

The Problematic Presence of Memory

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis is an investigation of memory. Reflective memory demands two things. First, that it might relate and logically position itself in relation to what is absent. Second, that it is to remain open to free repetition for so long as it goes unchallenged by forgetting or correction. Under these structural requests, the ground for an ontological comparison appears: are not these demands also the demands of language? According to Husserl's *Logical Investigations*, a sign must, in its hunger for truth and fulfillment, be able both to constitute a relation with the signified, though absent, object and to repeat its sense and meaning over time. Analogously then, memory is *like* a language insofar as it *speaks of* the past in its absence and, at the same time, drives forward to its 'death', self-effacement, and dissolution; that is, forward into the resolution of truth.

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Introduction

0.1

The Program

In this work I will examine the central phenomenological problems of memory. I will argue that memory is a unique ‘language of absence’. By first distinguishing among three kinds of memory, I will isolate and then engage with what Edmund Husserl, calls secondary memory. This latter type is reflective, reproducing a past occasion and presenting it to consciousness in a modified form (*as having-been*). According to Husserl in his *Lectures on the Phenomenology of Internal Time Consciousness*, secondary memory occurs when I remember myself doing something that I have done. Unlike imaginative episodes, secondary memories are positional; that is, they posit a relation to the *real-lived-past* and, in so doing, announce their stay in the realm of truth. On the condition of this relation with the *real-lived-past*, memories can be true, false, or a variation of both. Without this relation, the positional force of memory would prove illusory, transforming the phenomena into something it is *not* (namely, into fantasy). In our day-to-day life, we place a great amount of trust in our memories and their ‘truth’ claims; imagine what life would be like if we did not trust the implicit claim of our memories and did not assent to their truth structure!

Secondary memory demands two things. First, that it might relate and logically position itself in relation to what is absent (the *past present*). Second, that it is to remain open to free repetition for so long as it goes unchallenged by forgetting or correction. Under these structural requests, the ground for an ontological comparison appears: are not these demands also the demands of language? According to Husserl’s *Logical*

Investigations, a sign must, in its hunger for truth and fulfillment, be able both to constitute a relation with the signified, though absent, object and to repeat its sense and meaning over time. Analogously then, memory is *like* a language insofar as it *speaks of* the past in its absence and, at the same time, drives forward to its ‘death’, self-effacement, and dissolution; that is, forward into the resolution of truth. Hypothetically, then, a memory would collapse and become superseded in the presence of original, historical evidence (much like a meaning intention disappears into obsolescence when fulfilled). On the one hand, memory – like any language – is constituted by the fact that it acts as a supplement and substitute for the signified object. On the other hand, the signifier always refers to truth, the deferred presence of the object, and thereby opens the relational element that constitutes it. On this level, the positionality, constitutive opportunity of repetition and the impossibility of absolute verification are respected. This comparison between memory and language is not arbitrary but, rather, indicates an essential dimension of memory that has been overlooked entirely. By broadening the concept of language in order to include memory, I will move beyond analogical argumentation and, in so doing, disassemble the central phenomenological paradox of remembrance.

What is this paradox? For a certain variety of phenomenology, this type of memory has proven to be epistemologically problematical. As a philosophical method, the phenomenologist begins by suspending her judgment about the existence or non-existence of the *real and objective* world. In doing so, she is able to focus on the world *as given* and, from there, uncover the conditions for the possibility of *this* world. These conditions, which are immanent within the structures of consciousness, are object

directedness (intentionality) and its constituting temporality. After the reduction, the world is the same as it was before; the only difference is that our metaphysical prejudices are neutralized. Thus, each phenomenon *must*, even after ‘the reduction’, maintain its sense. Under these conditions, secondary memory is anomalous insofar as it requires, in essence, a relation to something that cannot be given: the *real-lived-past*. On the one hand, if the *real-lived-past* is neutralized, memory loses its sense and, thus, the principal tenant of phenomenology is effaced. On the other hand, the admittance of the *past present* would only lead to a ‘metaphysical infection’. Here, we arrive at an aporia.

With these issues in mind, it is easy to fall into a representational account of secondary memory. Some thinkers, including the early psychologist Brentano, have argued that memories *represent* the past much like a bronze bust represents a war hero. Husserl himself was quick to dismiss this argument. For unlike bronze statues and pictures, memory is unmediated by anything physical. A memory stands before us authentically, much like a true perception. Thus, this relationship between memory and the *real-lived-past* seems nebulous. For this, the *real-lived-past*, being absolutely unsalvageable, cannot ever substantiate the claims of memory; to promise it a place in the hall of evidence, of presence, would be both dishonest and cruel. More seriously, the very species of this relationship has, for the most part, been ignored and thrown under the rug of analogical argumentation (in Husserl, Sartre, and Merleau-Ponty, for instance). If not ignored, the problem has been complicated further by the uncritical arguments of empirical psychologists (like Brentano) and metaphysical dualists (like Bergson).

At first, this paradox appears to be trivial and merely structural; but in truth, it does raise many everyday concerns. After all, memory is the most profound form of self-

relation and self-knowing. In memory, I give myself *to* myself and, in the process, work towards becoming situated in my world. At any given time, I always know and understand myself in terms of *where* I have been, *what* I have been, and *who* I have been with. On this account, the reflective merging of past with present horizons – both of which are mine – is an unremitting movement in the formation of identity and constancy. Without these retrospective signs, the possibility of being contextualized, of having an identity, is windswept.

When memory is thought of as language, our understanding of it is improved. In articulating the symbolic dimension of memory, the epistemological impasse becomes constitutive of the phenomenon itself: memory *is* infinitely removed from the evidence it indicates. On this view, there is no longer a problem but a *schism* that is essential to remembrance as such. In philosophical terms, the *essence* of memory is co-determined by its *telos* and, thus, remains in a state of perpetual deferral and suspension. In other words, it is *always open* to assent or suspicion.

0.2

Memory

In signifying ‘*the presence of my past*’, the term ‘memory’ quickly splits into a plurality of terms that are more specific. There are, for instance, numerous subjective functions that fall under the category *memory* and include, without being limited to, muscle-memory, recognition, retention, representational-memory – in short, a plethora of unique subjective functions can be seen to harbor (or signify the harboring *of*) our past within our present. In this way, human beings are often – if not *always* – involved in different kinds of memory functions that can both constitute and augment an experience.

At this level of generality, however, memory tells us little about its specific modes and even less about the possibilities and structures of their instantiation; when trying to decide whether a handful of berries are safe to eat, one best not deduce from the concept of *'plant'* alone. Save for the temporal insight it offers— namely, that if memory is to be possible, the *past* must be capable of being *absent* and *present* simultaneously – the general concept of memory is, by itself, an insufficient object of analysis, assuming what we want to *know* about are its different kinds. With the general concept always in mind, then, my analysis will focus on memory as it manifests itself in subjectivity. More specifically, I will be investigating the structure of representational memory.

In the realm of human subjectivity, we are likely to implicate both the ability to *recognize* something and the ability to *know* how to do something in the general function of being able to preserve, or *remember*, something. If I were unable to retain the guitar lessons of my youth I would be unable to recognize the instrument *as such* (i.e. as being musically organized in such a way, as having specific functions etc...). More significantly, the inability to retain what practice teaches me would disallow the learning itself. After all, the intent of practice is to *facilitate* the formation of a habit and, thus, elicit the development (i.e. the learning) of an ability. Of course, this does not mean that I must *remember* my whole learning process in *memory* in order to exercise my ability; if such a task were required, we would need to re-learn a language every time we wanted to think! We, therefore, recognize that this kind of remembering is responsible for holding the past – for instantiating a species of memory – in a way unique to it.¹ This way does

¹ Casey (1983), p. 80. On this page, Casey writes that this kind of memory is called 'keeping in mind' and keeping in mind "tells us something important about remembering, namely, that it is as much a withholding of the past as a holding of it." This means that on

not, however, entail the conjuring up of representational images.

That being said, we can also recollect an event that has already taken place; we can represent this past world to ourselves and again perceive what was perceived. I can remember spending Christmas Eve in the basement of an old church. While my mother attended the services above, the other children and I played with the gifts we were given in advance, gifts that were meant to occupy us during church and, upon our arrival home, encourage a contentment rarely achieved by children on said night. I have this memory *presently* and it affects me according to the context I am now in; while remembering this event a week after its occurrence may have inspired disappointment in Christmas' end, it now provokes nostalgia and sadness. This *time* is no longer. For unlike the original event, the recollected event is experienced (and is given) as *having-been-so*, which implicitly implies *no-longer-being-so*. And in our everyday dealing with the world, objects are not given as *having-been-so* but, rather, as *being so*. This structure of memory is, therefore, composed of a tension that is its very heart. How can *my* past – which is *no longer* – become present to me again as an object of experience? How is this kind of temporal absence to be characterized? How does *representational memory* instantiate the essence of memory in its own way?

In what follows I will explore this very issue. As a phenomenologist, Husserl spent a great deal of time analyzing representational memory, its structure, and the role it plays in our life. In what follows, I would like to begin to challenge the view that he arrived at, a view that is presupposed in the literature rather than challenged. Husserl

the one hand, the past is present – if it were not, we would not be *able* in the way we are. This means that we *have* learned things; if the past were not in one sense held, it would not affect the present. At the same time, the past is a withholding because we do not objectify it or represent it to ourselves.

offers a non-representational theory of memory; in memory, we see the past itself. Our memories are not given like pictures, paintings, movies, or busts. They are, rather, reproduced images, given *as if* originally. Early in his career, Husserl held a different view, a view that I think is more accurate. According to this earlier view, our memories are representational and, in themselves, refer beyond themselves to the original, real lived past. While the abandonment of this view never seems complete, Husserl and his scholars behave as though it were. I will argue that while Husserl explains how we see the past itself in memory, he never explains how we refer to the past *present* in memory. He never adequately explains how our memories posit a past *present*, a now that is no longer. While memory cannot be the same as this past present – a present that no longer exists – it must refer to it in some way. Without this reference, *our memories would not be memories of temporally prior events*. If my memories did not posit the prior of existence of the remembered event, they would, analytically speaking, *not* be memories. The hard question to ask is *how* this reference occurs and *how* it can be, if at all, accurate. I will elaborate on these problems in Chapter 2.

I will argue that this reference to the now that is no longer is a necessary component to memory. In its presentation of the past, memory necessarily refers to that reality that is no longer; our memory images point beyond themselves to the reality they *represent*.² However, since the *represented reality* can never be given again, it is only given as an absence, a *signified transcendent*. On this account, our memories do not represent the past present – since representation would presuppose a givable original – they, rather, *indicate* the said reality. In other words, our memories indicate something

² For the precise analysis of memory images and representational consciousness see text following: Chapter 3, section 3.1.

that cannot be given except through that very indication; the past present exists only insofar as it is being referred to. *It is insofar as it is signified.* Without ever being able to give what they indicate, our memories are forced into a system of interrelation for verification; for since our memories can never be verified originally, they must rely on other memorial indicators of the past. In this way, our memories constitute an interrelated system of reference, first referring to the absolute transcendent, then to each other. When thought of as this similar in this respect to language, many of the problems we encounter when thinking about memory will disappear.

In this paper, I will not be completing the task but beginning it. In the first chapter, I will discuss the development of Husserl's concept of memory and time. In the second chapter, I will explore the phenomenological analysis of memory. In this chapter, I will also explore the issue of memory and argue that a non-imagistic reading is insufficient. In chapter three, I will give an in-depth of the image structure of memory and its positional character.

0.3

Why Husserl?

My project might be criticized for using tools that have, to a large extent, become obsolete. After all, the history of Husserl's kind of phenomenology is neither unproblematic nor *open* in any significant way. Since the publication of *Being and Time* in 1927, Husserl's project has often been used as a starting point whose central aim is quickly left behind. This can be seen, for example, in the central works of Heidegger and Derrida. While I do not condemn or revere these thinkers to any degree worth mentioning, I will admit that their impatience with phenomenology often stems from the

ulterior aspiration to *move beyond* (or, in the least, to the *end*) of “western metaphysics.”³ For Husserl – who is trying, in a very real sense, to establish a kind of logos – the projects of these inheritors would, at their most fundamental level, be moving in a direction opposite to his own. For him, the main task is establishing a science to which all other physical, mathematical, ethical, and metaphysical sciences must answer:

[Phenomenology] is a philosophy which, in opposition to prescientific and scientific objectivism, goes back to knowing subjectivity as the primal locus of *all* object formations of sense and ontic validities, undertakes to understand the existing world as a structure of sense and validity, and in this way seeks to set in motion an essentially new type of scientific attitude and a new type of philosophy...⁴

Husserl is a logo-centric philosopher, who can, for reasons implicit in the just-quoted passage from *Crisis*, be considered a *modernist*, a thinker committed to foundational science. Without passing judgment on the fate of western metaphysics, I will be *assuming* this modernist perspective and, in doing so, render the phenomenological analysis of memory both meaningful and possible. At the same time, I will be doing some disservice to Jacques Derrida who, despite his central efforts, ended up doing some phenomenological analyses with admirable precision. Derrida is the phenomenologist of absence extraordinaire – and, when it comes to the eidetic analysis of memory, such a phenomenology has incredible value. His early work plays an important role in Chapter 3

³ See, for example, Derrida (1973), Chapter 7: “The Supplement of Origin.” Derrida writes (p. 102): “The history of being as presence, as self-presence in absolute knowledge ... this history is closed. ... Since absolute self-presence in con-consciousness is the infinite *vocation* of full presence, the achievement of absolute knowledge is the end of the infinite, which could only be the unity of the concept, logos, and consciousness in a voice without *differance*.” Also see Heidegger, “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking,” in Heidegger (1993).

⁴ Husserl (1970), §27, p. 99.

of this analysis.

At this point, I should also position myself in the context of Husserlian scholarship. Indeed, I am not a scholar of Husserl; I have never been to the archives or read any work in the original German. What right do I have writing about Husserl then? The short answer is that I will not be writing about Husserl; I will be writing about memory consciousness and its essential (or *eidetic*) structures. Not only does Husserl offer the most precise methodological tools for doing this, he has also written a great deal on memory himself. Husserl is not the topic but the means by which, and through which, the topic will be examined. In the most popular research on Husserl today, there are many raging debates about what *he meant* or *how he meant it*.⁵ While I don't think that these debates are pointless, I do think that citing Husserl against other citations of Husserl is an endless game. For so long as we read Husserl as a philosopher that said x and y about z, we will be groping in the dark and getting nowhere phenomenologically; what is important is coming to understand what z tells us about its own being. Taking Husserl's advice, I believe that it is most fruitful to go back to the objects under examination. Husserl might say both X and Y about the noema – perhaps these two positions are even incommensurable – but this does not answer the question: given the phenomenological limits, what *is the nature of that which organizes and informs the synthesis of appearances?* In this way, what Husserl *does* say should not always be considered *final*. Reading Husserl as an instigator rather than a magistrate could help toss the

⁵ There is the longstanding noema debate. This literature consists in many articles, including: Zahavi (2004); Sokolowski (1987); Dreyfus and Hall (1982); Føllesdal (1982). Also there is the internal time-consciousness debate, which consists mainly in the exchange between Zahavi and Brough: Brough (2010b), Zahavi (2010). See also Brough (2010a) and Gallagher (1979).

phenomenologists back into the world rather than back into a volume of Husserliana.

This is the approach that I will take in this thesis. While I will not be able to establish the method of this approach – indeed such a project would require a thesis of its own – I would like to be transparent from the outset. When it comes to the issue at hand, I believe that it is best to utilize, rather than revere, Husserl’s analyses for further developing a phenomenology of memory. For while Husserl does say a lot about memory, his analysis is never satisfactory. (I will show one way that his account is incomplete in Chapter 2.) At the same time, Husserl himself uncovered many essential memory structures, each capable of instigating further investigation.

While there may be metaphysical methods available for the analysis of memory – methods that originate from comprehensive theories of reality – the task of phenomenology remains a preliminary one. Originating on the foundation of neutrality rather than theoretical acquiescence, phenomenology suspends judgment about extra-mental *reality* and thus distances itself from the objective sciences, metaphysics, and “transcendent theses” about reality generally: “instead of naively carrying out the act proper to the nature-constituting consciousness with its transcendent thesis...we set all these theses ‘out of action’; we direct our glance...to pure consciousness in its own absolute being.”⁶ When analyzing memory, I will not be tracing a causal lineage of a neurologically complex system; I will not be doing *physical science*. For the phenomenologist, a memory and the scientific demonstration of a hypothesis are very different kinds of acts; this being so, one cannot be reduced to the other (i.e. our memories to neurological systems). Setting these limits will, at the same time, explain

⁶ Husserl (1969), §50.

and perhaps justify the exclusion of certain metaphysicians of memory, most notably, Bergson. In his central work on memory, *Matter and Memory*, Bergson begins by stating that “this book affirms the reality of the spirit and the reality of matter, and tries to demonstrate the relation of the one to the other by the study of a definite example, that of memory.”⁷ While I do not want to dismiss such a metaphysic (indeed it may prove indispensable when analyzing memory), I do want to suspend it for now. In truth, it deserves its own analysis.

At the same time, I must confess that the phenomenology of memory can get quite ‘metaphysical’. Like the existence of *others*, our memories push phenomenology to its limits – the limits of what is *given*.⁸ For in the case of memory, what is *meant* cannot ever be given *again*: the past present itself.

⁷ Bergson (1959), p. xi.

⁸ Husserl (1969), §24.

Chapter One:

The Presence of Absence

1.1

Moving away from the prejudice of presence

I invite the reader to take note of the transition that occurs between §25 and §26 in Husserl's 1904-1905 lectures on phantasy and image consciousness.⁹ Briefly, on the later side of the partition, Husserl begins to abandon what can be called *the imagistic theory of reproductive appearances*. According to Brough, this theory holds that the noematic correlates of reproductive acts – i.e. acts of phantasy, memory, and expectation – are “indirectly” represented by a mediating *image* that invokes the object either *internally* by way of resemblance (like a painting of Versailles) or *externally* by way of indication (like phonetic alphabets).¹⁰ While *external imaging* in reproductive acts is accidental, *internal imaging* is a necessary structure of all reproductive images; each reproductive correlate is internally divided into that which appears (called the *image-object*) and that which possesses the appearance, using it as a vehicle to presence (called the *image subject*): “In the image-object we image the subject, which is more or less different from – even if resembling – the image object.”¹¹ In our phantasy of a demon, for instance, we can separate the image itself from the subject *meant* in that image (i.e. the demon). In phantasy and memory alike, something present (i.e. the memory or phantasy image-

⁹ Husserl (2005), §41.

¹⁰ Ibid., LIII. For a definition of internal and external image consciousness, see §16.

