Andrea Sipos
Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, Hungary
https://orcid.org/0009-0008-6596-0527
andrea.b.sipos@gmail.com

THE EVENT AND THE PROBLEM OF TIME-CONSCIOUSNESS*

Abstract: The event comes about suddenly and unpredictably, changing everything in our life; afterwards nothing will ever be the same. The time of its arrival can hardly be determined: Once we become aware of the metamorphosis, it has already happened. Although the event opens up a new future for us, it appears as a kind of past, therefore the meaning of the event is only accessible from its own posterity. The event seems to be quite a unique phenomenon with a rather complex temporality. What is the reason for that? In order to reply, we have to look at the different layers of its 'constitution'. If it is true that first we grasp the sense of the event at the level of pure affects (spontaneous understanding) and only then can we find out its meaning through reason (reflection, cognition, interpretation), we have to draw the consequences with regard to time-consciousness in general. Naturally, we use words and expressions (such as metaphors) related to time, space, and movement in order to depict the quality (affectivity, intensity, direction) of our experiences. However, is it legitimate to link the description of phenomena with the dimension of time? This problem has been present since the foundation of phenomenology. Although Husserl puts the world time into brackets, he does not suspend the 'existence' of time as such, hence the notion of time is presupposed, so it is the horizon of time including its continuity and linear movement. I will argue that in the sphere of primordial impressions simply there is no time, as the lived experiences of originally affective nature are not temporal but have intensity. Consequently, to apprehend the temporality of the event, we can say at most that its genesis takes place in an affective 'time', which by contrast is not at all temporal.

Keywords: *phenomenology, event, temporality, time-consciousness, affectivity*

*

© 2026. This work is openly licensed via CC BY-NC 4.0., which enables reusers to distribute, remix, adapt, and build upon the material in any medium or format for noncommercial purposes only, and only so long as attribution is given to the creator. Canonical URL: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/

Andrea Sipos (2026). "The Event and the Problem of Time-consciousness." In M. Nyírő, Zs. Lurcza, P. Makai (eds.): *EVENT and Its Mediation: Interdisciplinary Perspectives in Philosophy, Religious Studies, Literary Studies, and Cultural Theory* (231–246). Miskolc: Miskolc University Press, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. https://doi.org/10.70832/EVENTanditsMediation.11

1. INTRODUCTION

In this article, we are going to explore a specific problem in phenomenology, notably the temporality of the event occurring in our personal life. The phenomenological description of the relationship between event and time presents inherent difficulties, and as we will see, this matter expands and embraces the problem of time-consciousness in general. Although many attempts have already been made to capture and describe the temporality of the event, within the framework of this study we primarily rely on the ideas of Henri Maldiney, Claude Romano, and László Tengelyi. The aforementioned philosophers approach the issue from different angles, such as psychoanalysis, hermeneutics, and phenomenology, hence comparing their thoughts promises to be an exciting endeavour in itself.

What kind of events are we talking about? Within the framework of the so-called evential hermeneutics, Romano examines events that occur in our own lives, such as a decision, a meeting, a serious illness, or grief, but one can also mention birth and death, suffering, and trauma. The event comes about suddenly and unpredictably, it completely disrupts our lives and radically transforms the previously established meaning of the world. In the event, our own ipseity is at stake, in other words, our unique and unrepeatable self is put at risk. In the event, not only some, but all the existential possibilities are reorganized through which we understand our own existence.[1] According to Romano, human beings are inherently exposed to events, moreover, this vulnerability is the first and foremost characteristic of human existence. This is what the concept of the *advenant* expresses: *Advenant* is one with whom anything can happen during its life journey or rather its hermeneutical adventure, who understands itself and the world in the light of events, and who inevitably changes as a consequence of these happenings. Throughout our lives, we encounter numerous events that bring irreversible changes, which cannot be predicted, and therefore one cannot prepare for their arrival. Tengelyi says that through a destinal event, a new meaning unfolds for us that has never been experienced before, which not only disrupts our prior expectations but also creates a radically new beginning in our life-history.[2] The event causes a real crisis situation, in which our self-identity is shaken; this is the moment of alienation from or the split within oneself, which requires the subsequent re-establishment of our self-interpretation.[3] It may also happen that an event breaks into our lives in a dramatic manner and transforms our world completely that we are unable to accept. Such an experience is the trauma. Maldiney analyses the extreme forms of the event, more

1 Claude Romano, *L'événement et le monde* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1998), 44.
2 László Tengelyi, *Élettörténet és sorsesemény* (Budapest: Atlantisz Kiadó, 1998), 38.
3 Ibid., 47.

