more relaxed walk would be far more likely to bring out secondary intentions. Again, in this second distinction, we have a variety of other modalities. For example, I may go to borrow a particular book and think all the way about its topic, so that I hardly notice my surroundings, etc. In any case, these distinctions allow us to better understand that different rhythms of acts belong to the living present and its transcendence.

⁶⁸ HuaMat 8, 12.

or to modify or completely abolish the original aim. The life of the "I" in the world as striving is grounded in the constitutive original present, and, at the same time, the life transcends itself in the constitution of immanent temporal consciousness: "my primal streaming present (streaming as a primal phenomenon) carries essentially within itself transcending life, representing life".⁶⁹

Is there a unity of the life of consciousness as a constitution of the immanent stream and of life as the living of the "I" also in the sense that the constitutive temporalization itself, taken as a form with streaming hyletic contents, is a unity of striving and interest? We have seen that the "I" is not focused on the constitution of the immanent stream in its living. The temporalization in which the immanent stream is constituted takes place at the level of the passive constitution, it is not the primary concern of the "I"; in the constitution of immanence, the experiences are only just being incorporated into the total immanent life. However, if we interpret this original passivity of temporalization as instinctive intentionality, as originally occurring striving without the involvement of the "I", we can say that even original temporal syntheses are striving. This is precisely the step that Husserl takes in his later analyses. This is particularly apparent in the manuscript from September 1933, where Husserl says that in his old doctrine of the inner consciousness of time, he did not understand the intentionality of retention and protention as egoic in terms of volitional intentionality in the broadest sense. Moreover, he adds that he later introduced this volitional intentionality into temporal analyses as founded in ego-less passivity.⁷⁰

6. Conclusion

The observed connection between living of the transcendental "I" through mental experiences and experiential life could be summarized by saying that life is life through and through. The striving life of the "I" lives through the constitution of an immanent stream of mental ex-

⁶⁹ Hua 34, 171.

⁷⁰ Hua 15, 594–595. Already in the Bernau manuscripts, Husserl speaks of a foundational layer of unconscious or pre-conscious affections and drives (Hua 33, 275–276). This issue of instinctive intentionality as the foundation of temporal syntheses cannot be dealt with here. For a more comprehensive interpretation, cfr. James Mensch, *Husserl's account of our consciousness of time* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2010), 244; James Mensch, "Husserl's Concept of the Future", *Husserl Studies* 16 (1999): 41–64.

periences, in which this striving life has its past and future dimensions. Mental experiences are not merely individual intentional experiences but belong to the whole life of a concrete subjectivity, to its system of interests and goals. All this interpenetration, which Husserl describes as the passing of the stream of world-experiencing life through the immanent life,⁷¹ is founded in a living original stream in which it has its livingness and, as the life of the “I”, its self-centering.

The transcendental “I” lives in actions and affections as the pole of mental processes. Life is not a single action or affection but a whole where all mental experiences in which the “I” lives are unified. Seen with respect to the whole of life, the structure of “I live in *cogito*” is remarkable in that the opposition of passivity and activity is accomplished by a synthetic connection of life that is not carried out by the “I” but that takes place in the constitution of an open whole of the stream of *cogitationes*. This synthesis is characterized by passivity in the sense that it is not a performance of the “I”.⁷² Life happens to me, and I live it at the same time. This paradoxical passivity of life in the activity and passivity of the ego’s performances is expressed succinctly in Husserl’s idea of the living of the “I” as immersing oneself (*Hineinleben*) into the world. The “I”, in its activities and passivities, engages in the world – namely, engages itself. The overall context that arises from this, however active the “I” may be in it, is already rather something that happens to the “I” in the world. Consider the phenomenon of a violent quarrel, in which the “I” is somehow both vigorously active and yet passively captured in a struggle with the other. The “I” is fully engaged in this struggle, and yet, at the same time, it finds itself in the passivity of self-forgetting, in immersion in this particular situation. The “I” lives in individual mental experiences, but, at the same time, it is able to overlook (*Überschauen*) the contexts of its life and to live with respect to them. Hence, from this context of living with respect to the open whole of living, it is intelligible that Husserl can speak of the life of consciousness as a universal *cogito*, and, at the same time, as a universal *cogitatum*.⁷³ After our interpretation, we can already see that the constitution of this universal *cogitatum* essentially involves the transcendence of the living present in which the immanent stream is constituted.

⁷¹ Hua 34, 171.

⁷² Hua 1, 81.

⁷³ Husserl 1982, 43[81].

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Summary

The following paper traces Husserl's late-time analyses (concentrated especially on the so-called *C-Manuscripts*) in the context of the problem of the life of the transcendental ego. We proceed from the constitutive stage of primal life (*Urleben*), in which the streaming living presence is constituted as lasting now (*nunc stans*). Then, we trace further the structural connections between the constitution of the so-called first transcendence, that is, the transcendence of the immanent stream of consciousness, and the second transcendence, in which life is constituted as living-in-the-world (*In-der-Welt-Leben*). It turns out that the life of the transcendental "I" is of the character of a striving life (*strebendes Leben*) and that the first and second transcendence belong to it essentially.

Keywords: primal life, striving, time, transcendental "I"