¹¹ Ibid., §14.

objects themselves) invokes something absent (i.e. the imagined demon or the remembered birthday celebration). When the image-object appears in a way that is similar to the image subject if it were to appear, Husserl calls it internally imagistic (like a statue of Napoleon). When the image object does not represent or mimic the features of the image subject, Husserl calls it externally imagistic (i.e. the phonetic signifier “mountain” does not *look* like a mountain). A more comprehensive analysis of these structures and differences will be given at the beginning of chapter 3. For now, it is important to note that Husserl utilizes image theory to explain the presence of an absent object.

Husserl’s early submission to *image theory* was instigated on the basis of the essential question that arises concerning reproductive modes of consciousness, namely: how is the difference between perception (of that which is present) and reproduction (of that which is absent) possible when the reproduced is, in its own way, *present*? In reproductive consciousness, we experience a scenario much like that of perception:

...in both cases we have objectivating apprehensions; and in both cases the same object can come into appearance, and even come to appearance with precisely the same determinations – in short, the appearances are indeed the same, except that in one case it is precisely perception that we have and in the other case, phantasy¹²

How can we explain this difference phenomenologically without begging the question, without simply reiterating the difference between presence and absence? After all, it cannot be denied that even reproductive images are, in their own way, *present* to consciousness. In this context, Husserl’s appeal to *image theory* – an intentional complex

¹² Ibid., §5.

in which an absent subject is *meant* in a present image – is understandable. On the one hand, the *absence* of the reproductive object is respected; as the *embodied* rather than the *embodying*, “it has no existence at all.”¹³ The present image-object, on the other hand, is intended in its own unique way, a way that would differentiate its present appearance from perceptions. In perception, and even in the perception of the paintings, statues, and pictures etc... there is an essential possibility of intending a substrate of the object in which no *referral* occurs. We can look at the painting as a wooden frame with colorful markings, the picture as a material fragment, and words as a series of markings etc. In the case of the reproductive image-objects, however, there would be no *non-referential* substrate as in the case of perceptually based images (i.e. paintings, busts, and the like); thus, the image object “bears within itself the characteristic of *unreality, of conflict with the actual present.*”¹⁴ In other words, perceptually based images require a conflicting, non-referential substratum (i.e. the frame, the strokes, the bronze etc...) in a way that phantasy images do not; the referral beyond them that inaugurates the ‘nullity’ of their appearance is, in the case of phantasy, absolute.

The shift away from the image theory of reproductive acts is the result of a parallel, more fundamental shift in attitudes. At base, the move away from image theory is a move away from the dominating authority of presence, which would have us believe “that one can be aware of what is absent through something present.”¹⁵ In distinction from this position, Husserl moves towards a theory of reproduction that “defends itself

¹³ Ibid., §10.

¹⁴ Ibid., §22.

¹⁵ Ibid., LIII.

against the demand that [reproductive appearances] be taken as present.”¹⁶ According to this theory, which can be termed the *non-imagistic theory of reproductive acts*, the reproductive appearance does not refer beyond itself but, rather, presents the object *itself* in its own way – given as *absent*. In phantasy, the “subject is not seen in an image object appearing as present” but is seen directly, though absent.¹⁷ Later, in Ideas I, Husserl will write that the “phantasy image...is not a faded datum of sense, but in its own way is a phantasy of the corresponding sense-datum.”¹⁸

As a result of this transition, Husserl is no longer able to differentiate perceptual acts and reproductive acts on the basis of the essentially *imagistic* presence of the latter. How then are we to distinguish the two different kinds? A more important question might be whether this new way of thinking remains true to the phenomenon. I will argue that it becomes questionable, especially in the case of memory (which, in its essence, refers beyond itself to a past present that is gone forever), as to whether Husserl illuminates or only obfuscates a phenomenology of reproductive acts. In the development of his time-consciousness lectures, Husserl writes that “what is remembered appears as having been present, doing so immediately and intuitively.”¹⁹ This position is one that he will not alter. Later, in the 1920’s, Husserl will write that in memory the past “is itself there, passing through a fog of un-clarity.”²⁰ Initially, this understanding of reproductive memory sounds strange. How is my past ‘itself’ there when it is no longer? Isn’t this

¹⁶ Ibid., §39.

¹⁷ Ibid., §25.

¹⁸ Husserl (1969), §111.

¹⁹ TPITC, no. 18, p. 189.

²⁰ ACPAS, §24.

break in the usual rigor suspicious, perhaps even indicative of Husserl's own confusion? More substantially, how am I to account for the fallibility of memories, the differences they bear in relation to the original act, if the past-act is "itself there" as past? Indeed, it seems that the imagistic interpretation of memory answers these questions by prohibiting their very emergence. As I shall demonstrate in some depth in what follows, if we assign to the memory image a representational function, we can account for both the presence of the past (in the image-object) and the past present (in the image subject).

What does Husserl mean when he says that "in memory we *see* what is past"?²¹ This question has two parts. On the one hand, it is a question of my perception (or seeing). On the other, it is a question of my past. Husserl's position already tells us a little of what he thinks of both; namely, that consciousness is somehow capable of *seeing* the past and the past is somehow capable of being *seen* immediately, without being iconized. Initially, such an understanding may seem obscure and wrongheaded. It is, perhaps common sense to believe that immediate perception is the perception of what is, not what was. To the everyday gaze, memory *represents* the past-event. I would argue, however, that phenomenologists also have every right to be skeptical. Husserl himself writes that "I can re-live the present, but it cannot be given again" and thus he only reiterates (but does not answer) the problem.²² How can Husserl posit that we see the past originally and yet hold that it cannot be *given*, or perceived again? This will require further explanation about what exactly the past *is* for Husserl. In the end, it will become apparent that when Husserl says that we see the past he means that we see the *past*, not the event that it *was*;

²¹ TPITC, §17.

²² TPITC, §18.

we remember the *past present X*, not the *present X*. While this will straighten out the first problem, another one will quickly arise; namely, the problem of a past that does not refer to the present it is the past *of*.

I will first attempt to answer the primary question: how can Husserl hold the simultaneous positions of a present that cannot be given again and a past that can be given as *itself*? For the sake of brevity, I will call this problem the *problem of the given-past*. The problem of the given-past refers to the seemingly paradoxical ability that memory exhibits when it gives what cannot be given again. In beginning to address this problem, I will attempt to see if Husserl's step away from imagism is successful and, if not, *why not*. And since questions about the 'past' become answerable only within a temporal context, I will need to position myself from within the framework of Husserl's analysis of time. More generally speaking, the following analysis of time is indicative of my own preconceptions about the examination of memory; namely, that it is first and foremost a temporal affair, not a psychological one. The primary issue is not so much how we can see the past, but how the past can be *seen*. Where the answer to the second question implicitly answers both, the same cannot be said about the first. This is why situating my question primarily from within a temporal framework is so important. And since this temporal framework is phenomenological, the subordinate topic of consciousness is implicated automatically.

Before moving on, it is important to note that the question of the possibility of the given-past plagues far more than just the act of memory. In a very significant way, it is a question about the possibility of experience generally. How so? In any experience, time *passes* by. From one moment to the next, experience changes or endures; it quickens,

slows, or repeats. In most cases, people will say that experience experiences the *now* or the present. But what does this mean? What is the now? Does it not appear and simultaneously vanish? If an experience is essentially temporal, how can it persist throughout the constant change of time, forming the experiential units of intentional life? If experience were to only experience *the absolute now point* – a now that, by definition, does not at all persist – *experience* would be in flux. It would, in other words, not be experience. For if experience could hold only nows that did not endure, it could not hold objects; it could not, in other words, be intentional. As Jay Lampert writes, “our sense of inner time consists in our ability to retain experiences of objects seen in the past, hold them in present consciousness, and anticipate future continuations”.²³ Indeed, the present is anything but unproblematic.

If, however, the nows were synthesized and united, then experience could occur. But what would such a temporal synthesis look like? The synthetic unity of a temporal stretch presupposes the union of the past now with the present now (as well as the anticipation of the future now). In this way, experience could endure. As we shall see, this reflexive synthesis is what Husserl refers to as primary memory, as the memory that conditions the possibility of an experience generally. As can be noted presently, primary memory also falls prey to the problem of the given-past. If our experience is informed by the co-presence of the past, how is such a synthesis achieved? How is the *past* constantly made *present* again? Husserl’s own answer to this question will be explored in section 1.4 of this chapter.

²³ Lampert (2012), p 21.

1.2 Time

When Husserl discarded his imagistic theory of reproduction he also discarded the previously mentioned “prejudice of presence.”²⁴ Doing so allowed him to distance himself from Brentano in more ways than he could imagine, especially when it came to the issue of temporality. As Sokolowski has indicated: “Removal of the phantasm as a present picture in secondary remembering is a prelude to removal of a faded or decaying sense datum in primary memory [i.e. retention].”²⁵ Near the beginning of his lectures on time consciousness, Husserl begins to move away from a representational theory of endurance and change. In challenging us to account for the experience of change, endurance, and succession without already presupposing them, the bracketing of worldly time in §1 of the Lectures problematizes *all acts of experience*. For if we limit ourselves to the *experience* of time, all the objects that fall within that experience are accounted for. For this reason, Husserl writes:

It is certainly evident that the perception of a temporal object itself has a temporality, that the perception of duration itself presupposes duration of perception, that the perception of any temporal form itself has its temporal form.²⁶

²⁴ Husserl (2005).

²⁵ Sokolowski (1974), p. 153.

²⁶ TPITC, §7. It is important to note that Rudolf Bernet, Kern, and Marbach have suggested an unusual and misguided understanding of this quote. In their *Introduction to Husserlian Phenomenology*, they argue that this quote shows Husserl putting time-constituting consciousness, thereby subjecting himself to the regress he would later confront (see TPITC, §39). There is no good reason for reading the quote this way. For Husserl, immanent acts are, themselves, a unity constituted by time-consciousness, which constitutes itself. These unities have temporal duration, and it is clearly to this, and not to the time-constituting consciousness, that Husserl is here referring. The time-constituting consciousness is that which senses itself by sensing its own acts. I will talk more about this later.

This quote illustrates many things. Most importantly for our present purposes it illustrates the constituting power of temporal consciousness. *If* we are limiting ourselves to the given – *if* we are studying objects *as the correlates of consciousness*, as they are *meant* by a me irrespective of their *reality* – then the conditions for experience are also the conditions for objects. In the words of Husserl, “the epistemological question about the possibility of experience is the question about the essence of experience.”²⁷ Thus, the duration of the perception is the necessary, though insufficient, condition for the enduring object as experienced (i.e. *as* object). And if experience is possible only on the basis of consciousness’ being temporal, then it serves as a foundation for the phenomenological substratum. No experience could occur if “the stream of consciousness itself was a series of unconnected points of experiencing like a line of pearls.”²⁸ The problem, therefore, is accounting for temporal experience without presupposing that consciousness (or its objects) is in time.

If experience refuses to maintain its possibility under the strain of an absolute discontinuity between the now and the not-now, we must account for the not-now as being in union with the very fabric of the present, lived experience. According to Brentano – or, more specifically, to Husserl’s Brentano – the past and future moments of an experience are associated with the presented representationally. Each original now is transformed into a representation with the stamp of “past” on it; “each [following] representation belonging to this series reproduces the content of the preceding, but in

²⁷ TPITC, §2. I understand that in the TPITC Husserl is not doing transcendental phenomenology per se. He is doing something that looks an awful lot like it.

²⁸ Zahavi and Gallagher (2008), p. 73.

such a way that it always affixes the moment of the past to the new presentation.”²⁹ As Husserl points out, there are two obvious problems with this theory. According to Brentano our present experience is given along with a multiplicity of data that are representational, unoriginal, and temporally organized. Husserl argues that this raises the question: how do we know which data are present and which are past? Even if we could make this distinction, how could we then account for the different levels of the past? How would we know which datum was older, which one younger and so on? Husserl is quick to point out that differences in vivacity are not enough to make such a distinction. Indeed, “the fact that perception [renders] something as now adds nothing to the quality, intensity, and spatial determination of what is [rendered].”³⁰ Husserl’s point is that since many perceptions are indistinct and many representations are clear, we cannot distinguish between the now-datum and the represented past-datum by way of difference in quality.

The inability to discern the past from the present data forces this position to admit possibilities that contradict its own intention. In the most extreme case, the position is forced to abandon the possibility of change and alteration qua experiences. The evocation of the past in a datum that is, itself, present concentrates the entire duration into a single point, the present; in the case of change, “the space traversed by the body would appear as continuously filled, but we would not have the representation of movement.”³¹ While he admits that Brentano was both aware of this problem and in the pursuit of resolving it, Husserl ultimately condemns his teacher for leaving this problem unsettled. Even if representational consciousness imparts the stamp of “non-existence” or ‘past-ness’ on a

²⁹ TPITC, §3.

³⁰ TPITC, §5.

³¹ TPITC, §3.

particular datum, the position implicates the past in the present to an extent that would only conflate them.³² If “the previous phases of [a pedestrian’s] movement are perceptually present in the same way as his current position.... if that were the case the pedestrian would fill the entire space he [traverses].”³³

It is important to note that, in addition to these disapprovals, Husserl also criticizes Brentano for utilizing a truncated concept of representational phantasy – a concept he exploits for the purposes of explaining the unreal stamp of the present-past. Husserl’s main objection is that phantasy is itself the reproduction of a temporal act and therefore presupposes what it is meant to explain. In the case of representational phantasy, Husserl asks: “if the original intuition of time is already a creation of phantasy, then what distinguishes this fantasy of the temporal from the one in which we are conscious of something temporal that belongs to the more remote past.”³⁴ Bernet, Kern, and Marbach abbreviate this question and rephrase it phenomenologically: “is there not an essential distinction between the phantasy of a temporal object and the consciousness of what has just passed?”³⁵ This second objection to Brentano’s theory is stimulated by the phenomenological method itself, which hopes to sanctify, respect, and only *then* analyze, the already articulated realm of experience.

³² TPHIC, §6, esp. pp. 30–35. “Thus the past, insofar as it falls within the sphere of the original intuition of time, must at the same time be present...if a content that is perfectly like A is constantly in consciousness even with a new moment, then A is precisely not past, but enduring.”

³³ Zahavi (2010).

³⁴ TPITC, §6, pp. 18-19.

³⁵ Bernet, Rudolf, Iso Kern, and Eduard Marbach (1993).

If the past must be constitutive in the experience of duration and the duration of experience, it must function as such without falling prey to the same conceptual objections cited above. This is easier said than done – eradicating the possibility of these objections is, at the same time, eliminating the possibility of a present-past datum; a datum that would conflate two necessarily distinct temporal modes. Without the present-past, how are we to justify the possibility of succession and duration? In his gradual shift away from the ‘prejudice of presence’, Husserl became more and more able to account for unrepresented absences. What is more, Husserl was also at an advantage in dealing with this problem *phenomenologically*; that is, in a way that properly respects the difference between experience and the object *of* that experience. Against Brentano, Husserl claims he “finds temporal characters, succession and duration, not only in the primary contents [or irreducible sensuous material] but also in the apprehended objects *and the apprehending acts*.”³⁶ While the representational theory of the present-past attempted to ground the temporal phases of the object, it could not account for the temporality of the corresponding experiences. This is because the temporal phases of the object were, themselves, constructed by acts of the mind and could never, therefore, apply to the mind without regress; for if the mind produces successive time representationally, then a successive consciousness would require *another* consciousness in order to represent it (ad infinitum). And although this is not unlike the problem Husserl will find himself in, he will not make the mistake of accounting for the ‘experience of the durational object’ without accounting the ‘duration of that experience’.

³⁶ TPITC, §6.

In bracketing objective time, Husserl rearranges the levels and modes of temporal priority. Briefly, it is a shift from a transcendent time, in which both perception and the object run their course, to a time where the temporality of the experience grounds the possibility of objects or, as Gallagher puts it, “the [lived] present is not different from the duration of the act, and it is not something objective or measurable in time.”³⁷ Thus, we must differentiate the temporal dimensions of the object from the temporal dimensions of the experience while, at the same time, both privileging the latter (as constitutional) and maintaining the parallel flow of the former. Put differently, “the object-phases of the object are phenomenologically possible only as correlates to the parallel sense phases.”³⁸

Throughout his career, Husserl continuously makes this distinction between immanent and transcendent objects. While the former refer to the experiences, the latter refer to the objects of those experiences. Immanent objects (like an act of perception) are not objects in the true sense, in the sense of being *meant*. Rather, they are the *sensed*, though un-objectified, means through which meaning passes. When I experience a willow tree, I definitely experience, or *sense*, myself perceiving it (otherwise I wouldn't be experiencing anything); I do not, however, experience the willow tree and the perception of the willow tree in the same way. While I experience the former non-thematically, I experience the latter thematically. Moreover, it is important to separate “the contents of apprehension” from the “apprehension-intentions” within immanent objects themselves.³⁹ Although Husserl will later abandon this ‘apprehension content language’ for the terms ‘noesis’, ‘noema’ and ‘hylectic’ data in *Ideas I*, their meanings

³⁷ Gallagher (1979).

³⁸ TPITC, §6.

³⁹ TPITC, §95.

are similar (otherwise he would not write that hylectic data was comparable to “all the ‘experiences’ which in the *Logical Investigations* were designated primary contents”).⁴⁰ For Husserl, the apprehension content (or hylectic data) is synonymous with those appearing sensations that, phenomenologically speaking, rely on the relative position of the subject (i.e. the *data* of color, touch, sound, visual profiles, tactile differences etc). Importantly, these data, by themselves, are that in which a definite quality (i.e. the color red or roughness) and definite object (the farm) show themselves. Thus, these “sensory data offer themselves as material for intentional informing’s or bestowals of meaning at different levels.”⁴¹ I will, for instance, *mean* the same flower throughout all of the varying perspectives I force it through. In opposition to this data, or apprehension content, Husserl delineates immanent objects *simpliciter*; i.e. those apprehension-intentions that inform the matter, collecting it into a perception, memory, or phantasy. These apprehension-intentions are those acts of consciousness which *objectify*, and whose separation from their objects define phenomenology as such.

While we do not experience them in the same way as an object as meant, these immanent objects can be objectified in reflection; this objectification, however, bifurcates consciousness itself. In reflection, consciousness looks at itself – there is a thematic immanent object (an immanent object that is meant) and there is a non-thematic object (the immanent object that means). Reflective consciousness is often called thetic and pre-reflective consciousness is called non-thetic. In the *Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time* Husserl recognizes the priority of the temporality of immanent objects

⁴⁰ *Ideas*, §85.

⁴¹ *Ideas*, §85.

and, thus, spends most of his time explicating their possibility and sharpening the demarcation of their structures. Given the intentional nature of conscious acts, this explication automatically implicates the objects of these experiences in the analysis. Thus, for every experience-phase, there is an object phase and vice versa. As was previously mentioned, this constitutive activity is possible if, and *only if*, a continuum emerges among different moments, “linking” them together. When I hear the sound of my lover’s voice I do not experience a series of discontinuous ‘noises’; I hear a continuous *voice*, profuse with sense. Presupposing that time flows, how is it possible to maintain this continuity amidst flux? How is our experience allowed to be this way?