precisely the psychotic disorders (schizophrenia, mania, and melancholy) in which the entire human existence falls into crisis and collapses. He maintains that the event is an impossibility, or rather a possibility that surpasses all other possibilities *(transpossible)*, yet the fundamental existential characteristic of humans is being inherently open to the event, that is, having the ability to assume a possibility that arises beyond possibilities *(transpassible)* and to transform due to this experience.[4] However, the event of psychosis means such a profound metamorphosis of existence that it cannot be integrated into the life-history, moreover, it prevents the possibility of experiencing any subsequent events.[5] One thing is certain: With the occurrence of the event, everything is irrevocably transformed and nothing will ever be as before.

2. TEMPORALITY OF THE EVENT

The event has a rather unusual temporality. We often cannot determine the time when it happened as the event has already occurred by the time we realize we have experienced it, and the change it brings can only become clear to us retrospectively.[6] Therefore Romano says that the event is not dateable, it does not arise in time, but rather opens a new time in our lives. What is more, it is the event that temporalizes the time. Surpassing the present of its manifestation, it actually does not occur in the present, but opens up an entirely new future for us, which, however, only appears as a kind of past because the real meaning of the event is only accessible from its own posterity.[7] Tengelyi formulates it similarly: The event reveals a future to us that actually has never been present, since the event is something we cannot plan or foresee. In fact, the event confronts us with the reality itself, which, to quote Levinas, "precedes and surprises the possible".[8] On the other hand, its meaning arises from a past that has never been present, as the destinal event is preceded by numerous 'shreds of sense', which already foreshadowed its arrival in the form of 'premonitions'. However, our actual expectations usually override these premonitions, so we only realize later that they had already appeared earlier and communicated something to us, meaning that we can only grasp these 'shreds of sense' retrospectively through their 'aftershocks'.[9] The destinal event, as the manifestation of self-initiated meaning, therefore does not fit into the line of advancing time, but occurs outside the horizon that connects our past experiences with the future expectations; it takes place in a

4 Henri Maldiney, *Penser l'homme et la folie* (Grenoble: Millon, 2007), 61, 105, 213, 228, 235.
5 Ibid., 91, 96.
6 Romano, *L'événement et le monde*, 60–65.
7 Ibid., 66–69.
8 Emmanuel Lévinas, *Autrement qu'être, au-delà de l'essence* (Dordrecht / Boston / London: Kluwer, 1990), 58.
9 Tengelyi, *Élettörténet és sorsesemény*, 201–203.

present that has never been future.[10] It always marks a new beginning, which 'has its own time'; moreover, the constitution of the unified time of our life-history is built upon the plurality of the own times of these significant events.[11] After studying the psychotic disorders, Maldiney concludes that patients are affected in their entire existence. Notably, in the event of psychosis, the existence collapses and the temporality simply becomes dislocated, so the disorder also manifests itself in the fundamental dimension of existence, in temporality.[12] For example, the melancholic is stuck in a past that is rooted in an old and irreversible present; hence, its temporality is determined by a present derived from a past that is alien to living time, a past beyond time, which does not point towards any future.[13] For the melancholic, time essentially comes to a halt, it no longer temporalizes, or rather the flow of time is replaced by a kind of standing-water-like constancy symbolized by the repeated complaint.[14]

In short: The appearance of the event does not fit into a timeline, moreover it turns upside down the way we consider the progression of time itself. These statements all prove that the event is a peculiar phenomenon, hence the philosophers seem to be obliged to forge complex, somewhat paradox expressions in order to be able to describe the temporality of the event. What is the reason for that? Is there any other way to clarify the connection between event and time that is without contradictions? In fact yes; however, for this we need to have a closer look at how actually we perceive the event.

3. UNDERSTANDING THE EVENT

The temporality of the event is closely related to the way we get to the meaning of this phenomenon. Moreover, it is actually not the temporality of the event, but the process of understanding itself that has an ambiguous nature: Everything has already changed irrevocably when we realize what happened to us and we learn that from now on nothing will be the same as before. At first glance, this statement suggests that understanding is characterized by both a sort of anteriority and posteriority; yet it is not entirely accurate.