Husserl’s answer lies in what he calls retentive consciousness; this consciousness is nothing by itself but, rather, exists *as* the modification of the *primal impression* or source point.⁴² In one way these words seem overly complex. Like all phenomenological data, however, these two moments have their origin in our everyday understanding of time, deriving their phenomenological counterparts therein.

It is important to note that, for the most part, Husserl’s examination of time is formal. Insofar as these lectures deal with the pre-objective or pre-intentional conditions, they hold a unique position within Husserl’s works, which deal mainly with the intentional experiences of objects. As Jay Lampert has pointed out, this tension – i.e. between pre-objective (or formal) conditions and their fully embodied result – is divisive in the work itself. Lampert notes that “the former approach describes subjective time formally without concern for what objects we experience; the latter ties our experience of

⁴² TPITC, §11.

objective time concretely to the particular objects we experience”.⁴³ Indeed at a formal level, the first problem Lampert uncovers in Husserl’s time lectures would not be so definable.⁴⁴ As I understand it, this problem (what he calls the problem of “staggered time lines”) results from the inability to show how intentional experiences of differing tempos can occur simultaneously.⁴⁵ The very fact that simultaneity occurs, unifying two events into one now, is proof that different experiences are unified into one stream. Thus, everything that happens in the now will pass into the no longer now at the same rate even if these events are happening at a different tempo. From t_1 to t_2 , event X may begin to change while event Y endures as before. These two temporally different events can be happening simultaneously insofar as they are unified or ‘absorbed’ into the primordial flow of time. While this explains the unity of time, it becomes hard to explain why two events of differing tempos can occur at the same time. How, in other words, can they become synchronized? At the formal level of Husserl’s analysis, this does not seem problematic. Fundamentally, all simultaneous events are occurring at the same, primordial tempo. It is, rather, the relative rate and pace of change that is different between the events.⁴⁶ The primordial flow might, therefore, be that which *makes* the relativity of tempos and their synchronicity possible. When fully fleshed out, the

⁴³ Lampert (2012), p 22.

⁴⁴ Lampert (2012), p 22.

⁴⁵ Lampert (2012), p 25.

⁴⁶ In fact, I would like to pose this question to Lampert. What about the relativity of speed and rhythm? In this case, the primordial flow of time may be said to be absolute, while differing temporal speeds may be called relative. We can, for instance, say that we cast a fishing rod at the same time that lightning struck the water. Indeed, the lightning moves much faster relative to the cast; the lightning would have already struck by mid-cast. One event is faster than the other, though both occurred simultaneously. This is how Husserl could hold the contradictory positions of a time of differing speeds and a time of one tempo (Lampert 2012, p 27).

complexity of intentional experience makes any clear proof of this impossible. For how does this synchronization of staggered events occur in the first place? How does time allow for the differentiation and amalgamation of multidimensional temporal events occurring “simultaneously”? Thus, Husserl’s formalism may be said to suffer from the same shortcomings as most. The formal conditions are not easily translated into the full-bodied actualities of life.

1.3

Primal Impression

Each immanent object, each experience, is extended in time. This experience allows things to be experienced, to *be* phenomenologically. The preceding moments are filled with the contents of apprehension. They are filled only insofar they *have been* filled in a now that is no longer. In the form of the absolute now, a single content of apprehension can be held. This is what is actually being experienced, we say. What is actuality?

Every day we acknowledge something profound about the *now*; namely, that as soon as it is, it is no longer. We say that we will never get these moments back once they are gone; we say that the now does not persist. At the same time, however, we often say that everything that happens happens in the now. Things do not *happen* in the past – the past is made up of those events that *have* happened; and neither do they *happen* in the future – the future is made up of those indeterminate events that *may* come to be. Every day then, we implicate ourselves in an ancient problem: the now does not persist, yet it is all that *is*! In traditional metaphysics, the now is without persistence insofar as it cannot be said to have duration. As Lampert writes, “the idea of a temporal instant or point is not

very plausible, except artificially”.⁴⁷ In relation to its counter moments the future and past, Aristotle writes that the now “is the beginning of the one and the end of the other” respectively.⁴⁸ As such a limit, Aristotle simultaneously extinguishes the possibility of a ‘durational’ now (which would presuppose at least a ‘then’ and a ‘now’) and, at the same time, affirms its primacy as the ‘moment’ of *origin*, “an identical substratum” of presence.⁴⁹ Similarly, Husserl’s notion of the *primal impression* is both absolutely transient and absolutely persistent (though in a unique way). Like Aristotle, Husserl believes that the absolute “present is a limit” where the past and future ‘begin’.⁵⁰ On the one hand, “the *impressional* consciousness, constantly flowing, passes over into ever-new retentive consciousness.”⁵¹ On the other hand, the primal impression is a formal distinction that, despite its ever-newness, “is something absolutely unmodified, the primal source of all further consciousness.”⁵² For this reason the primal impression has been called the “motor” of time constitution.⁵³

Here, when Husserl says ‘unmodified’ he means *original*. More specifically, he conceptualizes the primal impression so that its originality is entirely abstract in isolation, becoming concrete only when positioned in relation to the other temporal modes. The *primal impression* is original (or *unmodified*) because the other two modes rely on it for their possibility: the *past* is precisely a past-now and the future is precisely a future-now.

⁴⁷ Lampert (2012), p 5.

⁴⁸ Aristotle, *Physics* 220a10–11.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ TPITC, §31.

⁵¹ TPITC, §11.

⁵² TPITC, §31.

⁵³ Bernet, Rudolf, Iso Kern, and Eduard Marbach (1993), p. 103.

Colloquially, this amounts to the fact that past and future are terms designating ‘now’s’ that are either not yet or ‘now’s’ have already been. Each past event was once a present one. Each future event – each event that will come to *be* – will confirm itself as *futural* in the present. Most significantly for our purposes here, we must emphasize that the primary past (or retention) is a modification of a primary impression. Husserl will argue that “a corresponding perception, or a corresponding *primal impression*, must precede the retention.”⁵⁴ Simply put, the past is the past *of* something that *was* present.

What is more, we often recognize that each new now is absolutely novel, that each is different from every other. Husserl’s position is similar to this. For him, the primal impression can be dissected into form and content. On the formal side, it is the absolute now of time-constituting consciousness, a now that is constantly being replaced. And regardless of the content that *fills* this ‘now’ intentionally, whether it is an object-phase or the parallel sensation-phase that satiates or fills the temporal form, the now, in itself, is absolutely unique:

The content, understood purely as content of sensation underlying the objectivating apperception, is extended, that is to say, each now has its content of sensation, and each different now has an individually different content, even if the content is exactly the same materially. Absolutely the same c now and later is perfectly alike as far as sensation is concerned, but the c now is individually different from the c later.⁵⁵

How is Husserl justified in saying this? Why is each now utterly different, constituting an absolutely unique shimmer? How “in the face of the phenomenon of continuous change, does the consciousness of objective time and, above all, the consciousness of an identical

⁵⁴ TPITC, §31.

⁵⁵ TPITC, §31

position in time come about?”⁵⁶ It seems that the present isn’t really what we understand the present to be; namely, the *living moment* in its entirety, complete with acts and objects. In its absolute flux the primal impression destabilizes the living present to a point where it is no longer conceivable. Objects and acts without any kind of duration or endurance are not, in any way, objects or acts. At this point it is important to note that the *primal impression* is one temporal dimension of the *living present* (*lebendige Gegenwart*) and *not* the present as given every day. It is easiest to understand this distinction in a non-phenomenological context. First we must differentiate between a now that simply changes and a now that is *ever* changing. In the former case, the now *endures* for the moment that it encompasses and then passes away. This is similar to the instances we *experience* every day: we see a bird fly by our car window; we smell a rose as we bike past it; we inaugurate a kiss, etc. This form of now can be likened to what we often call *moments* and must be differentiated sharply from an *ever-changing* now. This chaotic now has passed as soon as it *is*. Nothing occurs within its limits because an occurrence would presuppose duration – it cannot be captured. While the former now encompasses a duration of time and is, thus, spacious or thick, the second type is without any duration. It is an absolute, abstract limit. While the first form of the now *is* and *then* ceases to be, the second *is-not* as soon as it *is*. Indeed, the ‘*is-and-then*’ dynamic of moments is indicative of their duration. The second kind of now disallows what we generally mean by something *being*; namely, that it *is*. For if an entity is placed within this second now, it is no longer as soon as it is – it does not endure. If we say that time is “made” of an ever-new now we must admit that *objects of absolute disunity are not objects* or, what is the

⁵⁶ TPITC, §31.

same, that an object, in order to be, must form a temporal unity. In this way, Husserl advocates for two different kinds of presence. First, the primal impression, our source point, is the moment of actuality existing between the two forms of the not-now. Nothing happens in this present, not because nothing endures, but because there is no duration. There is a shimmer. The living present, on the other hand, “is an absolute concretum because everything happens within it.”⁵⁷

Since the ever changing now works to constitute the living present, we arrive at the same question we have already been asking. If each now is both absolutely unique and absolutely transient, how do we experience anything at all? If primal impressions are separated from each other *in essence*, if each constitutes an absolutely unique form regardless of its fulfillment, how are we to explain consciousness at all? If consciousness does not endure, how is an intentional act possible? How are phenomenological objects possible? I will now set out to answer this question.

1.4

Retention

Besides the question above, we are asking two other smaller questions: first, how is every new now novel? Second: how “in the face of the phenomenon of continuous change, does the consciousness of objective time and, above all, the consciousness of an identical position in time come about?”⁵⁸ In the following explanation of retention, I will begin to answer all three. This is the beginning of Husserl’s answer – the full account will occupy the entire chapter. Apart from these specific questions, it is also important to remember

⁵⁷ Sokolowski (1974), p. 158.

⁵⁸ TPITC, §31.

the twofold purpose of this temporal analysis. First, I am trying to establish a context in which the problem of memory – i.e. *the problem of the given past* – can be approached and perhaps advanced. For Husserl, this problem comes down to whether the past is given directly or is represented by images. In addition to this, I am also laying down a temporal schema in which the *problem of the given-past* can become meaningful. I will now attempt to address the more pressing questions concerning the phenomenological structure of time.

In their transience, each primal impression *qua* primal impression expires. As already noted, this expiration is without any kind of duration (insofar as duration would presuppose a continuum between a then and a now). When a *primal impression* expires, however, it does not disappear from being; rather, it is *replaced* by a new impression, which “changes [it] into something that has been.” In this way, Husserl argues that an “always new now continuously relieves the one that has passed over into modification.”⁵⁹ And “when the consciousness of the now...passes over into retention, this retention itself is a now in turn, something actually existing.”⁶⁰ When the primal impression is replaced, it is modified in its entirety. Though the object/sense-phases of the act are preserved in this usurpation, the totality of the primal impression is modified *ontologically* – it comes to *be* in the mode of having-been. Non-presence is, itself, *present*: “retention does not

⁵⁹ TPITC, §11.

⁶⁰ TPITC, §11.

transmute what is absent into something present; it presents the absent in its absence.”⁶¹
In retention, consciousness *intuits* the just-past directly.

Furthermore, since “every actually present now...is subject to the law of modification,” and every modification pushes the past further away, Husserl concludes that retentions are, themselves, subjects of incessant re-modification; they become “the retention of retention...continuously.”⁶² A distant retention is the retained past of a series of retentions *just like* it in content. In other words, it is identically the same as both the original retention and impression, except that its temporal position has changed: “since each retention is in itself continuous modification that carries within it...the heritage of the past in the form of a series of adumbrations.”⁶³ Ultimately, the implicit heritage of the retention refers back to the impression that birthed it. And though the more distant phases of retention no longer *actively* constitute the living-present, suffering the diminishment of continuous re-modification, they must elicit (even vaguely) the “objective intention” of its original impression; if it did not – if retention was unable to carry on the material of the impression – unity could not be constituted. The living-present would not be. This is not to say that more distant retentions suffer from deterioration in terms of liveliness; indeed, the older retention, un-active in the fabric of the living-present, has passed into the “night of forgetfulness.” As we read in *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*:⁶⁴

⁶¹ Brough (2010a).

⁶² TPITC, §11.

⁶³ Ibid. §11.

⁶⁴ ACPAS, p. 465.

Those retentions taking place *originally* do remain non-intuitive and sink into an un-differentiated general horizon of forgetfulness that has, as it were, become life-less – provided that an associated awaking has not taken place.⁶⁵

Retentions can be forgotten but they are not, therefore, dead. A present experience – especially a secondary memory – can provoke the awakening of a once-forgotten retention. Through association, for example, the smell of play dough can re-awaken experiences I had in early kindergarten (and do so vividly). In this way, old retentions are not dead. They are inanimate, not –living. However, this lifelessness does not exclude the possibility of harboring the objective “template” of the original impressions. If they did not, they would not be what they are: temporally modified original impressions. In this way, “it is a [transcendentally] universal and fundamentally essential fact that every now, in sinking back into the past, maintains its strict identity”⁶⁶

Since there are fundamental absurdities in the denial of such a structure, we can look at the position macroscopically. For if the just past was essentially different than the now it is the modification of, we would be unable to discover any past at all. If any moment were different than the past it engenders, it would not be the past at all. The present experience would be entirely different than its primary memory (or retention) – it would not be the *past of said moment*. The past, in its sense, is the past *of a present*. What is more, for Husserl “the object of the primary memory (retention), which is being pushed back continuously, does not change its place in time at all, but only its distance from the

⁶⁵ Ibid. §19.

⁶⁶ TPITC, §30.

actual now.”⁶⁷ The past-now does not, if you will, exchange its temporal position with other nows; the before(s) and after(s) of a past-now do not change. And though there come to be more after(s), the before(s) are permanently affixed in their relative positions. If they were not – if, for instance, the older became the younger and the younger, the older – a sequence could not be constituted or maintained. Surely, I could confuse the temporal positions of secondary memories but this is something entirely different from confusing the sequences of their original constitution.

With retention, “the matter is the same, the temporal position is the same temporal position, and only the mode of givenness has changed; it is givenness of the past.”⁶⁸ In this respect, our question about the novelty of the now can now be answered. The novelty of the now is nothing but its *relative originality* or, rather, its unmodified-ness. Two primal impressions can be filled with the exact same quality or material without surrendering to a simultaneity or repetition that would conflate them. Each primal impression comes *before* a particular future and *after* a particular past; and since the primal impression is *always passing away*, the relative position of each now is unique. When the primal impression (p1) is replaced by another primal impression (p2), p2 is the “after” of p1 and p1 is the ‘before’ of p2. P1 is before and p2 is after. When p2 is replaced by p3, p2 and p1 will maintain their own relation while both becoming the ‘before’ of p3, and so on. Simply put, each now has a different ‘before’ and different ‘after’, and it is this ecstatic arrangement that bestows absolute novelty on the now: “what distinguishes primal impression from primal impression is the individualizing

⁶⁷ Ibid., §31.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

moment of the impression of the *original temporal position*, which is something fundamentally different from the quality and other material moments of the content of sensations.”⁶⁹ Furthermore, since every primal impression is relatively unique, so is every retention as well (insofar as the whole primal impression is modified).

According to this position – which is a very ‘intuitive’ phenomenology of time – we cannot imagine an absolute repetition of a now. You cannot make the past present *again* itself. This ‘again’ is the central source of ‘retrieval, revival, restoration etc...’ and, itself, presupposes the ordinary flow of time – a flow that cannot be repeated. For in order for a now to happen *again* there must be both a ‘then’ that is being repeated and a ‘now’ in which this repetition occurs. Thus, the temporal distance between the original ‘then’ and its repetition in the ‘now’ signifies a repetition of content, even absolutely; after all, we must remember that “each different now has an individually different content, even if the content is exactly the same materially.”⁷⁰ As a repetition, however, the repeated now is not the same now as the original ‘now’ insofar as the very possibility of the ‘again’, of repetition and revival, is conditioned by the relative temporal difference between the two nows. In order for something to happen again now it must have happened already. Thus, nows cannot be repeated; their novelty is unqualified and their uniformity is their absolute difference from the other. The ‘now’ can be defined negatively: the now is that which is not any other now. If the now cannot be any other *now*, can there be two ‘nows’ existing simultaneously? The short answer is, no. For if two nows existed simultaneously they would have to exist in a third that would supersede

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

them. Simultaneous nows require *one* now that contains and sublates them (for without being consumed by the one now they could not be simultaneous). In this way, simultaneity itself presupposes uniformity and oneness of the now and cannot, therefore, contain two nows without annulling them into itself.

With this in mind we can move on to our second question. For Husserl, this structure of retentional modification – which leaves the *content* and relative *temporal* position of the primal impression intact – is the condition for the possibility of “the consciousness of objective time and, above all, the consciousness of identical position and extension in time.”⁷¹ When a primal impression is ‘immortalized’ in retention, sentenced to perpetual modification, the position and objective content remain identical. Because of this, the same sensuous content – and so any object at all – can appear throughout the temporal flux of the intentional act. At different phases of the experience of perceiving a bear, for instance, the continuity between multiplicities of retentional sensations is constituted by the self-sameness of each. Correspondingly, the more original continuity between the multiple moments of the experience is constituted for the same reason. In each moment, the same perception persists (or alters) because the just past remains.

For Husserl, time is constantly pushing the past further back – there is constant change. At the same time, there is constancy insofar as each retention preserves the objective template of the unique primal impression of its origin. In this way, every now consciousness (along with its sensuous data) is entirely different regardless of said content. The living-present experience of a bear is constituted by ever-new and original

⁷¹ Ibid.

primal impressions and their sensations. What is more, each new now is different than the preceding and this novelty is constituted by its relative temporal position, not by its content (as said previously): “each actually present now creates a new time-point because it creates a new object, or rather, a new object point.”⁷² In this way, the same content can find itself enduring through a process of constant change (i.e. the blackness of the bear). Each primal impression passes over into retention and so does its content. The retentions, having maintained the content and position of the former, build up on top of other, preceding retentions that have similar content and constitute the identity of the act.