The event signals the emergence of a surprisingly new life situation, so when it arrives, we do not even understand exactly what is happening to us. With its manifestation, our old world completely loses its meaning, instead, a new world opens up for us, which rises out of incomprehensibility. The event is a phenomenon

10 Ibid., 200, 208.
11 Ibid., 195–196.
12 Maldiney, *Penser l'homme et la folie*, 69, 98.
13 Ibid., 47–50.
14 Ibid., 16, 43.

that can only be understood according to its own sense, which becomes the starting point for all further interpretation.[15] Such an occurrence is absolutely uncontrollable, so we cannot constitute its meaning; we can only strive to appropriate the newly revealed possibilities. Romano stresses that in this respect, comprehension primarily does not denote a reflective-cognitive act, but rather indicates the basic attitude towards the world. It is an understanding prior to language and conceptualization. Therefore, we first grasp the meaning of the event (what happened to us) at a pre-reflective level, and only afterwards can we interpret and elaborate this meaning more concretely.[16] According to Tengelyi, experiencing an event means that an entirely new and alien sense breaks into the consciousness, which puts us into a crisis and shakes the seemingly solid sense of ourselves. Similar to Romano, he notes that a destinal event is an absolutely spontaneous sense formation *(Sinnbildung)*, which emerges 'of itself', beyond our control, so it cannot be the result of the process of sense-bestowal *(Sinngebung)* of an intentional consciousness.[17] We cannot freely attribute meaning to the events, all we can do is to discover and grasp the spontaneously formed new sense through concepts.[18] Therefore Tengelyi separates life-history from self-identity: The former is a "wild region of spontaneous sense formation",[19] while the latter is the field where the struggle for the fixation of our own sense takes place. Hence, the true foundation of our life-history is not actually the narratives we produce about ourselves, but precisely these destinal events, whose sense arises secretly, somewhere "behind consciousness".[20] This means that first we have an impression that is still not formulated conceptually, not expressed through words, and only in a second step can we try to fix this sense and turn it into concrete meaning by sewing it into our life-history with the help of narration, thereby giving them a clearer and more permanent form through concepts.[21] Although Tengelyi does not explicitly apply the pre-reflective and reflective distinction, nonetheless such duality seems to characterize the experiencing and understanding of the event. Maldiney from his side affirms that in the first place, it is through feeling, empathy, and attunement that we grasp the meaning of the world and ourselves, consequently we can say that the sense of the event as well. It is already at the level of the primordial impressions where we directly feel the metamorphosis of our existence in the world *(être-au-monde)*; this meaning does not unveil itself through the mediation of signs,

15 Romano, *L'événement et le monde*, 54.
16 Ibid., 85.
17 Tengelyi, *Élettörténet és sorsesemény*, 42.
18 Ibid., 28.
19 Ibid., 32.
20 László Tengelyi, *Tapasztalat és kifejezés* (Budapest: Atlantisz Kiadó, 2007), 28–29, 68, 70–71.
21 Tengelyi, *Élettörténet és sorsesemény*, 38, 42.

nor does it arise merely from the constitutive activity of an intentional consciousness, but rather, it appears at a pre-objective level.[22] Perception *(sentir)* is also feeling *(ressentir)* he says, since the perceiver, while perceiving, does not only sense the object itself but he somehow feels himself too, thus he experiences the world and his own self simultaneously. Existence, indeed, has an affective dimension *(dimension pathique)*, through which the manner of experience is expressed, and in which the style of openness to the world is also reflected. What the analysis of psychotic disorders uncovers is exactly the decisive role of the affective tone of experiences, see for instance the case of Suzan Urban.[23] Therefore, following Maldiney's phenomenological analysis, we can come to a similar conclusion as in the cases of Romano and Tengelyi, notably that the event is first of all understood at a non-intentional, pre-reflective level, which means that we grasp its sense directly and spontaneously, before any reflective objectification and interpretation.

Based on the above, we can say that although the meaning of the event is initially incomprehensible to us, nonetheless we clearly take note of its arrival. Even in the extreme forms of events (trauma, psychosis), where the experience itself is so overwhelming that it is not at all sure that we can express what has fallen out on us and embed such an experience into our life-history, in other words, where the reflective-narrative understanding and processing of the event may not be accomplished, or only becomes possible over time (for example after following a lengthy therapy), we nevertheless immediately and clearly become aware of the fact that we lived an event, the world has changed for us, the flow of our life has been disrupted, or our existence has entered a crisis.