The same sensation now and in a different now possesses a difference...that correspond to the absolute temporal position; this difference is the primal source of the individuality, of the ‘this’, and thereby of the absolute temporal position. Each phase of the modification has essentially the same qualitative content and the same temporal moment, although modified and it has them in itself in such a way that, by their means, the subsequent apprehension of identity is made possible.⁷³

For Husserl then, an enduring act of perception is possible because the intentional sense is allowed to persist from one moment to the next: “for each individual object (each unity whether immanent or transcendent) endures, and necessarily endures.”⁷⁴ The same perception can be found in many different nows because they can be simultaneously unified by their content and different according to their temporal positions. The perceived *qua* perceived endures for as long as the perception does, for “it belongs to the essence of a consciousness having this [temporal structure] to be at once a consciousness of a unity

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid., §78.

of the immanent sort and a consciousness of a unity of a transcendent sort.”⁷⁵ In the flow of consciousness, primal impressions pass over into retentions. Simultaneously, the corresponding primal contents pass over into retentional contents; “and these primal contents are bearers of primal apprehensions that, in their flowing interconnection, constitute the temporal unity of the act.”⁷⁶ In this way, time allows unity to appear because time-consciousness itself is the formal unification of itself; each primal impression is compounded with a retentional moment and future moment, or protention (the to come). The same act can persist from one moment to the next because time-consciousness, in its self-elaboration, retains each replaced primal impression along with its relative time position in a modified form.

(It is important to recognize that this structure purports to offer a necessary, though insufficient, condition for the possibility of unity. Though immanent and transcendent objects can happen only as unities in time-consciousness, this does not mean that the very existence of time-consciousness causes these object unities. Initially, studies in time-consciousness leave out studies in noetic and noematic unities and the other essential dimensions of their constitution.)

Because it constitutes the possibility of identity and endurance, this structure can also explain simultaneity and change. Before moving on to examine these phenomena, it is important to note that Husserl distinguishes between temporal and non-temporal objects (and that these objects will persist and change in a manner peculiar to their way of being). Unlike non-temporal objects, “temporal objects ...are not only unities in time but

⁷⁵ Ibid., §43.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

also contain temporal extension in themselves.”⁷⁷ Surely, both kinds of objects are unities in time. If they were not, they could not exist. Temporal objects, however, are one with the duration that constitutes them. I can, for instance, interrupt my perception of a flower and still say that I have perceived it. If I interrupt my perception of a movie or song, on the other hand, I will often say, ‘I have seen or heard *some* of it’. Temporal objects include, without being limited to, melodies, movies, events, and, especially, immanent objects. Even though they occur pre-reflectively, all immanent objects are extended in time and constitute the duration of the act. (Indeed, the analysis of time-consciousness is incredibly significant: the fact that immanent objects are both temporal and the condition for all objects phenomenologically proves it.) Thus, any object for Husserl must form a temporal unity. Unity is, therefore, not a differentia bifurcating the being of objects. Rather, temporal objects can be differentiated from non-temporal objects insofar as their *pieces*, or moments, do not exist simultaneously in relation to another but form a sequence under which a unity is constituted. A non-temporal object, on the other hand, has spatial limits. Take a sailboat, for instance. I can begin at the mast and follow my perception down to the bottom of the rudder. While this perception is temporally extended, the corresponding moments of the sailboat are not. The limits of the spatial object are simultaneous, any of which can signify its beginning and end. The limits of temporal objects are not simultaneous and are, therefore, incapable of being interchangeable in terms of beginnings and ends; the end is always temporally older than the beginning and its pieces are *always* sequential. Now, while non-temporal objects are not, in themselves, temporally extended, the intentional gaze that objectifies them *is*; this

⁷⁷ Ibid., §7.

means that, while the pieces of the perception unity are temporally extended, the pieces of the object are not. Even so, spatial objects endure from one moment to the next within the *perception* of them; their pieces endure through the ever-changing perception of them. What is more, we must admit that this endurance is what allows for the *simultaneity of their limits* and, thus, the essence of their spatiality. In this way, we can say that non-temporal entities are also temporal entities, but in a different sense. While their pieces endure and, thus, occur simultaneously, the pieces of a temporal object do not – they run off in sequence. In the case of temporal objects, the pieces of the unity of the act and the pieces of the unity of the object are temporally parallel to one another, forming a parallel *sequence*.

In the case of simultaneity, the innumerable sensations that fill the same primal impression will maintain their identical temporal point as they pass into retention.⁷⁸ If the object-phases of two perceived entities grow into the living present together, meaning that each has filled the same series of primal impressions, then they are simultaneous: “the actuality of the present now is *one* now and constitutes *one* temporal position, however many objectivities are separately constituted in it [simultaneously].”⁷⁹ Contents of entirely different types can co-exist within the same primal impression – their difference is a matter of their content, their unity is a matter of the temporal form: “in a group of primal sensations, primal sensation is distinguished from primal sensation by means of content; only the now remains the same.”⁸⁰ As these simultaneous contents are temporally modified – as they fall away into *retention*, into the just past – they are altered

⁷⁸ Ibid., §33.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid., §38.

in terms of form. The contents are still simultaneous except now they are in the past. Simultaneity is the unity of many different contents within the temporal forms of either present or past.⁸¹ In the future, nothing can be simultaneous because nothing exists, or has existed. We can anticipate simultaneity without anything yet existing simultaneously.

Change, on the other hand, occurs in an object when the synthetic continuity of content within “the same genus of quality” is broken, interrupted by a new primal content.⁸² In the case of a melody, the enduring tone is replaced, not by an image, smell, or texture, but by a tone of differing quality. When a non-temporal object undergoes change, the same thing happens (it goes from being red to blue; from being loud, to quiet; from being this to that). The difference, of course, is that only temporal objects (e.g. the melody) come to be through those changes. Of course, any genesis is, itself, a temporal process (the growth of the baby etc....) but this does not mean that the object enduring the genesis is temporally extended. A change occurs, then, when something that has been continuous becomes discontinuous, when there is a break in content between a then and a now.⁸³ And since “a discontinuity is not possible at every time-point” – for then no objects would come to be – it is safe to say that, “discontinuity presupposes continuity.”

⁸¹ This is not to assume that these are the only temporal forms. Also, calling the present a *form* could be entirely problematic insofar as ‘*forms*’ are enduring and the now is not. While I would agree that it is problematic, I would add that the ever-changing character of the now is precisely what is enduring, what is *formal*. Just because no two nows are ever the same does not mean that they are not each nows. The now is replaced by another now without anything in-between them; in this way the now is constant. It is constantly different from itself while, at the same, replacing itself. This is why the *now* “persists through continuous change of matter.” See *Ideas*, §81.

⁸² TPITC, §41.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ In other words, there can be continuous change (as in the case of time-consciousness) or continuous duration – in either case, there is continuity. Continuous discontinuity, on the other hand, is unthinkable chaos; first, nothing could endure (that presupposes *continuous* duration); second, nothing could change (that would presuppose a *continuous* something undergoing change); third, nothing could be constantly changing (because change is, here, continuous).⁸⁵ Thus, “something enduring must be there in the variation and in the change as well.”⁸⁶ In order for consciousness to change from perception to memory, for instance, it must be the same, self-identical, consciousness that undergoes the change. And though this self-identical consciousness is undergoing change all the time, it is self-unifying (by way of retention). In the next section, I will further examine how time-consciousness is self-unifying.

Knowing the difficulties inherent in allowing the positing of the past in a present datum of imagination, Husserl maintains that retention is itself given to consciousness *as* past: “it is [an] actually existing present...but not an [actual] present.”⁸⁷ Now, while Husserl often maintains that retention is *intended* – often calling it “retentional consciousness” – we must be weary of such determinations. After all, “given that retention constitutes the temporal horizon the [*living*] present...it should be considered as part of perceptual consciousness.”⁸⁸ In other words, retentional consciousness is not an

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ TPITC, §11. With brackets removed and rephrased.

⁸⁸ Sokolowski (1974), p. 167.

intentional act directed towards objects *per se*; indeed, retentions make these objects possible. Where do retentions reside then? How are we aware of them at all?

In a way, this is a trick question and I may as well be transparent from the outset. Retentions cannot be a kind of ‘content’ present to consciousness – Husserl would then fall into the same trap that Brentano. For this reason, retentions cannot be given beside the objects they work to constitute; if retentions “reside” anywhere, they reside in consciousness. But this is also misleading; for how can anything reside *in* consciousness? Do retentions “reside” like retirees in their cottages? Is consciousness like a cottage? Because of these unavoidable absurdities, it is misleading to think about retentions as *anything* at all (though it is admittedly useful when it comes to their analysis). As Gallagher suggests, it is best to think of retentions as the effects of a function, or activity, of consciousness: “retention is precisely a performance, and this performance is essentially a functioning of consciousness.”⁸⁹ In this way, retentions are the name given to the self-reflexive nature of consciousness itself: “the flux of consciousness, on the basis of this ‘retentioning’, is its own self-awareness.”⁹⁰ I will continue to explore these structures of time-consciousness in the next section.

We are also beginning to see that the *problem of the given-past* may be more problematic than imagined. Indeed, Husserl argues that the past is, in an essential sense, intended in every living present. As past, however, it is an intention whose object is modified in its entirety. More precisely, the past is *not* original and cannot, therefore, be

⁸⁹ Gallagher (1979), p. 453.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 453.

given in the full-bodied manner of the present – the retentional intention is doomed to be empty.

1.5

Time-Consciousness

We have now distinguished and organized the different temporal objects and the structure of their priority. On the most basic level, we have transcendent objects that are either temporal or non-temporal (though both are unities in time). These are the objects that are experienced by the acts of consciousness, the *immanent* objects (perception, remembrance, phantasy, reflection). As reflection demonstrates, these immanent objects are, themselves, constituted in time-consciousness; the phases of the act are retained and form a continuum in which they are unified. These immanent objects – which are pre-reflectively experienced – constitute transcendent, phenomenological objects. The second level constitutes the first. If the phases of the act are retained, the question arises: in *what are they retained?* If immanent objects are unities *in* time-consciousness – in a time that precedes their origin, exceeds their end, and defines their limits – then what distinguishes the two levels of consciousness? If I hear a melody, I must retain the moments of the melody and the moments of the experience *of* the melody. If I must experience the past phases of an experience, must I not posit another consciousness that will experience those phases and so on ad infinitum? If *experience* must be *experienced* as we have said – if “there is indeed an awareness of acts... as temporal [unities]” – how do we avoid falling into an infinite regress? If every lived experience (*Erlebnis*) is experienced (*Erlebt*), must we not posit another experiencing consciousness for every experienced one? I pre-reflectively experience myself pulling flowers. I *experience* the experience. If the pre-

reflective consciousness is experiencing, what is experiencing *it*; *how is it experienced*? It must be experienced – if it wasn't, it would not be what it is. For phenomenology, this problem is incredibly significant. Since the phenomenological world is constituted by the experiencing ego, the experiencing consciousness is synonymous with the *constituting* and the *experienced*, with the *constituted*. On this basis, the above problem can be rephrased in the terms of phenomenology: if every constituting level of consciousness is a unity that is itself temporally constituted, how can we avoid a regress and posit a final level – a level that constitutes without having to be constituted? Husserl himself was aware of this regress:

Without a doubt a difficulty does present itself here: If a self-contained flow [or immanent object]...has elapsed, I can nevertheless look back on it; it forms, so it seems, a unity in memory. Hence the flow of consciousness obviously becomes constituted in consciousness as a unity too. The unity of a tone duration, for example, becomes constituted in the flow, but the flow itself in turn as the unity of the consciousness of the tone-duration. And must we not also go on to say that this unity becomes constituted in an altogether analogous way and is every bit as much a constituted temporal series....⁹¹

If each temporal unity is constituted by a constituting unity, how can we account for a final constituting consciousness that does not require another, lower-level consciousness to constitute its unity? Husserl's way of escaping this regress is by showing that, at the most fundamental level, consciousness is actively constituting itself: "there is one unique flow of consciousness in which both the unity of the tone in immanent time and the unity of the flow of consciousness itself becomes constituted at once."⁹² How is this possible?

⁹¹ TPITC, §39.

⁹² TPITC, §38.

Husserl's answer is complex and is still the crux of an essential disagreement among scholars. Husserl believes that time-consciousness unifies itself in its own temporal movement. Every primal impression is replaced, pushed back, and retained. In this way, these phases of consciousness do not leave consciousness – they are retained *over and over* again, becoming retention of the retention and so on.⁹³ In its reference to a now that is now longer, each retention is positioned in relation to both the current primal impression and to every earlier or later retention. If retention (a) immediately precedes impression (b), then retention (a) will immediately precede retention (b); (a), however, becomes the retention of a retention when (b) becomes a retention, and is replaced by (c). Impression (c), on the other hand, will be twice removed from retention (a) and once removed from retention (b). Here, (a) is the retention of what was retained when (b) replaced its impressional origin; it is the retention of a retention. Each further retention contains within itself the degree of its unoriginality, the extent to which it is removed from the current now (how many 'times' it has been pushed back). *It is, in essence, its relation to the now.* Thus, each retention is positioned in relation to each later retention, ending in its relation to the now: "the retention of the retention has intentionality not only in relation to what is immediately retained, but also to what, in the retaining, is retained of the second degree and ultimately in relation to the primal datum."⁹⁴ And since these retentions do not 'leave' consciousness, each primal impression is positioned in relation to each preceding retention. Each moment in consciousness will come to exist, will exist as such, *only* in relation to every other moment. Insofar as it is a system of self-reference,

⁹³ TPITC, §39.

⁹⁴ TPITC, §39.

time-consciousness is aware of itself: “the flow of consciousness that constitutes immanent time not only exists, but is so remarkably and yet intelligibly fashioned that a self-appearance of the flow necessarily exists in it.”⁹⁵ In its essential self-reference and self-constitution, absolute time-consciousness avoids the infinite regress previously mentioned. Absolute consciousness – the consciousness that constitutes all subsequent levels – experiences immanent objects by first experiencing itself; it is the experiencing and the experienced.

Husserl’s position is that, in grounding all temporal movements, time-consciousness cannot be spoken of temporally. It is not *in* time – it *is* time. We cannot say it changes, is simultaneous, or endures; this language belongs to the constituted temporal horizons. If we talk of time-consciousness in temporal language, if we speak as though the constituting-consciousness were in time, we depreciate its time-engendering function (and also, re-ignite the infinite regress). For even though Husserl calls the absolute consciousness a flow, he confines this to a purely metaphorical use: “it is absolute subjectivity and has the absolute properties of something to be designated *metaphorically* as flow.”⁹⁶ The philosophical reasons for this linguistic prohibition are also important. The flow is not a succession and, therefore, cannot change or endure: “no phase of this flow can be expanded into a continuous succession, and therefore the flow cannot be conceived as so transformed that this phase would be extended with itself.”⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ TPITC, §36.

⁹⁷ Ibid. As this section shows, succession is the duration of a series of nows, nows that can be *followed* and *preceded* by other nows. Furthermore, each now – in order to be limited by other nows – must, itself, have durational limits; each now must be the unity of retentions, protentions, and an impression datum. When discussing the absolute flow, we

Simply put, this argument shows that the constituting cannot be confused with the constituted, lest we wish to beg the question.

In recent literature there has been a lot of debate on whether or not Husserl's absolute time-consciousness is necessary at all. Some have argued that it is nothing but the abstraction of immanent-time, the time of successive immanent objects: "the flux of consciousness" is consciousness abstractly considered, "purified of phases, and of immanent unities in inner time."⁹⁸ Gallagher and Zahavi have argued such a view. Generally speaking, the crux of this debate rests on whether Husserl needs an absolute consciousness to account for the pre-reflective awareness of immanent experience. Zahavi argues that pre-reflective experience-objects are not objects at all: "experience itself is not pre-reflectively experienced *as* objects."⁹⁹ We experience our experiences only in reflection; pre-reflectively, these experiences are sensed but not as objects: "pre-reflectively, the stream of consciousness is given to us as a flowing unity...originally, consciousness does not appear to itself chopped up into bits."¹⁰⁰ Since there are no longer any pre-reflective experience-objects, Zahavi argues that there is no good reason to employ a lower-level, objectifying consciousness. Rather, "the experience is given in and

must strip away any object-unity between these tripartite structures (besides its own self-unity) and, in doing so, recognize the faultless, duration-less moments of its structure. For the duration of nows in succession implies a radical difference between it and the flow. For in the absolute flow, the primal impression is *followed* by retention and *preceded* by protention – it is not followed and preceded by other durational nows. In this way, each of the three tripartite moments is without any duration of their own. Since duration is composed of nows that have their own duration, the primal flow has no duration (because each of its moments has no duration). For this reason, a succession of primal impressions cannot be said to be a succession at all.

⁹⁸ Gallagher (1979), p. 452.

⁹⁹ Zahavi (2010), p. 332.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 336.

through and for itself.”¹⁰¹ Brough, on the other hand, argues that absolute time consciousness is anything but a superfluous appendage. While he agrees that pre-reflective experience is not chopped up into object bits, he maintains that it is, in fact, “jointed.”¹⁰² If definite limits did not manifest themselves in immanent experience, “the reflective discrimination between my current act of thinking about time-consciousness and my simultaneous hearing of an airplane passing overhead would seem arbitrary.”¹⁰³ In other words, reflection shows that we are able to distinguish between the different kinds of acts; these acts must lie ready for reflective objectification. If pre-reflective experience were not in some way articulated “what would guide acts of reflection?”¹⁰⁴ Since immanent unities are experienced as unities (though not as thematic objects *per se*), Brough argues for the necessity of absolute consciousness. For the reasons he gives, I tend to side with Brough. While my experience is not chopped up into bits, I can pre-reflectively discern when a perception ends and a memory begins. I know the difference between seeing and touching, thinking and walking etc. Acts of consciousness end, consciousness does not.

This whole debate revolves around what the term “object” means. Zahavi has a hard time accounting for non-thematic, immanent objects. Brough acquiesces to the extent that he posits a difference between thematic and non-thematic objects. In contrast

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 334.

¹⁰² Brough (2010a), p. 33.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

to Zahavi, however, Brough maintains a broader definition of intentionality, where consciousness can be consciousness *of* un-thematic, immanent objects.¹⁰⁵

1.6

Protention

Protention is one last aspect of time-consciousness that needs to be elucidated. It is, so to speak, the future-oriented *retention*, occurring along with every primal impression. Instead of retaining what has occurred, protention point towards what will occur in the coming impression; protentions “point ahead to the future [content] and are fulfilled just as long as this content endures.”¹⁰⁶ Unlike retentions, which hold content that has been, protentions hollowly intend the coming phases. Since the subject of their intention is the future – and the future is the undetermined *itself* – the anticipated phases are generally highly indeterminate. On the other hand, it is often specific, intending what would be continuous with what is and has been. When the arrival of the future satisfies this intention, continuity is established; when it is dissatisfied, discontinuity. Even in the case of dissatisfied protentions, however, the more general aspects of the ‘anticipation’ are often satiated. In all cases within intentional life, the general anticipation of “something coming next” is always satisfied – when it isn’t, intentional life is over. Protentions are not only the pre-reflective expectation of the coming phases – they are the anticipation of the impending generally.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 47.

¹⁰⁶ TPITC, §40.