This implies that in reality, it is due to the inherent mechanism of understanding that the event's temporality appears to be so unusual, giving rise to the cumbersome and paradox descriptions by which our thinkers try to define it: "a future that has never been present", "a past that has never been present", "a present that has never been future", "a past rooted in an old and irreversible present", "a present that is alien to living time", "a past beyond time, which does not point towards any future", "the time that comes to a halt and no longer temporalizes", or "the flow of time replaced by a kind of standing-water-like constancy", etc. However, the appearance of the event is not connected to time as such, so it cannot be considered and described through the dimension of time, instead, its strange temporality should be explained by the different levels of comprehension or 'layers of constitution' so to speak. Instead of the duality of anteriority and posteriority, it is actually the two-phase

[22] Maldiney, *Penser l'homme et la folie*, 90–91, 196–198.

[23] Ibid., 202. Ludwig Binswanger, *Le cas Suzanne Urban. Étude sur la schizophrénie* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1957).

process of understanding that has to be highlighted here: The first stage is the level of primary comprehension, which is the dimension of affective impressions, the second stage is the level of secondary understanding, which is associated with reflexivity, thinking, language, and interpretation. Yet, should not we say that the way we understand things has to do with the very "structure" of consciousness itself?

4. Modalities of Consciousness and Time

We could admit that originally consciousness has two basic functionalities, an affective and a reflective mode. We refer to the primordial register of experience as affective perception, through this function we are able to perceive the continuously flowing impressions; this includes sensations, feelings, emotions, and dispositions. The reflective functionality is by which we are capable of thinking, this is the mode that mobilizes language, hence clearer meanings and concepts are formed at this level. The affective mode is the primary functionality of consciousness, which always precedes the reflective one. However, these modalities operate simultaneously and alongside each other, they switch from one to the other almost imperceptibly depending on what captures our attention in a given moment. I can remain in one mode, while I almost completely exclude the other, or one mode becomes dominant and oppresses the other function. Let's take some examples from our daily life. If I am in pain, I can hardly focus on anything else because this intense affective feeling captures all my attention. I am unable to think or work, and even another activity, such as listening to music, may not help to deviate my attention from the pain. In such a state, the affective impact is so strong that it makes almost any other activity impossible, especially those for which I use the reflective mode. Therefore, no matter how strongly I try to concentrate on reading a book for instance, thereby keeping myself in the reflective mode of consciousness with my will, I cannot eliminate the pain, as this powerful feeling constantly disrupts me.

Now let's imagine a more pleasant situation: When we are reading a good book or talking to a friend, our consciousness is maximally focused in a reflective manner on what we are reading or on the conversation, while simultaneously our affective attention decreases to a minimum. In such situations, we can almost completely exclude all external and internal perceptions: We hardly even notice that others are chatting in the background, or that someone has walked away behind our back, but we can also forget about our hunger or tiredness. Moreover, even if we do perceive these effects, we can still try to suppress them for a while, yet only until a certain point, when the affective function will overtake the reflective one and our attention will naturally turn towards our sensations and feelings.

Something similar happens with time itself: Iin the affective mode, we do not realise how time passes because we do not perceive time at all. The same applies to situations when we are in a deep reflective mode. The truth is that in most cases, we have no awareness of time, as it falls outside our field of attention. More precisely, we only realize the progression of time when we specifically focus on it, for example, when we look at our watch. Nevertheless, there is one major difference between the two modes of consciousness when it comes to the perception of time. Only the reflective functionality enables us to translate various impressions into thoughts, or in other words, to form concrete meanings of these pure 'shreds of sense', and only in this mode can we observe and describe things, that is, to grasp and examine our experiences as objects. As a consequence, we can only perceive that time is passing if we switch to this mode, what is more, the concept of time itself is also formed in the reflective sphere. By contrast, in the affective sphere simply there is no time, as primordial experiences (impressions) of originally affective nature are not temporal, they rather have intensity.

Nonetheless, we are used to expressing the quality of our experiences (their affective tone, intensity, direction) by concepts and expressions (metaphors) related to time, but also movement, and space. During a pleasant activity (reading, conversation), it usually seems to us that time runs more quickly, while in unpleasant circumstances (pain), time barely wants to move forward. The interesting thing about such statements is not that we feel the progression of time differently compared to its real pace, or that we perceive the objective time subjectively, if this distinction is appropriate at all, but that we take the concept of time for granted. The reason for this is the following: Impressions emerge in the affective sphere, yet the affective conception is almost immediately followed by the reflective grasping (or at least there is an attempt to capture the 'multifarious shreds of sense'), it is understandable that the interpretive activity of the reflective mode steps in and tries to govern the process of understanding, and by its very nature, it introduces concepts such as time into the interpretation, thereby 'smuggling' temporality into the originally 'timeless' affective experience. Although, for example in the state of pain, it is not time that passes more slowly, but the feeling itself is intense and unbearable. It is true that we can measure pain also with the time it takes, however, someone who is actually in pain knows neither space nor time, this person only 'knows' that she or he feels unwell. Therefore, it is not incorrect to say 'how time flies' when we are immersed in a joyful activity, or 'time hardly passes', 'time seems to stand still' when we are in an unpleasant situation or we are suffering, but we must acknowledge that these statements are formulated in the reflective register, and that it is the understanding and interpretive activity of this mode of consciousness that, according to its own operating principle (objectification, external viewpoint or third-person perspective,