Like retentions, protentions work to constitute the living-present and must, therefore, not be confused with everyday acts of expectation. In the genesis of the living present, protentions intend the coming content in such a way to allow identity and unity to occur. In other words, protentions ‘anticipate’ phases that would establish continuity with the previous phases of an experience.¹⁰⁷ We experience this pre-reflectively by way of continuity; while the unfolding of constituted objects often surprises us, we are not often surprised about the unfolding of contents. When we are surprised, a disappointed protention is rarely to blame. It is, more often than not, the disappointment of the motivated, pre-reflective anticipation of the coming *living present*. When the ulterior profile of a building presents something beyond my expectation (i.e. a hidden waterway), protentions have already been at work *constituting* the perception of the unexpected. Protentions, rather, might promise us the future existence of what is constituted. In this way, they allow for the feeling of continuity and discontinuity. If I am moving around a single tree and come across a drastic change in color, the discontinuity that I feel is a result of a disappointed protentions. While it is hard to divide pre-objective from objective continuities – and while the former ultimately ground the latter – protentions must be secured in their own, pre-objective, domain. I do not anticipate “tree” protentionally, but the phases that fulfill my perception of it. It may be useful to reserve the term *anticipation* for the more fundamental function of protentional consciousness and *expectation* for its objective counterpart.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

Chapter Two:

Memory and Reference

2.1

The task of this chapter

With this temporal schema established, we are now prepared to push ahead and confront the problem of the *given-past*. Within this context, how is the past present in memory? Is the past directly present to consciousness in memory or is it merely represented, mediated by an image? In this chapter, I will give an argument in favor of the second position: memories are images. At the same time, I will not reject Husserl's view outright; in a way, the past *is* present in memory. As we will see in section 1.10, retentional intentions are essential to the formation of memories and thereby implicate their reflexivity presence in our memories. Beyond this, I will depart from Husserl. I will argue that while the past is present to us, the past is, itself, *unoriginal*. The past always designates a past *present* to which it can only refer and never promise. Thus, while memories are *of* the past, the past is the past *of* a present. And since the object of memory is always the past *present*, I will argue that this object is never *given* – it is only ever invoked in the image consciousness that intends it. In other words, the past is *not* something that can be given immediately – it can only be *meant* or intended. In this chapter, I will make this argument in detail.

As I did in chapter one, I will also be creating a context in which these issues can be expanded and confronted. In this case, I will be establishing a preliminary phenomenology of memory. In the first section, I will relate the schema of time to the

problem of the given-past (i.e. to memory). In the second section, I will discuss the two-tracked nature of memory consciousness, its implications, and the confusions it can produce. Next, I will show how memory is essentially positional and, paradoxically, veridical.

2.2

Memory: How is it (that it's) True?

This elucidation of time in Chapter one is not an analysis of the living present, but of its a priori genesis. The unitary past, present, and future a priori structure of the *living present* has its parallel structure in the living realm itself. Thus, we cannot think of the genesis of the living-present as originating temporally; when I experience the world, I do not pre-objectively 'put things together' in a priori time. The movement from primordial time to the living present is not temporal. A priori time is the condition for the possibility of the *duration of perception and the perception of duration* and is known reflectively. The original realm is composed of the necessary features that, in their unfolding, are responsible for the world *as an intentional, phenomenological matrix*. This is my every day realm, complete with objects, people, and ideas. It is also flowing; while the experiences in its unity come and go, I am always standing in the living now. Though absent, the events that have been and will be are still intended; they are remembered, expected, retained, or protended. In its constant activity, retention retains the content and the event alike, the genetic and the living. Similarly, protentions anticipate according to the meanings of the living present and, in so doing, constitute expectations. I am, in other words, contextualized. I sit here, retaining the events of yesterday. More generally, I know that I am a student, a resident of Guelph, the son of Ron and Jo, and the brother of

Rory etc.... The past is “not something to be re-constructed out of materials which are atomically present,” it the fundamental dimension and source for our living present.¹⁰⁸ I am where I am because I am where I have been.

The living present is the site for all experience and verification: “whatever presents itself in intuition in original form (as it were in its bodily reality) is simply to be accepted as it gives itself to be.”¹⁰⁹ And while the living-present is ecstatic, constituted with the non-presences of the retentional past and protended future, this does not deny these constitutional non-presences their verifiability. In valid perception, there is non-perception (retention) insofar as non-perception is part of that veridical perception: “just like the tone itself that is given ... as enduring has the mode of certainty ... so too do we see here the necessity of the tone that is given ... as just passed having the mode of certainty.”¹¹⁰ In any given perception, the just past is *given*; the absolute present is never perceived. As Zahavi and Gallagher explain, “given that retention constitutes the temporal horizon the present ... it should be considered as part of perceptual consciousness rather than as a form of memory typically understood.”¹¹¹

In this context, we are better equipped to answer the question about memory. Briefly, the question was: *how can Husserl posit that we see the past originally and yet hold that it cannot be given, or perceived again?* How can he hold the simultaneous positions of a past that cannot be given again and a past that can be given as *itself*? Husserl would argue that the un-modified dimension of the past is what cannot be given

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 167.

¹⁰⁹ Husserl (1969), §24.

¹¹⁰ ACPAS, Appendix 8, p. 459.

¹¹¹ Zahavi and Gallagher (2008), p. 73.

again, i.e. the present to which the retention ultimately refers back to. In other words, the feature that is ‘gone’ is not the past but the *past present*; the past itself is not gone – it is this absence itself. In memory, on the other hand, we see the *absence* of the past present, the past present *as* past. Indeed, the past present is not present at all; in its modified form, it is but the template of itself. This is how Husserl would answer the question. In memory we see the past present as past, not the past present itself. The present that *is* past cannot be given again, but the present *as* past can; memory “presents a now that is not given.”¹¹²In other words, memory is the unmodified presentation of the past.

In Husserl, the discussion generally ends here. With the exception of a brief treatment in an appendix (which we will examine later), Husserl leaves this memory structure intact. For this reason, Husserl scholars usually –if not always – presuppose this structure as a starting point and, in so doing, do not acknowledge the further difficulty of the *given-past*. What is this difficulty? Even if we grant Husserl the freedom to posit the givenness of the past present as modified, we still must still recognize the ‘unoriginality’ of this object. In other words, we must recognize the duality of the position. On the one hand, memory is a memory of the past *as* past. But as a presentation of the past as such, it must include as its unmodified “reference,” the past *present* of its origin. Indeed, what we call the fallibility of memory is possible only on the condition of this very duality. Without an implicit reference to the past as it really happened – to the unmodified event – our memories would be taken as absolute, infallible evidence. More drastically, without “reference” to the real lived past our memories would become fantasies – they would not posit any reality whatsoever. The difference, tension, and unity between the past-now *as*

¹¹² TPITC, §17.

past and the past-now *as it really occurred* are essential to memory. They in fact constitute its essence. Even if memory is the unmodified presentation of the past *as past*, we must still recognize it as the unmodified presentation *of a modification*. With this admission, we posit an essential, though implicit, reference to what cannot be given again. Our memories are images (though Husserl might have us deny it). Are they not given as images, as involving reference? Briefly, how do our memories *refer* to a real lived past, without which they would not be what they are? Colloquially, this amounts to asking how the past-now in memory contains the now it is the past of. Is there not something paradoxical about memory when it forces what is not present to present itself without becoming present? How can a relation connect something that does exist (i.e. my present consciousness of a memory) with something that does not exist (the past *present*)? The rest of this thesis will be an attempt to confront this question in its full force and mystery.

At present, I will spend the remainder of this chapter articulating the phenomenological structures of memory and, in so doing, disclose and intensify its enigmatic nature. At the same time, I will also be arguing *for* an imagistic reading of memory consciousness.

2.3

Reproduction and Two-Tracks

In memory, everything is given *as if* it were being perceived: the objects are given spatially and temporally, in profiles and retentional adumbrations. Unlike the situation in perception, however, in the case of memory we do not really perceive what we perceive – we perceive *as if* we were perceiving. My memories do not, as it were, implicate

themselves as realities in my reality. If they did, they would be a most startling species of hallucination. If memory is like perception in its most fundamental ways, how is it not perception? In acts of reproduction, consciousness is itself reproduced in such a way as to yield two, non-thetic intentional tracks that exist simultaneously.¹¹³ In the case of recollection, for instance, “we must distinguish...between the reproduction of the consciousness in which the past enduring object was given...and that which attaches to this reproduction.”¹¹⁴ In other words, when I remember the basement of a church I once attended, I do not simply remember the basement. Rather, I remember *myself* experiencing the basement. In memory (and in phantasy), my present consciousness deploys a second consciousness. In order to experience the past-event, I must deploy a memory of the consciousness that experienced that event. In my memories I am not free to roam around the church basement; I must remember it as I *experienced it* (from this angle, in this mood, with these people etc....). In memory, therefore, the reproduced consciousness is posited in temporal relation to present consciousness and, in this way, admits to having temporal horizons of its own; memory “posits what is reproduced and in this positing gives it a position in relation to the actually present now.”¹¹⁵ The deployed consciousness has a future and a past, both of which belong first and foremost to the deploying mind; but unlike the future of present consciousness, the future horizon of the deployed consciousness has already been *lived* up to the moment of its own conception. According to this structure, the reproduced consciousness implicitly refers to a before and after. In its temporal relation to my present, the complete memory is also in temporal

¹¹³ Sokolowski (1974), p. 149.

¹¹⁴ TPITC, §25.

¹¹⁵ TPITC, §23.

relation to my entire temporal field; it is older than many memories, younger than others; it is, itself, an aging memory – in the passing of life, it will be pushed further into the growing past. In memory then, “the whole is reproduced, not only the then-present [or the past *present*] of consciousness with its flow but ‘implicitly’ the whole stream of consciousness up to the living present.”¹¹⁶

And while this deployed consciousness is running parallel to my deploying consciousness, it is not *meant*. It is rather the filter through which the past event is *meant* again. In the case of a past perception, “the perception is not meant and posited in the memory; what is meant and posited is the perception’s object and the object’s now, which, in addition is positioned in relation to the actually present now.”¹¹⁷ Like the deploying consciousness, the deployed consciousness is operating pre-reflectively. The immanent objects of its unfolding are un-thematically located. This being so, it is important not to conflate their difference. The past consciousness is immanently distinguished from the present one; if it weren’t, I would be experiencing the past directly. As Sokolowski explains, “memory essentially requires being aware of the otherness between the reproduced track and my present act of reproducing; if I lose this awareness of difference and absence, I slip into hallucination.”¹¹⁸ In the case of memory, one consciousness is remembering and the other is, more times than not, perceiving. When I remember Christmas Eve in the church basement, I intend the objects of that experience, not the experience itself. If I were to remember an act of reflection, I would still bifurcate the ego: the *experience* would be the act of reflection and the *experienced*

¹¹⁶ TPITC, §25.

¹¹⁷ TPITC, §27.

¹¹⁸ Sokolowski (1974), p. 149.

would be what was reflected upon, namely my acts of consciousness. In this way, all memory acts presuppose two parallel, pre-reflective consciousnesses. Unlike the case of phantasy, which bifurcates the ego without positing a real relation between the two bifurcated consciousnesses, memory bifurcation is a real division; the reproduced consciousness is posited as one that *has been*. (This necessary ability to distinguish pre-reflectively between these two acts further grounds and intensifies the necessity of absolute time-consciousness. For in memory, we clearly distinguish between two functioning consciousness's in pre-reflective consciousness).

In reproductive acts, my consciousness *deploys* – and even *decides to deploy* – another consciousness. The originality of the *deploying consciousness* does not rest on *will* alone, however. We can imagine, for instance, a hyper-neurotic who, despite all her willing, spends her whole conscious life ruminating in memory. Even in such a situation, the *deploying-consciousness* would still exist upon the cessation of its *deploying*, even if said cessation never occurred. The *deployed-consciousness*, on the other hand, would *not* exist upon the cessation of its *deployment*. Getting specific, we can say that, however deeply a two-tracked phantasy may occupy me, however forceful a vivid memory may affect me, and however influential a phantasy expectation may be, the relationship between the *deploying*, the *deployed* and their respective consciousnesses remains asymmetrical. While it is possible for both the *deployed* and the *deploying* to experience the reproduced world (or even a series of such worlds), it is essentially *impossible* for the former, and essentially *possible* for the latter, to experience any other world. Original consciousness has no other consciousness deploying it. The originality of the deploying consciousness rests on this fact: it is possible for primary consciousness to exist without

deploying another, reproduced consciousness but it is not possible for the deployed consciousness – or any series of deployed consciousnesses – to exist without being deployed. If I were to stop the reproductive act, the consciousness that was earlier deploying the phantasy Ego would still persist; the phantasy Ego (or Egos), on the other hand, does not share this same possibility of living beyond its deployment. If the deployed cannot exist without its deployment, it is impossible for consciousness to experience the reproduced without enacting such a structure.

In his book *Simultaneity and Delay*, Lampert describes some of the more nuanced complexities of the reproductive, or deploying consciousness. In what is called the second problem in Husserl’s account of time (i.e. retained delays), Lampert writes that “the past’s future has to be forgotten in order to remember the past”.¹¹⁹ What he means by this can be summarized as follows. Given that every intentional experience is partially informed by anticipations – i.e. by unfilled protentions – it is safe to assume that memory experiences will be the same. Memories will include the anticipations *of* the past experience. When I remember casting a fishing rod into a pool at the bottom of some rapids, the past protentions are included therein. However, since they are anticipations that have passed, they have been fulfilled – they are no longer the anticipated, unfulfilled, future. As Lampert writes, “a memory also anticipates, or intercepts, its future, but the memory’s future is already past”.¹²⁰ In order to remember the past event *as a past present*, the past anticipations must somehow be emptied again: “each memory

¹¹⁹ Lampert (2012), pp. 149–150.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* p 32.

experience thus prevents some of the past from passing into the present through it”.¹²¹ In memory, we must block the fulfillments from existing simultaneously with the anticipations (both of which have already occurred). When making the past present again, memory must also make reproduce the future belonging to that present *as such*; “without this trick of blocking the fulfillment of expectations, to prevent the past’s future from being experienced as already passed, we would all...lose what one has had in the past”.¹²² In this way, the past’s future is no future at all; it is the past. In memory, however, the arrival of this past has to be delayed so as to *appear* oncoming. We cannot get to the future of the past insofar as it is no longer the future. We can approach it, or *mean* it intentionally, but its arrival *as the future* is “infinity delayed”.¹²³

Lampert describes this infinite delay as paradoxical.¹²⁴ It is paradoxical insofar as the *past*, not the present, is delayed in memory. In our memories, pieces of the past are simultaneously remembered and forgotten. Though Lampert cites Derrida for fleshing out the implications of these conclusions and, in a way, resolving the paradox, I believe that there is another possibility.¹²⁵ I am not sure that there is a paradox at all in Husserl’s account. Although the past protentions as remembered are simultaneously filled (in the present) and empty (in the past), this simultaneity need not be attributed to a single intentionality. As I explained earlier in this section, the bifurcation of the ego in memory acts is essential to reproductive acts generally. Thus, to the reproduced consciousness – i.e. to the consciousness representative of the past consciousness – the protentions are

¹²¹ Ibid. p 32.

¹²² Ibid. p 32.

¹²³ Ibid. p 34.

¹²⁴ Ibid. p 34.

¹²⁵ Ibid. p 35. See sentence beginning with “But articulating the problems in this way...”

empty. To the original intentionality – i.e. to the consciousness deploying its reproductive counterpart – these very same protentions are filled. In this way, the past protention is not necessarily delayed, though it may be so regarded; the past protention is experienced by the reproduced consciousness *as* a protention and, by the original consciousness, *as* a retention. This tension between the two different, though simultaneous, temporal dimensions prevents the memory from falling apart. For if the past protentions were given only as being filled, the memory would not be the memory *of* an experience (insofar as protentions are essential to the fabric of intentional experience). If these protentions were completely empty, on the hand, reproduced consciousness would be having its own, original, experiences. Though the filled and unfilled past protention exist together, they exist apart. Indeed, the bifurcation of consciousness in reproductive acts gives rise to many paradoxical experiences. Using my *reproductive* imagination¹²⁶ I can, for instance, be sitting in a classroom and, simultaneously, floating in space.

Bernet believes that the two-tracked nature of memory is what allows Husserl to renounce an imagistic interpretation of memory. Bernet argues that the memory object is given to the reproduced consciousness *originally* and, for this reason, cannot be an image. He writes: “the object [of memory] appears presentified, that is, gives itself (originally) and not as an image, all the while maintaining its temporal distance from the present.”¹²⁷ For Bernet, the fact that the memory object is original to the reproduced consciousness is enough to renounce image theory. In memory I experience my past self pre-reflectively

¹²⁶ This term is here used in the colloquial sense.

¹²⁷ Bernet (2002), p. 337.

experiencing a past event. Bernet argues that, since the past experience is an intentional one, it is original. I do not find this convincing for two reasons.

First, while the reproduced consciousness may be experiencing the object *originally*, the primary consciousness is not. Though I must deploy the past consciousness when I remember an event, I do not re-live this past experience in its full-bodied splendor; no, the past experience of the remembered object is not the same as the present experience of the past experience. This leaves us with the question: *why can't the reproduced consciousness and the primary consciousness mean the same object in different ways?* In fact, I think that this is exactly what is happening in memory. To primary consciousness, for example, the memory object is being given *again* – it is the object of a past experience. To the reproduced consciousness, on the other hand – i.e. to the consciousness *acting* as my past consciousness – the object is given originally. And since my primary consciousness is what originally intends the past object, thus instigating reproductive deployment, we can assume that that object is primarily and presently *mine*. This is, in fact, why the memory object *is a past object* and not a full-bodied recurrence of the same: *because* I – the primary consciousness – intend it as having-been and not as being original. If the same memory object can be intended *primarily* as having-been and *secondarily* as being-now, why can't it also be *primarily* intended as an 'image' and *secondarily* intended as an original? The object of memory is different according to the consciousness that intends it (though both intend it at once). This is already enough to reject Bernet's claim; for by showing that the same memory object *is* meant – and, therefore, *can be* meant – in entirely different ways, we invalidate the claim that reproductive consciousness prohibits an imagistic account of memory.

Bernet's claim is insufficient on (at least) one other account. For while the two-tracked nature of memory is undeniable, it is incapable of explaining the *positionality* connecting the reproduced ego with the real, temporally prior experience. In what can be deemed 'unfortunate' for Bernet's position, the two-tracked nature of memory is not unique to it; it is structurally inherent in all *reproductive acts* including phantasy, which is entirely *neutral*. And since *neutral* reproductive acts are also bifurcated, the two-tracked nature of memory cannot be held responsible for the veridical, belief-infused stratum that makes memory what it is. As Bernet himself insists, "the reproductive modification of presentation can combine itself with the modification of position-takings but should not be reduced to them."¹²⁸ Because of this irreducibility, it is impossible to exhaust the analysis of memory by referring to the bifurcation of egos alone. Why is the reproduced ego posited as being a prior experience? How is this positing achieved?

2.4

Positionality

Unlike acts of phantasy, memories are inseparably bound up in belief consciousness; they *posit* what they present as having been 'actual'. In Bernet's words, the memory world is a world given in the mode of again.¹²⁹ If I remember a sequence, I not only experience it reproductively; I experience it believing that I experienced it before *and* in the same manner as I am remembering it. This belief is not 'up to me'; I cannot choose to believe in some memories and not in others. This ability would be akin to inventing memories, infecting any phantasy I wanted with my belief. Accordingly, it would also open the

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Bernet, Kern and Marbach (1993), p. 149.

possibility of de-infecting memories or, what is the same, eliminating them altogether. It would give us complete control, not over the past, but of our access to it. The belief consciousness in memory does not answer to my will; it is inextricably implicit within memories as such. Of course, a memory can become questionable or even proved untrue. But this alteration in belief is not arbitrary; it is possible only upon the intrusion of other, contrary beliefs. The doxic, or positional, belief that memory is the givenness of what has been is essential to its very being: “that it is consciousness of having-been-perceived belongs fundamentally to the essence of memory.”¹³⁰

Insofar as memory is positional – as in it posits something as having existed – it is, also, verifiable in a way unique to its own structure: “for every class of posited meanings the forms of verification that are intrinsically possible must be clearly laid down on phenomenological lines.”¹³¹In the case of judgments, which are always hypothetical, I seek verification in the appropriate domain; if I say something about a tree, I must verify it experientially. In the case of expectations, verification is a waiting game – my anticipations are disappointed or appeased only when the future arrives, when it is no longer the *future*. In most cases of positing, the empty meaning can be filled *originally*. In other words, I can intuit the corresponding, meant object whether it is real (e.g. my thoughts), ideal (e.g. numeral states of affairs), or transcendent (e.g. an oak tree). In other cases, some positings can, in themselves, prohibit the possibility of original demonstration. This is true in the case of Others, for instance. While I can – and indeed, *must* – posit the Other’s conscious existence in my experience of them, I can never

¹³⁰ TPITC, §27.

¹³¹ Husserl (1969), §140.

experience that consciousness originally: “if what belonged to the other’s own essence were directly accessible, it would be merely a moment of my own essence, and ultimately he himself and I myself would be the same.”¹³² This is also true, not surprisingly, in the case of memories: “the rational positing’s of memory, for instance, and so of all reproductive acts, including that of empathy, are not original and are, in a certain ways ‘derived’.”¹³³ Again, in the *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl writes, “somewhat as my memorial past, as the modification of my living present, ‘transcends’ my present that appresented other being ‘transcends my own being.’”¹³⁴

In *Ideas I*, Husserl writes that memorial evidence is given only mediately. In memory, I see a now that *cannot itself be given again*, a now that cannot be given immediately. On this account, we cannot hope to compare the memory of the event with the event itself, as though it were some kind of proposition – the essence of the past prohibits it. And neither can we say that the memory is the past event itself. For besides the empirical differences between memory and the perception – e.g. the fact that memory is “dim, vague, and undetermined” – memory is, in essence, the having-been-perceived, not the perceiving. Even if our memories were perfect representations of the real event, the memory and the event would be given differently. What is more, since the event is completely unreachable *except* through memory itself, there would be no way of knowing if this perfection had been achieved. We are left with the problem, then. If memories are positional, they must, to some extent, be verifiable. If they are verifiable, they must somehow refer to the event they revive by way of likeness. This original event, however,

¹³² Husserl (1999), §50.

¹³³ Husserl (1969), §141.

¹³⁴ Husserl (1999), §52.

is itself completely inaccessible – it cannot be given again. Memory is defined by an aporia – it posits what cannot be given. On the one hand, we cannot neutralize memory, rendering it un-positional, without transforming it into fantasy. On the other hand, we cannot strip memory of its reference to the no-longer-existent event of its origin without undoing its essence; without its relation to the past present, memory would not be the memory of *anything*. Perhaps we can extend the analogy between remembrance and alterity further then; in both cases, the posited ‘thing’ is a horizon, cowering from every ‘approaching’ step. To know it would be to lose it; if I experienced the past event again, it would not be a memory; if I experienced the other’s consciousness immediately, it would become mine. How does Husserl answer this question about memory? How does he say that, in memory, we see the past itself?

2.5

Reference

These questions are really asking *how is the fallibility of memory possible?* If our memories are fallible they must be capable of differing from the original event. The non-existence of the original event, however, prevents the possibility of any species of comparison, verification, or demonstration. The present event is given once; it can be given again and again only in memory. More importantly, Husserl has warned us against any representational, or imagistic, theory of memory. In memory, we do see the *past itself*; surely, I agree with him here. Unfortunately, I do not think that this is enough to ward off an imagistic theory of memory consciousness. Since the past is, itself, a modified present it is, itself, *unoriginal*. The unoriginality of the past begs the question about the immediate presentation of memories: in memory we see the past itself, but what do we

see in the past? Is it not a past present, something altogether different than the past itself? If so, must we not make a distinction between the past and what it implies, or refers to?

In a later manuscript often referred to as the *Apodicticity of Recollection*, Husserl sets out to solve some of these problems. These problems rest on a very particular metaphysical presupposition; namely, that any and all present events occur only *once*. In Husserl, this is not exactly true. As we have seen, the past event is retained and works to constitute the living present. In this way, the present event does not occur only once, but over and over again until it is ‘forgotten’, extricated from the fabric of the present context. At the same time, the retention is altogether different from what it is retention *of* – namely, the present. In this way, the present event occurs only once. On the one hand, memories can present the past because the past *really is something* (i.e. the retained). On the other hand, retentions are themselves modified presences and must be kept separate from the original moments.

What, then, is the relationship between memories and retentions? Surely they are different – for one thing, where memory is a full-blown objectifying act, retentional consciousness is not. Retention is a condition for any objectifying whatsoever, not just a reproduction. Because of this, retention and memory acts must be connected somehow. In memory, we experience, or re-objectify, an event that no longer exists in the present. Thus, the retentions that worked to constitute that event-object are reactivated in their re-constitution of the memory event:

The most original consciousness of the past is the retentional consciousness belonging to every perception like a comet’s tail. Should the remembering that has such an essentially different character also be called consciousness of the

past, then it must have an essential relation to retention, namely, it must be in relation to it in a synthesis of coinciding that forms identity....¹³⁵

If memory is a renewal of a now that is no longer, the retentional synthesis that constitutes the identity of that now must also, in remembrance, be remembered. The retentions that constitute the event-object X must constitute the remembered event-object X; if the retentions of the event X are still fresh, the retentions of the remembered X will be “fulfilled with the fullness that is re-established in the renewal.”¹³⁶ If I hear a short melody and then remember the melody soon after, the retentions that constitute the melody-object will be revived. Thus, retentions are like the empty templates upon which memories re-constitute the event: “in complete remembering, the entire fullness of the latter’s inner moments and articulations comes to the fore, which moments and articulations had become indeterminate and blurred in retention.”¹³⁷ In their recession, retentions maintain their reference to the present now *and* to the now of which they are a modification. As they are pushed further away, they become more and more indeterminate; until they are ‘put to work’ in a memory, they remain empty, indeterminate, and unarticulated.

These reignited retentions are not the same as their original counterparts; they do not constitute the *present* now, but the *past* now, re-given. In memory, we reacquaint ourselves with the original retentions mediately; the immediate retentions trail the actual “comet,” not the remembered one. Should the immediate retentions constitute an act of remembrance, then it is not “an empty retention simpliciter, but an empty remembering

¹³⁵ ACPAS, Appendix 8, 3.

¹³⁶ ACPAS, Appendix 8, p. 459.

¹³⁷ ACPAS, Appendix 8, p. 459.

that in its very emptiness has the peculiar feature of being the remembering of an empty retention.”¹³⁸ Thus, though all remembering originates by fulfilling *immediate* empty retentions, subsequent rememberings of the same event can originate by fulfilling the *mediate* empty retentions (i.e. the now empty, or retained, re-ignited retentions). In remembering, the past is “disclosed, so to speak, through the first remembering, but also through this, it remains held onto, and it is by means of a new remembering that it remains held on to now more than ever, and it is disclosed once again.”¹³⁹ In his sense, memories keep original retentions alive by repeating them in ever greater degrees of mediacy.

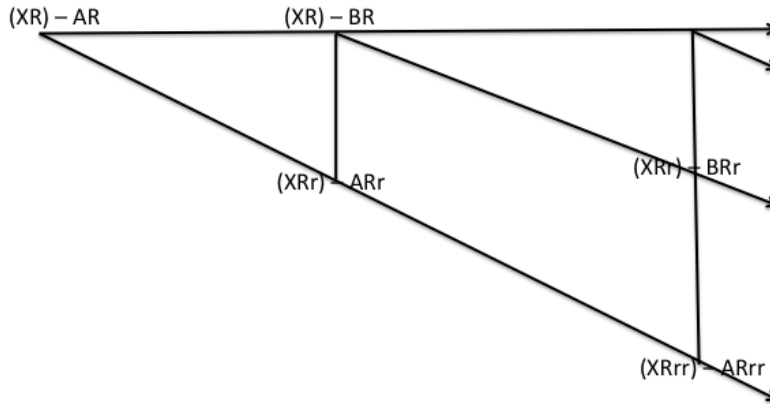
In the figure given below, I have tried to capture this phenomenon. On the top line {(XR)--AR} and {(XR)--BR} each represent a remembered now (designated as “R”). In each case the (XR) is meant to represent the pre-reflective, reproduced memorial consciousness; the corresponding AR or BR is meant to represent the object phase of that consciousness. Thus, X designates the objectifying acts while A and B designates the objects of those acts. The repeating “R”s signify that these acts and objects are occurring in a memory consciousness. While each of these now phases (the different points on the horizontal line) is present to the reproduced (deployed) consciousness, they are past to the reproducing (deploying) consciousness. Thus, these now phases are, in *the living present*, retentions. In the falling away of these phases in memory, they are themselves retained as they *were* when originally experienced (designated by the lower case “r”s). To the original consciousness (i.e. the consciousness that remembers), the template retentions AR and BR are given body *again* in memory. In memory the memory now is present and

¹³⁸ ACPAS, Appendix 8, p. 460.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

past: to the reproduced consciousness, the present moments are present; to the reproducing consciousness, they are past. This conflict between the deployed and the deploying consciousness is essential to the essence of memory. This how the memory now is both temporally present and absent.

When the memory act itself passes away, these re-embodied retentions will, themselves, become empty. These empty retentions, however, are re-embodied retentions. Thus, these empty retentions of the re-embodied retentions can be used again for the reiteration of the memory ad infinitum. These re-embodied retentions re-create the past retention; for in their re-embodiment, these retentions are allowed to be present again, are allowed to be free from their impotence. What the reproduced consciousness experiences is not the real present, but the *past present re-embodied*, extricated from its empty, retentional existence. At the same time, this re-embodiment signifies that it is, in a way, a now again. Because it is a now again, it will become retention again. *Original retentions* are re-embodied in memory and become retained again. When a retention is re-embodied in memory, then, it is also copied. These ‘original’ retentions and the ‘copied’ retentions are the same and different. On the one hand, they are the retentions of the *same now*. On the other hand, the now is original in one case and remembered in the other. The copied retentions are, therefore, further from the original now than the original retention.



We can make sense of this phenomenon less abstractly. Husserl is merely explaining how memories are a kind of habit, their reiteration strengthening their accessibility. If I continuously remember an event, then my memories of that event become less about remembering that event and more about remembering the memory of that event. Many of my more distant memories are really memories *of other memories*. This chain of unoriginality – where the copy is a copy *of a copy* – implicitly refers to the ‘original’ memory. The ‘original’ memory is the first memory we have of an event after it has passed (even if it is still passing). For Husserl, this first memory signifies a re-embodiment of past moments. This re-embodiment casts the old now into the reproduced stream of time and, thereby, subjects it to passing away once again. This new past is closer to the present than the old past and can, for this reason, be used to access the older events more easily. We can reimagine the diagram above in order to illustrate this. When this memory has passed, AR and BR become retentions again. Unlike their original counterparts, these retentions are reproduced retentions, attaching them to the memorial present, not the living present itself (a present, moreover, that has receded into the background during the act of remembrance). If we call the original memory the memory that re-embodied non-reproduced retentions, we will call the memory *of that memory* the

simulacra-memory. Since they originate as embodied replications of empty retentions, the reproduced retentions can be re-used in order to access the ‘original’ past and, mediately, the *now* of its referral. Each time I remember the memory X, it becomes more and more impossible to tell if I am remembering the past or other memories of the past. Of course, the original retentional template for the “*simulacra*” memory is implicit within the simulacra itself.

Now in order to do justice to this structure, a further distinction needs to be made. While every simulacra-memory is a copy *of* a copy, every simulacra-memory is also an original experience and can, therefore, serve as the basis for an original memory. In this way, we must (as Husserl does) distinguish between remembering a remembering and remembering a non-remembered event. In the case of remembering a remembering, every simulacra-memory is its own experience and can, itself, be remembered as an experience. In memories we can make remembering-events the object of remembrance. I can remember remembering my old dog jumping high over tall grass. Even if this memory is a simulacra-memory (which, at this point, it must be), I can remember the memory I had of it a moment ago. But this is altogether different than living *in the memory event*, the remembered that isn’t, itself, a remembering. When I remember a remembering, I remember the total act. When the remembered is not a remembering, on the other hand, I remember *what was* remembered not *that it was* remembered. As the memory of my dog jumping over grass, it is old and has been repeated many times; it is simulacra. As a memory that I have performed just now, I can remember the performance immediately afterwards. Insofar as they are acts, simulacra-memories can serve as foundations for ‘original’ memories. These original memories are allowed to be original because what is

being remembered is not the simulacra-memory, but the act of remembering it. That being said, it is important to notice that every remembering of a remembering ultimately refers to remembering that is not the remembering of a remembering. I can remember many acts of remembering my dog jumping; but in order to remember my remembering I must, first, have the memory of my dog jumping. In order to have this memory, I must experience the dog jumping and reproduce the event in remembrance. This first memory is not a memory of a memory, but the memory of an event. In order to have a memory of a memory, there must be a memory to remember. In order to have a memory, in the first place, I must experience something originally and then reproduce it in memory. This first experience cannot be a remembering because then it would presuppose another, original experience that engendered the remembering.

We can now see how it is possible for memories to differ from the events they refer back to; they are, after all, far removed from these presences. At the initial stage of original memory, there is a double removal from presence. First, retentions are the immediate modifications of the nows that have passed. Second, when memory re-embodies these retentions, it is re-embodimenting a modification immediately; it refers to the original now mediately. If the reproduced retentions are used as material for later memories, they become further and further removed from the ‘original’ retentions and the ‘original’ memories, originals that become less and less accessible in the flow of time. In this removal mistakes are likely to occur: “the empty [retentional] intention is enriched with the process of bringing to intuition; when the new features of the empty intention are reawakened, it is possible to become conscious of the fact that intuitive features have

intruded.”¹⁴⁰ In this way, parts of the fulfilled intuitions can be supplements, not real memories. In addition to this, sequences can be confused and – amidst the muddled traffic jam of receded retentions – ‘fusion’ can occur, memories can become mixed.¹⁴¹ While he acknowledges this, Husserl also argues that every memory must contain a kernel of truth. For if memories are the intuitive fulfillment of empty retentions, and all retentions are within the realm of certainty (of the living present), then memories must be, to some extent, true:

Insofar as we conceived remembering as being in a fulfilling coincidence with retention, belonging to remembering is the inviolable certainty of the latter; and precisely, with this certainty, we have apodictic certainty that there is a true self in the memorial image, a true self....¹⁴²

Thus, the certainty of retention allows us to posit the certainty of memory. In older memories, the empty retentions are duller, however, unleashing indeterminateness into the memory realm. Though mistakes can be made, each memory refers to an original set of retentions and, thus, to a truth. This begs the question, however. For how are we to differentiate between what is true and false if we have nothing to compare our memories with (except, perhaps other memories)? The certainty of active retentions – i.e. retentions that are still working to constitute the present – must surely be upheld. We must remember, however, that retentions become the retentions of retentions and so on; and does not this infinite modification cost them their determinacy? Is this not itself a phenomenological datum? If the past is hazy, are not the memories constructed from it hazy as well? Are not both the retentions and their intuitive counterparts (i.e. memories)

¹⁴⁰ ACPAS, Appendix 8, p. 461.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² ACAPS, Appendix 8, p. 462.

removed from the presences they once were? In his attempt to justify the positionality of memory, Husserl seems only to problematize the givenness of the past altogether. For does not our question about memory now also apply to retention: *namely, how can memory posit what cannot be given (the real past)?*

Husserl does a great job at explaining how we see the past itself; in memory we re-enliven the empty past (retentions) and perceive something in the mode of memory, i.e. as *again*. But the past is itself a modification; it is a having been present and in itself refers back to being *so*. Surely, older, inactive memories do this less well than their younger, active counterparts – but all of them refer back. *In memory we do see the past. In the past, however, we see a now that is no longer. We posit something that cannot be given again, that exceeds any kind of evidence.* In this positing, however, the past refers beyond itself to the present it *was*. This is why I think that an imagistic theory of memory is required. I hypothesize that the memorial image is bifurcated. As an image it can be described in terms of an image-object and an image-subject. The image-object is the given presentation, the re-embodied retention. This image-object, however, refers beyond itself to the present that it now only represents. This forever-gone present is the *image-subject*. Thus, our memories can be described as a hieroglyphic system that sets out to do the impossible – namely, to make the past present again.

2.6

The method of analysis

The relation that memory has with the past cannot be thought away from it without contradiction. A memory that did not relate to the past would not be a memory. The enigmatic character of this relation has been the driving force behind causal theories of

memory, which explain the relation by way of continuing causal connections to the original event. Like Husserl's recourse to retention, these theories fall prey to the same incommensurability between something present and something past: how do present neurological networks invoke their original cause? How and why is the past indicated in the present?

I have tried to show that Husserl never fully justifies leaving the imagistic theory of memory behind. On the one hand, I agree with Husserl. In memory, we do relate to something unoriginal *itself*; the past is the object of intention. On the other hand, Husserl never fully explains the constitution of this unoriginality and its strange ability to invoke something that is absolutely absence. Without invoking the netherworld of what is gone, the presence of the past could not sustain itself. If the past is going to be given *as such*, it must not be present or future. It must, in other words, be invoked without becoming incarnate; for even in memory, the past events must remain past. If memory not only invoked but also resurrected the past, it would no longer be memory – it would be a present experience. On this account, memory has the miraculous ability to indicate and (in a sense) *give* what cannot be given. The kind of intentional object capable of achieving such a task – of invoking the object without incarnating it – is the image. How?