mobilization of concepts, etc.) projects time onto an affective experience. In a reflective attitude, we already step outside our own experience and observe it as an object, as if we were watching a film about ourselves, where the frames follow one another in order, each having its own duration, and where it becomes possible to determine how long an affective episode lasted.

Another exclusive characteristic of the reflective function of consciousness is intentionality. Any kind of objects arise exclusively at this level, which also means that consciousness can only decompose the being-in-the-world *(être-au-monde)* into subject and object, or separate immanence and transcendence when it shifts into its reflective mode, exactly because in the latter we inevitably switch to a third-person point of view. When we engage in a philosophical reflection or discussion, naturally we apply the reflective mode of our consciousness. Since adopting the phenomenological attitude is the result of a reflective act (perform the reductions), and since the description of phenomena also happens with the involvement of reflective consciousness (formulate concepts, fix the meaning through language), it is not surprising that we still shift into an objectifying, third-person perspective even when we would like to gain access to the 'things themselves' as they are given to consciousness by examining things that are revealed to us directly in the first-person singular experience. This, however, has an impact on how we approach the question of time.

5. THE ORIGINS OF TIME-CONSCIOUSNESS

We have seen that philosophers apply various notions related to time, such as 'past', 'present', 'future', 'moment', 'before', 'after', etc., in order to grasp the temporality of the event. Yet, there is an underlying assumption behind this, namely that time 'exists' and it is in motion, it flows in a linear and irreversible manner. A crucial question arises here: From what perspective can we make such a statement about time? The answer is that only from an external viewpoint, from a third-person perspective, which is the characteristic of the reflective mode of consciousness.

If we think about it, this problem has been present since the commencement of the phenomenological movement. Husserl openly adopts a reflective position when he begins to examine the phenomenon of time in his lectures of 1904/05. The matter for him is to study the layers of constitution with the clear aim to set the foundation of objective time in subjective time, in the same way as he strives to prove that any kind of objectivity is rooted in subjectivity.[24] In order to achieve his goal, he follows strict methodological steps and performs an *epoché*, so he puts the objective world time into parenthesis, yet he does not suspend the premise regarding the "existence" of

[24] Edmund Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins (1893–1917)* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966), 10.

time itself. As a consequence, the notion of time is presumed and pre-given by default since the very beginning of his quest. Husserl thinks in the dimension of time, he uses the notion of time (explicitly and implicitly) for constructing fundamental phenomenological terms, such as 'subjective time', 'internal time-consciousness', 'living present', 'original temporal field', 'phase of consciousness', 'momentary presence', 'retention', 'protention', but even in his later texts, the 'timelessness of absolute consciousness' or the 'pre-time' and 'pre-temporal consciousness' etc. The key idea behind this is the following: According to Husserl, the passage of time is not something we imagine or represent, but is fundamentally perceived, which requires a consciousness (internal time-consciousness) that can integrate successive experiential moments into a single process. Individual perceptions always fit into a time horizon, so when we perceive something, we are inherently able to perceive the temporal extent of things as well.[25] Thus, there is no wonder that 'time' becomes the central and indispensable (unavoidable) concept of phenomenology. Unavoidably we think in time, we presume the horizon of time, thereby making temporality an unshakable foundational theme of phenomenology. Consequently, time and temporality are fundamentally given, are self-evident not only in the 'natural attitude' but also in the 'phenomenological attitude'. A second consequence is that all other philosophers after Husserl inherit this presumption without questioning it. The problem only arises when we encounter special phenomena, like the event, which manifests itself with a rather strange temporality: Philosophers inevitably face difficulties when trying to grasp the connection between the event and time, as the paradox and cumbersome expressions demonstrate it.

Contrary to Husserl's theory, yet in line with Marc Richir's philosophy, we could also argue that the phenomenon of time is nothing else but a "symbolically instituted sense"[26] that is culturally passed on through generations, which implies that we are 'unconsciously' aware of its meaning: We just 'know' that time 'exists', that time passes, and that human time is finite. Such 'knowledge' or the 'sense' of time most probably emerged in an intersubjective context (through the intersubjective experience of changes that occur in nature) and had subsequently been fixed. Nonetheless, it is precisely this deep-rooted 'ancient awareness' of time that constitutes the obstacle to examining our experiences (especially the affective aspects of the living experience) irrespective of time, that is, from a purely phenomenological perspective, by putting all the symbolic contents into brackets that are projected onto them, thereby capturing the sense as it arises, the "phenomenon as nothing-but-

[25] Ibid., 64–69.

[26] Marc Richir, *Phénomènes Temps et Êtres. Phénoménologie et institution symbolique* (Grenoble: Million, 1987).

phenomenon"[27] before any kind of reflective objectification. Husserl confronts this problem when he, in order to avoid the danger of infinite regress, sets the foundation for all temporality (both the objective and the subjective levels of time-consciousness) back to the non-temporal self-constituting consciousness of inner time or absolute consciousness. He asserts that absolute time-consciousness does not take place in time but is timeless, and for this reason we must say that time itself does not arise in time.[28] In this way, however, Husserl is unable to resolve the paradox thus formed, as although he performs the *epoché* of objective time (he excludes all assumptions, statements, and beliefs related to objective time), he does not suspend the concept of time itself, which means that he does not question the existence of time *(seiende Zeit)*, he rather takes it as absolutely given.[29] This can be explained by our theory that Husserl cannot step outside the framework of reflective conscious activity. Intentionality inherently presupposes a relation between consciousness and its object, which implies that the distance-creating, objectifying reflective attitude manifests itself even at the pre-reflective, pre-phenomenal level of the self-constitution of absolute time-consciousness. Could we say that all these difficulties derive from the fact that Husserl attempts to conceptualize the pre-reflective, non-intentional, non-objectifying modality of consciousness following the model of reflective acts, in other words, to grasp and describe the primary and essentially affective experience from a secondary reflective perspective? Indeed, saying that absolute time-consciousness appears strangely 'timeless' in terms of its constitution and 'atemporal' with regard to its flow sounds particularly contradictory. Nevertheless, is it possible that Husserl comes to such conclusions because his reasoning is based on incorrect implicit assumptions, namely, that time 'exists' and that any phenomenon can only be described by taking into account the dimension of time? The same applies to the observations of Tengelyi, Romano, and Maldiney regarding the temporality of events; they take the existence of time for granted and try to grasp something fundamentally non-temporal using concepts of temporality, which leads to rather strange and paradoxical expressions as discussed above.

6. SINGULARITY AND AFFECTIVE "TIME"

In order to avoid the contradictory formulations when describing the event's temporality, we have to redefine the event and subjectivity. According to the definition of Romano, the event puts into play my unsubstitutable selfhood, it befalls me in person and is assigned first hand only to me, not to anyone else. We could also say that the

[27] Ibid., 13–17.
[28] Husserl, *Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins (1893–1917)*, 112.
[29] Ibid., 4–5.

event "provokes solipsism",[30] since it appears as my own inalienable experience, in the event nothing less is at stake than my own existence. This means that in terms of its appearance, the event is not merely subjective, but radically subjective. Contrary to the philosophers referred above, I believe that the event is not a neutral phenomenon, its unique sense cannot be constituted in an intersubjective way. The reason behind its exceptional manifestation is precisely its personal nature. In fact, event and selfhood *(ipséité)* are not merely "closely interconnected concepts" as Tengelyi affirms,[31] but they mutually presuppose each other: On the one hand, we understand ourselves in the light of the events that occur in our life; on the other hand, the event simply cannot manifest itself without ipseity. Moreover, as Romano formulates it, in the event the *advenant* literally becomes a "stranger to oneself", encounters "oneself as another", in other words, I become radically and irreversibly different from who I was.[32] Tengelyi talks about the "split of the self", given that the event shakes up the sense of our identity that has been established, as a result of which we directly "come into conflict with ourselves".[33] Maldiney also says that in the event we confront our "absolute otherness", and in extreme cases, existence not only transforms but genuinely "alienates itself from itself", hence, when looking in the mirror, it "sees something other than itself".[34] Therefore, the concept of the event itself cannot be interpreted independently, that is, separately from the subject it concerns, because the true meaning of the event is not the metamorphosis of the world as context, but it signals a radical change or rupture in the self-interpretation of a concrete and singular subject. From now on, however, the main question is no longer the phenomenality of the event, but rather our task becomes to explore the 'constitution of the self', to uncover what kind of phenomenon the self is, in other words, how the meaning of our own self (ipseity) is constituted and revealed to us and how we can access it.