In his lectures from 1904-1905 Husserl begins to delve into the depths of image consciousness. Every image object is constituted by a dual intentionality, unified in one, overarching intentionality. This overarching unity is not accidental to image consciousness, however – it is not an accessory or empirical regularity. For Husserl then, image consciousness is always a complex act; though “each partial act has its particular intentional reference, each its unitary objects, and its own way of referring to it,” the total

act is the achievement of the “unity of its intentional reference.”¹⁴³ The unity of the two acts is not a simple simultaneity or unity of parallel experiences; the unity is itself “objectively presented” insofar as it constitutes an intentional ‘organism’, distinct and dependent on its parts.¹⁴⁴ Images, for instance, are divisible into the act that intends the image-object and the act that intends the image-subject; and it is only when these two are unified that image consciousness can be said to occur. Husserl writes, “in [image consciousness] we have two apprehensions, one built on the other...but the meaning belongs to the complete [image presentation].”¹⁴⁵ In the case of the statue of Kant, for instance, we are certain that it is not Kant himself – no, he is dead. On the one hand, we know that the statue is distinct from the object it invokes. If it were not, Kaliningrad would be the site of Kantian scholarship, not stuffy, overly-organized offices scattered about the world. At the same time, this statue is a statue *of* Kant only insofar as it refers or relates to the absent object of its origin, called the image-subject. The image-subject is that which the image invokes and does not incarnate; without its structural absence, the image would not be an image but a straightforward perception. Since the image-subject is that which is merely *meant* and *indirectly* given, it does not have to be *of* real objects that ‘have’ or ‘have had’ existence; images, for example, can refer to centaurs and Huck Finn. At the same time, this reference to the absent image-subject is what makes the image-object representative or indicative ‘*of*’ something.¹⁴⁶ When it comes to images then, the

¹⁴³ Husserl (1970), Investigation 5, §17.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ Husserl (2005), Text 1, §11, p. 25. I have substituted ‘image consciousness’ for ‘phantasy’, which Husserl was using synonymously at the time.

¹⁴⁶ Husserl (1970). See the first 3 Sections of the First Investigation and note the analysis of indication. Something is represented when the image-object is meant to resemble or

image-subject is what must be meant over and above the image-object. Thus, a statue of Kant is *by way of the image-subject* a statue of Kant and not just a morphologically interesting chunk of bronze (as in the case of abstract sculpture). In this way, Husserl means that images fall under the category relatives: images are always images of something else.¹⁴⁷

While the image-subject determines what the image is an image *of*, the image object performs the essential task of *standing in* for the presence of the image-subject. For even if the real individual Kant were to stand beside his statue, this would only be accidental – the statue functions the same with and without his presence. The statue invokes Kant with or without his actual presence. In fact, an image’s ability to function without the presence of its referent allows for it to perform purely fictional tasks. Gandalf in *The Lord of the Rings* films was not Ian McKellan; rather, Ian McKellan served as the conduit for the fictional, unreal character Gandalf. In this way, the image-object allows what does not appear to *appear* from within it – it is only meant, never exemplified: “*in the image one sees the subject.*”¹⁴⁸ At this point in his career (and before leaving the ‘prejudice of presence’ behind), Husserl is convinced that the object of ‘reproductive consciousness’ – i.e. memory, phantasy, and expectation – are imagistic assemblages, each having an ontologically distinct image-subject:

In every instance of such presenting we distinguish *image* and *subject*. The subject is the object meant by the presentation. And subsequently and by

mimic the image-subject. In the case of indication, there is no posited resemblance (as in the case of phonetic alphabets).

¹⁴⁷ For the most developed discussion on these issues, see Husserl (2005), Text 1, §§12–5, pp. 19–20.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, Text 1, §12, p. 26. My emphasis.

virtue of qualitative characteristics combined with it...this object is the object taken to be existing (e.g. *the remembered or expected object*); or the object taken to be unreal, as in the fiction known to be a fiction.... the image presents the subject but it is not the subject itself.¹⁴⁹

For Husserl (in 1905), the image-subjects of memory and expectation are taken as *having existed* and *going to exist* respectively. They are, in other words, positional acts and they unfurl as such. Phantasy images, on the other hand, are fictitious and say nothing of existence. Furthermore, the conjured images of reproductive acts are distinct from *real* images (i.e. statues, paintings, photographs, films, etc.) in that they do not occupy perceptual space.¹⁵⁰ Whereas real images have their foundation in physical objects, of which a genuine perception is made, “the apprehension contents of phantasy are obviously not simultaneously bearers of genuine and non-genuine [inauthentic] apprehensions.”¹⁵¹ Reproductive images are *in themselves* inauthentic and cannot be encountered in the realm of perception like a picture frame can be.

Analyzing memory as its own unique kind of image will be fruitful in many ways. Most importantly it will explain the phenomenological possibility of giving something that cannot *ever* be given again. While re-thinking memory brings all reproductive acts under question, dealing with each species would go beyond the limits of this thesis. For it is important to note that a similar problem is implicit within acts of phantasy and expectation; namely, how something that either *does not exist* or does not exist *yet* finds itself within something existing (namely, the phantasy image). While these questions warrant exploration, the issues around memory have an existential urgency that the others

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., §9, pp. 19–20.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., §§21–24, pp. 47–59.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., §24, p. 53.

do not. Our access to our past is, in a very essential way, our access to ourselves, for while the events that transpire in my life may be accidental to me as a *human being*, they are essential to *my* being human. Thus, being Athenian may be inessential to being a human being, but it is essential to being *the* Socrates. My past may be accidental to my general essence, but it is in many ways central to the formation of my particular essence (i.e. to my identity). The things that have happened to me are not separable from me as me; with a different past, I would not be what I am.

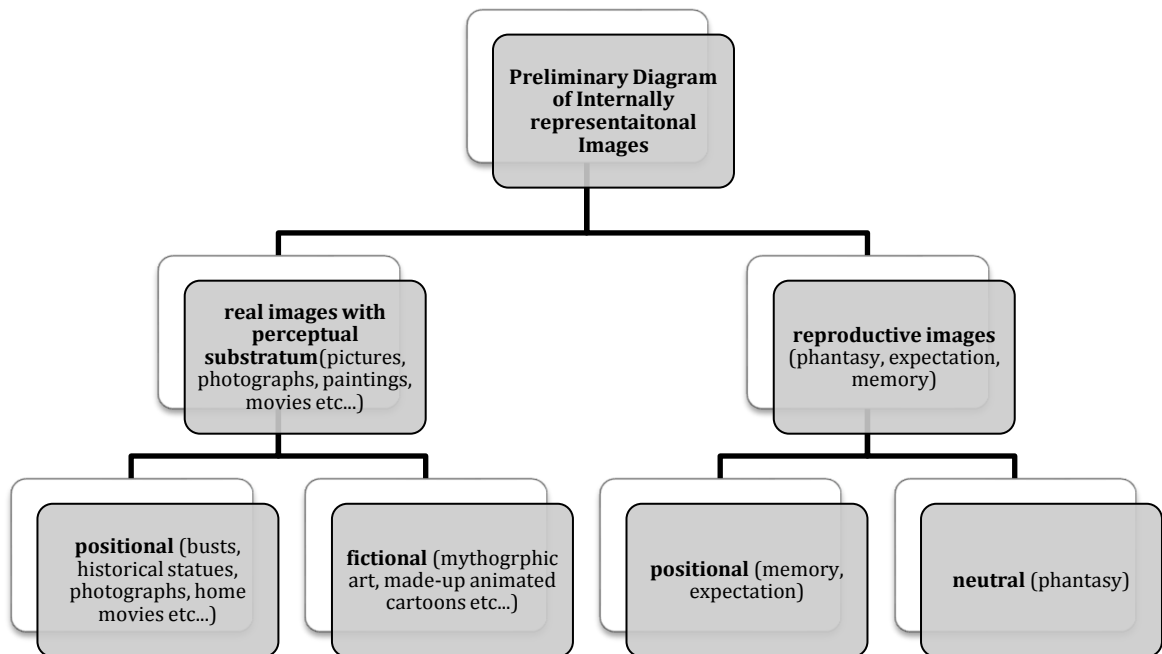
In order to analyze memory as an image, it must first be distinguished from other kinds of images. This is the next step.

Chapter Three:

The Image

3.1

Preliminary remarks



In this chapter I will demonstrate how an image-analysis of memory might occur. Having argued that memories are images, I will show how their examination *as* images can be fruitful in new ways. While it would be amusing to compare how these new ways are different, and perhaps better than, their non-imagistic counterparts, it would be superfluous to do so. Insofar as the examination of *memory as image* is already an examination of its bifurcation into image-object and subject, the proceeding analysis is a deepening rather than a correction. Due to the size of the task, this analysis will not be

comprehensive and will, thus, remain open to further analysis and sharpening. First off, I will examine Husserl's analysis of images. Here, I will attempt to locate memory somewhere between his two categories of images. Next, I will reveal my presuppositions for doing so. Lastly, I will examine the fundamental relationship between the image-object and image-subject, revealing and articulating the repetitive effect of their consummation.

3.2

Kinds of images

In writings from the same time period as his lectures on Time Consciousness, Husserl distinguishes between two kinds of image-objects. First, there are images with genuine perceptual foundations (i.e. real statues, paintings, and pictures).¹⁵² Second, there are the images in reproductive acts, and they have no authentic foundation (i.e. memories, expectation, and phantasies). At first, this distinction may be confusing as it relates to memories. Do we not remember having perceived something in our memories? Don't memories have a genuine foundation? While this may be true, it is irrelevant to the distinction that Husserl makes for two reasons. First, while memories can be memories *of* perceptual events, they need not be. We can, for instance, remember a dream, a memory, and an expectation. Thus, it is safe to say that not all memories refer to *genuine* perceptual acts. Second, when Husserl makes the distinction he is referring to the image-object, not the image subject. For these two reasons, memories fall into the second

¹⁵² Ibid., §16, p. 38.

category. The image-object of memory is reproductive and has no perceptual substratum; it does not, for instance, rest on a sheet of photographic paper or on a canvas. Thus, there are two kinds of image objects: image objects that have a perceptual substratum and image objects that do not. This distinction is, indeed, superficial and tells us nothing we don't already know intuitively.

Husserl makes a further distinction, differentiating image-objects that mean to bear resemblance to the image-subject from image-objects that do not. He calls the former internally representative and the latter externally representative.¹⁵³ In the first case, the image-object is similar to the image-subject so that it representationally embodies what it is an *image of*. The form of Kant's statue is not arbitrary but, rather, serves as the condition for allowing the invocation of the great philosopher to occur. If it were, for instance, a relatively formless mass, the onlooker would not know it was a statue of a human being, let alone a statue of Kant. If, however, the observer saw the title of statue reading 'Kant' she would assume that the statue was meant to represent the human being named Kant (assuming she knew of the man). This kind of representation, however, is completely different than the first. In the first case, "the image-object points to [the image-subject], but always to a similarly formed object, to an analogous object presenting itself in the image."¹⁵⁴ The image object, in this case, is *meant* to resemble the image-subject. In other words, "we see the subject in the image itself"¹⁵⁵ – the representational function is internal to the image object itself.¹⁵⁵ In the second case, the image refers to an object that it is essentially dissimilar to. When the spectator admires an

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., §15, p. 37.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., §25, p. 54.

amorphous statue called *Kant*, she may interpret the statue as a *symbol of* the great Philosopher's concept of the thing in itself. This subject – i.e. the thing itself – does not manifest itself in physical form; it is metaphorically represented, external to the image-object, the statue.

To make this distinction clear it is useful to think of the difference between phonetic symbols and hieroglyphic logograms. In phonetic alphabets, we are presented with graphemes that do not – and, indeed, cannot – resemble the *signified* object. In neither its graphic nor its auditory manifestations does the phonetic signifier resemble what it *means*. In writing and in speech, the word “Cobra” does not, in itself, resemble the reptilian terror that it means. The symbol “Cobra” points beyond itself to an object that it in no way exhibits: “the symbolic apprehension and, in addition, the signitive apprehension point beyond to an object foreign to what appears internally.”¹⁵⁶ A hieroglyphic logogram-meaning mountain, on the other hand, may *look* like a mountain. In varying degrees of generality, the image-object resembles the image-subject. A statue of a human being has potentially more possibilities than a statue of Kant. However, since every internally representative image is particular, it must, in itself, represent a particular. Thus, the statue of *a cobra* represents not just any *snake*, but a particular instance of a specific kind. As a general rule then, when the image-object is internally representative it is representing something particular (even if such a particular does not, or has never, existed). Externally, the statue could indicate a generality (as in the case of symbolism), but internal representational functions are reserved for the particulars they invoke. The generality that a hieroglyph enjoys is, in this way, undermined or at least in conflict with

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, §15, p. 37.

its internally representative dimensions.

Of internally representative images, there are image acts that are positional and image acts that are not.¹⁵⁷ Internally representative images are positional if and only if their image-subjects exist, have existed, or could come to exist. In other words, they are positional if and only if their verification is possible. Surely, Centaurs are possible creatures but we must still distinguish between phantasy and expectation. On the one hand, a phantasy centaur has, by definition, no claim to current, future or past existence. For Husserl, phantasies are that species of reproductive act that are, essentially, non-positional.¹⁵⁸ On the other hand, we could have an expectation about a Centaur that was positional (perhaps that we might see one, wandering the forests of Macedonia). On this basis, we must differentiate between a phantasy-Centaur and an expectation-Centaur. Only in the latter act, is a positional act occurring. Furthermore, any non-reproductive image that is positional – i.e. pictures, paintings, and the like – must resemble something that has existed or does exist. Though fictions are of possible things (and can thus serve as the foundations for expectations) they do not, as fictions, invoke verifiable objects. If a fictional hero were to materialize, he would no longer be a fiction. Thus, for so long as Centaurs remain fictitious, to ask if a statue really resembles that centaur is an absurd question. To ask if Kant's statue resembles Kant is not.

The positionality of internally representative images can be exhibited in their ability to be put into propositional form. The internally representative dimensions of the image can be put into a propositional form to say something *about* the real subject – this

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., §16, p. 38.

¹⁵⁸ Husserl (1969), §111.

is what makes them positional. In the statue of Kant, for instance, we see that the statue is *of* a human being. The fact that the statue is the statue *of* a human being – a human being, furthermore, that once existed – we can say that Kant was a human being (insofar as the statue is of a being called Kant who once existed). However, there are dimensions of most images that are positional and others that are not. For instance, we do not claim that Kant was made of bronze. Internally representative images are positional in so far as they *mean* to exhibit something true about the subject that they are an image *of*. In the case of internally representative images that are not positional – e.g. phantasy images of every kind– all we can say is this is what they would resemble *if* they did exist (if they could become, for example, figurative statues or the objects of expectations). Since the object does not exist, there is no possibility for the subject to differ from the object. Indeed, we may say that an image of a centaur is different from a real centaur because a centaur is an animal and animals are not made of bronze. However, this is a general position about *animals* not about the image subject, which is always particular (according to the general rule above, namely, *that when the image-object is internally representative it is representing something particular*).

When the image-subject exists (or comes to exist), we can compare the image with the subject (or other images of the subject). Furthermore, the degree of their similarity determines the degree to which the image-subject and the image-object are in conflict. By conflict, Husserl means the schism that separates the object from the subject; when I see the painting of an angry black bear the image-object is quite different from a real bear (it is on two-dimensional canvas, the colors are unreal, it is at a conflicting time of day, etc....). Since the resolution of this conflict would mean transitioning into

straightforward perception, this conflict between the object and the subject is essential to the image *as image*. The less conflict there is, therefore, the “more perfectly the subject is made intuitable in the image...”¹⁵⁹ In other words, when similarity between object and subject is absolved into simple identity, the image act has become perceptual. We can imagine walking around a wax museum and needing to seek out conflict between the objects and subjects (i.e. touching their waxy arms, focusing on the stasis of their eyes, feeling the plasticity of their epidermis, appreciating their vital lifelessness, etc.) Furthermore, we can then imagine a mime that upon inspection quickly comes to life; the image-object has become the image-subject and no conflict exists.¹⁶⁰ Thus, in order for an image-object to be positional and internally representative it must be capable of maintaining some degree of conflict, or else no comparison between object and subject would be possible.¹⁶¹

Prima facie, memory images seem to be internally representative and positional. In the memory image, I *mean* the past as it was; when I remember canoeing across Killarny Lake on an overly windy day, the image-subject is *meant* within the image-object itself. My memories are *meant* as resembling the past as it really *was* – as it was when it was present. If the act of memory were not defined by way of this *resemblance*, memories would be phantasies. Indeed, part of remembering something is meaning that it was *so*. While this seems obvious, it is not entirely unproblematic. For, while memories are positional and *meant* to be internally representational they are, in a strange way, absolutely unverifiable. And if they cannot be verified, how can their positionality be

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., §24, p. 55.

¹⁶⁰ For a more detailed discussion see Husserl (2005), Text1, §23, p 52.

¹⁶¹ The most important discussion of this is in Ibid. Also see *Ideas* I, §§40–43.

justified? How can we justify a difference between memory and mere phantasy? Of course, memories are used as a means of verification and, thus, are generally taken as being *true*. This does not, however, exclude the problem of *justifying* their truth. What is it about memory that makes it unverifiable? Is our definition of verification too narrow?

While even expectations of the most improbable kind have possible verification, memory posits something that cannot be verified presently or in any possible future. Of course, this conclusion – i.e. that memories are unverifiable – arises from presuppositions regarding memory, temporality, and verification. What are these presuppositions exactly? First: memory is memory *of* the past event. Second: the past event is something that cannot be repeated. Third: (a) *verification* requires the presence of the meant object whereas (b) *verifiability* requires the possibility of the presence of the meant object. While I take all three premises to say something true about these themes, it is enough to simply explicate, though not prove, the concepts I am utilizing. What is important for the time being is laying bare the conditions for the conclusion made above, namely, that *the 'claims' of memory as such cannot be verified*. Thus, the metaphysical concepts we elaborate will be preliminary – indeed each would require a tome of their own. In what follows, I will demonstrate how the conclusions about memory are drawn.

(a) *The Verification Premise*

The way that a proposition or judgment is fulfilled depends on the object towards which it is directed. This can be shown, for example, in the proposition “all swans are white.” In this case, the verification required is not the empirical experience of *all swans*. Indeed, such an experience – an empirically universal experience – is always impossible. Thus, the object of the propositions – i.e. *all swans* – is verifiable through the continued

demonstration of its hypothesis, not by the *presence* of all swans. In the proposition *it is raining outside my house*, however, verification of the object meant can occur through the experience of it. In this way, verifying a proposition always requires ‘ontological respect’ for the object *meant*; without such humility, mathematicians would be looking in the forest for proofs. Without respecting what the object *is* we have no hope of approaching it. What kind of object then, is *meant* in a memory? Answering this will allow us to see how it is verifiable.