The meaning of the event is always unique, as Tengelyi and Romano acknowledge it, moreover, both philosophers consider this singularity as primarily that characteristic of the phenomenon, which subsequently determines the singularity of the subject.[35] Yet, in my view, uniqueness should be assigned to the subject who experiences the event, otherwise we cannot explain why a given phenomenon appears to us as a 'personal' or 'destinal' event. Consequently, we will call the concrete and always unique subject as *singularity*.

---

30 Jean-Luc Marion, *Étant donné: Essai d'une phénoménologie de la donation* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2013), 376–381.

31 Tengelyi, *Élettörténet és sorsesemény*, 33.

32 Romano, *L'événement et le monde*, 210–211.

33 Tengelyi, *Élettörténet és sorsesemény*, 43, 199–200.

34 Maldiney, *Penser l'homme et la folie*, 54–55, 279.

35 Tengelyi, *Élettörténet és sorsesemény*, 46–48; Romano, *L'événement et le monde*, 125–126, 158–160.

Singularity is a strictly phenomenological concept that refers to the unique meaning of the self that emerges as a result of a passively unfolding process of sense formation and sedimentation. Here we are dealing with an infinitely complex meaning that is formed through our experiences, and which settles down, condenses, and solidifies in layers even before conceptualisation, in a pre-reflective manner, without ever taking on a final, definitive form once and for all. Singularity functions like an 'embodied' and 'four-dimensional' prism that refracts light in a unique way: The light is the impulse coming from the world, and my singularity, 'myself', that is, the current form of the infinitely dense meaning is the prism. Any sense emerges and passes through the singularity, the concrete and individual subject of the experience, and only therefore can it take up a unique meaning, as the "saturated phenomena" or "paradox phenomena"[36] demonstrate it, for instance the ever-changing meaning of the Vinteuil sonata for Swann in the novel of Proust.[37] Singularity, on the one hand, manifests itself as a kind of phenomenon for itself, and on the other hand, it constitutes the ego-pole or subject of all its experiences. Yet, the singularity is not a simple phenomenon, nor is it a 'paradox phenomenon', but not even a "hyper-phenomenon",[38] rather, it is a genuine *enigma*: An inscrutable dense meaning that is formed spontaneously and invisibly, that can never be fully illuminated reflectively, yet it is always experienced and felt. As a subject, it denotes a uniquely individual subjectivity, which is not identical with the methodological subjectivity, the transcendental and sense-constituting ego, nor can it be regarded as some kind of empty consciousness, as a mere recipient of the phenomena, like the *adonné* in Marion's philosophy or the *advenant* in Romano's evential hermeneutics; instead, it denotes a real 'existence', a radically personal 'being-in-the-world'. Singularity is a subjectivity deprived of all activity, as it cannot arbitrarily control the sense-formation or its sedimentation, yet passively it still participates in the emergence of meaning, like a prism that participates in the refraction of light.

The structure of singularity shows a very complex organization. We are affected by numerous impressions, which we primarily experience in an affective manner and only in a second step can we try to grasp reflectively. Some of these impressions spontaneously settle down and get stored in various memory layers (affective-physical, cognitive). This process is completely uncontrollable: It is impossible to determine when, what, and essentially why something gets 'imprinted' in my singularity, which consequently is continually being built and shaped, and as a result of this accumulation, it solidifies into a kind of crystal-like prism. As a consequence,

[36] Jean-Luc Marion, *Étant donné: Essai d'une phénoménologie de la donation*, 366–370.

[37] Marcel Proust, *À la recherche du temps perdu* (Paris: Gallimard, 1999).

[38] Bernhard Waldenfels, *Grundmotive einer Phänomenologie des Fremden* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2006).

the event is nothing else but the experience of a deep structural transformation of my singularity. It marks a break in the process of self-understanding, or rather, in the constitution of our 'sense of self'. The event of psychosis means a real rupture, a complete collapse of existence, because singularity, no matter how resistant it is, like real crystals, suffers such a degree of rupture that it shatters into shards and it becomes almost impossible to reassemble them again. Even a less dramatic experience can have an effect on us 'years later', or maybe 'for a lifetime', because it has been integrated into the singularity altering its structure and leaving an indelible mark in it. We have countless experiences that we 'preserve' even though we do not specifically remember them; it can happen that only through a 'new' experience do we realize that these experiences 'still' live within us, when the sedimented meanings 'at some point' suddenly resurface 'again' and exert an effect 'once more' on us and on our actions. We carry such integrated experiences with us 'over time', as singularity — our selfhood — is composed of meanings, mostly in the form of non-conceptualized affective impressions, that have 'once' been fixed in a completely spontaneous and unique way. However, as the resurgence or the withdrawal, as well as the intensification or the weakening of the impact of affective aspects of the experiences impregnated in the singularity happen in an absolutely unpredictable manner, therefore we can at most say about these 'occurrences' that they take place in a totally elastic and volatile affective 'time'. On an affective level, I do not 'know' about time, I can only feel: In fact I always feel something, often many things at once, in some way, with some intensity. In short, original impressions are simply not tied to time, but have an affective intensity. In the same way, the event, which signifies in reality a deep change in our singularity, does not occur in time, rather we should say that its original manifestation takes place in an affective register, which is not at all temporal. Hence we should not wonder that when the event is grasped reflectively, it displays a peculiar temporality. Let's underline that in the case of the event, it is not time that is irreversible, it is not temporality that gets twisted, but a quality shift happens in the self, in the very structure of the singularity, and this metamorphosis is what is undeniable and unalterable.

7. Conclusion

In this article we explored the temporality of the event occurring in our personal lives. We have seen that when trying to determine the time of its manifestation, philosophers face difficulties. This issue seems to be closely linked to the problem of time-consciousness in general, a problem that originates from the early thoughts of Husserl on the lived experience of time. It is true that at the moment we encounter an event, we do not even understand its meaning, it is only after it arrived that we realize what has

happened to us, that everything had already changed and nothing will be the same as before. Yet, it is not about any anteriority or posteriority, the difficulty is not linked to the temporality of the event but to its phenomenality and understanding, thus ultimately it has to do with the modalities of consciousness. In fact, the exceptional character of the event primarily stems from its close, even inseparable relationship with the concrete and singular subject that experiences it, which necessitates the redefinition of both event and subjectivity. The event does not signify the emergence of a new sense, but an immanent change in meaning, a rupture of our self-interpretation, more precisely, a radical and deep transformation in the structure of our singularity. The singularity is formed through the spontaneous and uncontrollable sedimentation and integration of our experiences. This process takes place in an elastic and volatile affective 'time' which, however, is not temporal but is linked to quality and intensity. Accordingly, the event, redefined as the alteration in the singularity, also happens in this non-temporal, affective dimension. Primarily, we experience things in an affective manner, and only in a second move can we try to reflect on them by conceptualizing and formulating thoughts. By the reflective function of our consciousness, we are capable of distancing, objectifying, and to look at things from a third-person perspective, thereby separating subject and object. Moreover, all concepts, including the concept of time itself, are born in this register, hence it is only the reflective modality that projects time on the originally non-temporal, affective impressions, when it tries to grasp their meaning. Nonetheless, if we still insist on describing paradoxical phenomena, like the event, according to the dimension of time, we not only arrive at contradictory statements, but most importantly, we conceal the true nature of the sense-formation of singularity that happens, we can say at most, in an affective 'time'.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

[1] Binswanger, Ludwig. *Le cas Suzanne Urban. Étude sur la schizophrénie*. Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1957.

[2] Husserl, Edmund. *Zur Phänomenologie des inneren Zeitbewusstseins (1893–1917)*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1966.

[3] Lévinas, Emmanuel. *Autrement qu'être, au-delà de l'essence.* Dordrecht / Boston / London: Kluwer, 1990.

[4] Maldiney, Henri. *Penser l'homme et la folie*. Grenoble: Millon, 2007.

[5] Marion, Jean-Luc. *Étant donné: Essai d'une phénoménologie de la donation*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2013.

[6] Proust, Marcel. *À la recherche du temps perdu*. Paris: Gallimard, 1999.

[7] Richir, Marc. *Phénomène, temps et être: Phénoménologie et institution symbolique*. Grenoble: Millon, 2018.

[8] Romano, Claude. *L'événement et le monde.* Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1998.

[9] Tengelyi, László. *Élettörténet és sorsesemény*. Budapest: Atlantisz Kiadó, 1998.

[10] Tengelyi, László. *Tapasztalat és kifejezés.* Budapest: Atlantisz Kiadó, 2007.

[11] Waldenfels, Bernhard. *Grundmotive einer Phänomenologie des Fremden*. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2006.