Of objects that are, some are *real* and others *ideal*. If the object is subject to change in time, we say it is *real* (e.g. material objects, states of affairs). If the object is unchanging, we say that it is *ideal* (e.g. numbers, geometric objects, logical forms, and meaning).¹⁶² As a rule, propositions about ideal objects are always universal (e.g. $2 + 7 = 9$); they posit something essential and universal about the object at hand – if it is true, it is always true. If the object is real, propositions can, at their extremes, be either universal or particular; we can say, *all bears naturally have fur* or we can say that *that bear has fur*. Of particular propositions, there are propositions about objects that can be given *directly* and about objects that can be given *indirectly*. In the case of *it is raining outside my house*, the object can be given directly to me in experience. In the case of the judgment *the debt crisis is the reason for the recession*, the object can be given only through evidence indicating the presence of the object (in this case, the *cause* of the recession). Here, we must therefore distinguish between real objects that can be *given* (present objects) and those that cannot, but for which there exists evidence (the once-upon-a-time existence of Dinosaurs, x is the cause for y , all bears naturally have fur). A claim about

¹⁶² For this ontological elaboration I am using J.N. Mohanty’s chapter, “Husserl’s Preliminary Formal Ontology,” in Mohanty (2008), pp. 111–125.

an object that cannot be given – even though it might be *very* well supported by evidence – is not *verifiable directly*. For this reason, universal judgments about real objects, judgments about the past, and indirect causal judgments fall into this category.¹⁶³ From here on, I will reserve the word *verification* for the direct kinds of verification and *demonstration* for the indirect kinds. I will be using *demonstration* in its scientific sense, *not* its mathematical. Unlike mathematical demonstrations that yield certain proofs, scientific demonstrations only ever support, though never verify, hypotheses about states of affairs. On the other hand, ‘verification’ will designate when “the object is actually ‘present’ or ‘given’ and present as just what we have intended.”¹⁶⁴ Verified propositions have a confirmation that exceeds mere evidence of the object – they are filled with the object *itself*. Thus, they are limited to objects that can be given perceptually (i.e. to factual states of affairs).¹⁶⁵ These kinds of propositions are limited to propositions of fact (e.g. it is sunny, it is Wednesday, there is a moose in the hall). General propositions about the world are not verifiable (even though they can be probable) because general objects cannot be given (e.g. “all swans” in the proposition “all swans are white”).

To say that memories cannot be verified, then, is to say that the *object* of their “propositional content” – i.e. the content that is *meant* as representing the past present – cannot be given directly. Thus we say that the image-subject, the past present, is the object meant by the memory. Phenomenologically speaking, this image-subject of

¹⁶³ For two especially helpful sections to read when trying to understand these divisions, see Husserl (1970) [Investigation 6, Ch. 5]: §§37 & 39.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 261.

¹⁶⁵ Reflective judgments—that is, judgments about occurring experiences—would also fall into this category.

memory is the object towards which the imagistic meaning seeks termination.¹⁶⁶ In the case of the memory image, it is this image-subject that cannot be verified; namely, my past or, what is the same, the *past present for me*. The past is not something that exists without the present; in fact, *it was* the present. Thus, to verify our memories would mean turning a ‘*was*’ into an ‘*is*’ (which I will argue is impossible). Thus, the essential object of memory is the site of verification itself, namely, a present. This is why we can use our memories as *verification* of past events – memories give a representation of *a present*, in which the present objects were verifiable. In memory, I remember a past present in which things were verifiable and present to consciousness. Because it is a present that I am remembering, the content of the memory — i.e. the event that I remember — was once verifiable as an experience of mine. Memories are used as verifications because they give a present, in which objects are given in bodily actuality.

While all this is fine, it is important to remember that though memories give *a* present they do not give *the* present. Since verification happens in *the* present, not in the past present, verification of *a* past (remembered) present or future (expected) present would have to occur in *the* present. Memories are a source of verification insofar as they give *a* present; since this present is not *the* present, however, the present it gives is not itself verified. In memory, we *mean* a past *present* and, thus, assume some degree of its legitimacy – if we did not, they would not be memories *of a past present* (i.e. would not be memories at all). Given this, the questions still remain open: how do I know that this past present really was present once? Even if it were present, how do I know that it was present in the way that my memory posits it? Given the definitions above, the verification

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

of the past present *itself* and the past present *as remembered* would require the transformation of what ‘*was*’ into what ‘*is*’.

(b) The Temporality Premise

As I argued earlier, the past present is the image-subject of memory. Our image-objects indicate that subject. The only way to verify what we remember would be to experience the past again – to ‘transform’ a ‘was’ into an ‘is’. I argue that phenomenologically speaking, this cannot be done; nor can it even be *thought*. To argue this, I will first argue that – **ideally** speaking – the past is identical with the *present* it *was* in regard to content. While it differs in *form*, the past objectivizes the present it is a past *of*; this is why the past is, **ideally** speaking, unchanging. As Husserl writes, “the modification [of the present into the past]...intends no new object and no new object-phase...it yields no new time points, but constantly the same object with the same time points.”¹⁶⁷ So, while the present is that which passes away, the past is unchanging; because the past is always a past *present*, the present that “is pushed back remains preserved...in absolute identity.”¹⁶⁸ Past present X is ontologically different than present X, though they are the same X in regard to content (or ‘material’). This is why the true judgment ‘Lincoln *was* president between 1861 and 1865” will be true regardless of what is happening now or what will happen in the future. This is, of course, assuming that the judgment is *true*. True Judgments about the present on the other hand – e.g. Barak Obama is President – are always becoming false insofar as the present changes. As a rule then, true judgments about the past are, insofar as they are true, always true.

¹⁶⁷ TPITC, §31, p 68.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

The past: it cannot be changed. And yet, sometimes we wish we could ‘go back in time’ and change the course of events. What do we mean by this? Given the reasons above, it is partially unthinkable. An alteration to past events would presuppose a difference in content between past present X and present X; but this is never what we mean by ‘*changing the past*’. Rather, we must first presuppose the coincidence between the past X and present X event when we speak of ‘changing the past’. For by ‘changing the past’ we always mean *retrieving the past*, making it *present again*, and then changing the course of events. Implicitly, this fantasy affirms the fact that that which-will-be-past (i.e. the passing present) is wholly determined, and indeed structured, by what *is* now present; nothing can pass without being. Thus, the truth regarding the coincidence of present-x and past-x is implicit in the structure of regret: we regret things that have happened because we know they cannot themselves be changed. The past can change only by becoming *present again*. In this way, *changing the past* never means severing the absolute coincidence between present-X and its modification into past X. It means making the past *present again*.

But the past cannot be made present again. This ‘again’ is the central source of ‘retrieval, revival, restoration etc...’ and, itself, presupposes the originary flow of time – a flow that cannot be repeated. For in order for a now to happen *again* there must be both a ‘then’ that is being repeated and a ‘now’ in which this repetition occurs. Thus, the temporal distance between the original ‘then’ and its repetition in the ‘now’ signifies a repetition of content, even absolutely. As a repetition, however, the repeated now is not the same now as the original ‘now’ insofar as the very possibility of the ‘again’, of repetition and revival, is conditioned by the temporal difference between the two ‘now’s.

If I went back in time to the moment of my first romantic encounter and, instead of changing the course of a previous history, I were to allow the sequence to unfold as it *already* did, then I would, indeed, experience the same event. The second occurrence of the event, however, would be different than, and not *the same* as, the first – indeed it would contain the *first* as its past, like any *older* event. In order for something to happen again now it must have happened already. Thus, ‘now’s cannot be repeated; their novelty is unqualified and their uniformity is their absolute difference from each other now. The ‘now’ can be defined negatively: the now is that which is not any other now. The past cannot itself be made present again. The second coming of any past event would *not* be the original. The Ghost of Christmas past cannot show us the past; it can only show its repetition.

Given the above, it follows that memories cannot be verified. For if I were to experience the remembered event exactly as I remember it – i.e., if I were to experience it *again* – I would experience two different events, not the same one. The object of verification would not even be the posited object and would, thus, be incapable of bestowing truth. The very fact that I *remember* the event now being repeated would be indicative of its difference. In order for something to happen again, it must happen already. In order for it already to have happened, the original time cannot be the same as the repeated time. For these reasons, the past is very cruel. It is unchanging, exhibiting a kind of immortality, godlike in its resolve. It resides in a dark netherworld, however; a world preventing absolute repetition and, thus, forbidding any direct access.

Unlike internally representational images, memories cannot be verified. Their verification

is not probable or improbable – it is impossible. For this reason, memory images should be placed somewhere in between internal and external representational functions. As *internally* representational they are *meant* as being analogous to the past present. In this exhibition, however, they indicate something that cannot be *given* again – they posit something absolutely *external* to the images given. Unlike images of expectation and figuration, no verification is possible. And if we are to respect the limits of our object of inquiry, we must go so far as to say that we cannot know if our memories *resemble* the real events. In memories, we experience images that transcend the orders of representation and indication. Indeed, we cannot know if our memories represent reality; but neither can we allow them to serve a completely symbolic function, where the performing image is arbitrary. This being said, the symbolic or semiotic function of memory image-objects is anything but accidental. In memory acts, the image-objects do not *themselves* re-constitute the actual past presents; the image-objects are merely their *representatives*. Given the absolute inaccessibility of the original, however, we must be cautious and apt when using ‘*representation*’ speech to describe memory images. Though memory symbols are not arbitrary (as they are in phonetic writing and speech), they are no exactly *representational* either. In memory images we see shapes and events that are not in the least arbitrary. If they were, any memory could serve as representing any event (just as any phonetic signifier – like ‘pig’, for example – could serve for any other meaning). How are we to reconcile, then, the non-arbitrariness of memory images and our inability to know *if* they are acting representationally?

3.3

The primordial image

The memory image is internally representational insofar as the *content* of the memory is, in an essential way, non-arbitrary. The content of the memory is precisely *what* the memory is a memory *of*. Though any kind of verification is impossible, the memory images *give* themselves as being *true*. On the other hand, memories are externally representational insofar as they indicate, and in a sense *summon*, what cannot be given *again* as such; they invoke an *absolute* alterity, the past events themselves. If this were not true of our memories – that is, if they were not giving what cannot be given – they would not be *of* the past. In order to respect the subject of the image (i.e. the *past*), our memories must give the un-give-ability itself. In this way, intending the *past as such* is a precondition for the formation of our memory images; it is logically prior. Our memories are *informed* and *regulated* by the idea of the past.

Perhaps an analogy would be useful. When a representational painter decides on her subject, the determination of this subject will regulate the formation of the painted images, determining and guiding the strokes of her brush. Coupled with the painter's desire to abide by the rules of dimensional space, her painting *of* a birch bark canoe will be governed by the demands of the subject matter; it will come to look like a canoe only if certain essential aspects are respected in the depiction (e.g., the white and black color of birch bark, the sensuous shape and proud tilt of a canoe, the paddles that belong to it, its relation to water etc...). For internally representational images, the image-subject governs the formation – or the possible formations – of the images themselves. When depicting a canoe as a canoe, the artist cannot stray too far from the essentials without

losing the *depicted* object – i.e., the object *meant* in the images – in the chaotic scribbles of the *depicting*, image-object. This is why the subject in children’s drawings is so hard to locate; their depictions do not respect the essential structures of their depicted objects.

In the case of memory, the image-subject is a past experiential event; it is *meant* and invoked in the images. Of course, in the case of memory, there is no willful intention underlying this meaning and invocation. Not by all the powers vested in me by the intentional structures of consciousness, can I turn a phantasy into a memory. This is why memories are primarily sources, and not objects *in need of*, verification: if they are in fact memories, they are already meant or intended as informed images, governed and determined by the subject of their depiction. We do not paint our memories like the artist paints the canoe. Indeed, our memories are much more like paintings awaiting an audience – they somehow pre-exist the intentional act that opens them. When opened, they depict a world that is, or better yet, *was* my own. But just because they are not my creation does not mean that they are not tethered to the image structures delineated above. For it is my belief that by being *meant* in the images, the *image-subject* organizes, determines, and regulates the behavior and structure of the intentional act itself. I believe that this happens at the formal level of our memories. Most generally, my memories are *meant* as depicting my experience of Object ‘X’ *as it was to me then*. I believe that this intentionality will have repercussions at the formal level of my memory images (i.e., in the structures that all memory images share insofar as these structures are *essential* to memory). In a way similar to the representational artist, the image-subject (i.e., my past) will inform how memories *are* and how they can be.

Before continuing on to some of the formal structures of our memories, I would

like to use an example in order to show how intending the past organizes the structure of our memory images. In order to do this, I will use the example of nostalgia. I will show that nostalgia is possible only if our memories give the past *in* its un-givable nature.

The past is not presently accessible; if it were, it would no longer be what it is. Because of this, the image-subject of our memories is absolutely inaccessible or unverifiable in the sense given above. Though our memories are in themselves truth claims, these claims cannot themselves be verified (though they may be demonstrable). At a certain level, then, we are required to have *faith* that what our memories claim to be true is, in fact, true. At first, this may seem unobvious. Can I not go back to my public school and ‘check’ my memories, comparing them with the relatively unchanged hallways and playgrounds? Indeed, many (if not most) of the objects of our memories can be experienced *again* in the present. This, however, is not the central image-subject of our memories. It is not just object ‘X’ that we remember but object ‘X’ as it was to me *then*. For the most part, revisiting the places and objects of our memories has little to do with checking their validity. Indeed, the fact that I expect certain ‘things’ from these places and objects is indicative of the fact that I am already taking my memory for granted. However, when object ‘X’ presently shows itself to be different from the memory-object ‘X’ – i.e., as intended in the mode of “as it was *then*” – I can assert one of two possibilities. I can either maintain my faith and assert that object ‘X’ has changed over time *or* I can be skeptical and suspend my faith, attributing the caesura to the fallibility of memory. In the first case, I have asserted that this object has come to be different from what it used to be. In the second case, I have asserted that my memory object ‘X’ was *in fact* different than it appeared in my memory to be. Since what I cannot

do is ‘go back’ and see object ‘X’ as it was for me then, the factors involved in deciding which route to take are very complex and would require much more analysis than this thesis can offer at this stage. What is important is recognizing that the image-subject – object ‘X’ as it was *to me* then – eludes any kind of direct access. For when object ‘X’ is given as being the same as it appears in my memory, my memory claim has been *demonstrated*, not verified. Perhaps it is likely that my memory is true, but there will *always* be room for doubt.

The past cannot be given again. Indeed, this is the position I have taken both here and in the earlier articulation of my presuppositions. The past – i.e. the past-*present* – is unrepeatable; and since it is also the image-subject of my memory, organizing and informing the limits of its manifestation, I believe that my memories, as depictions *of* the past, will invoke and perhaps even ‘depict’ this very un-repeatability in their very givenness. I believe that this ‘given-unrepeatability’ is most explicitly exhibited in cases of nostalgia. For whether this feeling of nostalgia directs us towards our memory world or whether it is, itself, caused by a preceding indulgence into the fogged past, the resulting behavior is the same: when nostalgic, our memories nourish the emotion – they keep it *alive*. Why is this so? Nostalgia is not merely a home-sickness as its etymology would suggest; it is not a longing that simply supplants our other *goals* (if it did, nostalgia would result in action, not paralysis). The inactivity proceeding from nostalgia – the will to ‘sit and remember’ – is symptomatic of the hopeless desire that constitutes it. When nostalgic, I long for the past-present while understanding full well that such an aim is entirely futile: the past-present cannot *itself* be given again. In this way, nostalgia is a kind of mourning. There is no room for *hope*; I long for what cannot, by its very nature,

be given again. Nostalgia is composed of both these parts simultaneously and is, in this way, best defined as the ‘emotional response to an aporia’: I hunger after the reincarnation of a specific period (perhaps one of innocence and happiness) while, at the same time, acquiescing, and even *surrendering*, to the finality of these moments in their non-existence.

In cases where I am nostalgic *for* my own past (and not, for example, a previous historical epoch), I am drawn to my memories in a very unique and specific way. In ways that cannot be denied, nostalgia is nourished and, to a great extent, inaugurated by my memories. Why? Because my memories depict what cannot be given again *as such* (i.e. *as* unrepeatable). They in a sense exhibit the aporia described above. On the one hand, our memories are present images *of* the past. On the other hand, they are acting supplements for the presence what *no longer* exists. In our memories, we can *see* the definitive, and perhaps most unsettling, species of absolute, temporal absence (for even the future is *possible*). Furthermore, if the image-subject of the past-present is *meant* in the images as my hypothesis suggests, it will work to organize and constitute the portrayal (or elicitation) *of* this finality in the very act of remembrance. This would have to be true of every memory *qua* memory; for if it were not – if this finality were not meant and, thereby, evoked in the images – memory would not necessarily be *of a past-present*.

In the case at hand, the *idea* does not stand alone. It is an *idea* of a compound relation. The image-subject of a memory is not *just* the past itself but is also, simultaneously, *my experiential* past. I remember perceived, remembered, dreamt or phantasy experiences. While not every memory is the memory of a perception, every

memory (as defined in this thesis) has a perceptual structure. Phantasies, dreams, and expectations are all modifications of perceptual events, though are not themselves perceptual in the *genuine sense*. The perceptual structure, whether it is modified or not, is implicit within the *idea* and, thus, works to constitute the memory. Memory images are *images* precisely because they invoke perceptual events. Because they are perceptual, memories are also intentional and include a consciousness that, in the act, is reproduced. These intentional structures thus find themselves reproduced in memory and regulated by the essential intentional laws. This is part and parcel with the idea, *my past*. In this way, the informative idea is complex and not simple. The idea of the past is compounded with the complex idea of *an experience*.¹⁶⁹

Here we have seen how the *idea* meant in memory images regulates the givenness of the memory itself. I would now like to show how this *regulative idea* constitutes their possibility. But what is this complex idea and how does it work to regulate the memory image? Most simply, it is the *form* of the image-subject; it is what the image subject is, purified of all content. Regardless of what I remember specifically, my memory will always be *of* a past present experience and this past present experience qua *idea* will always be *grounding* the specific memory image. This grounding is exhibited most fundamentally in what I call *the repetitive nature of memory semiotics*. While I believe that examining memory this way will be fruitful in many respects, I will limit myself to the more fundamental structures of its constitution; structures that cannot be thought away from memory without annihilating it. In particular, I will examine how the

¹⁶⁹ In memory, it is true that it is almost always *my* past experience that appears before me but it need not be. It is possible that there be no connection of identity between present consciousness and its reproduced parallel. If it is a memory, it posits itself as a past experience, not necessarily mine.

immortality (or unchanging-ness) of the past as dictated by the idea informs the repetitive structures of memory semiotics.

In what follows, I will show how the immortality of the past regulates the repetitive nature of our memory images. This will demonstrate two things. First, it will further reinforce my claim that memories are images. Second, it will show how the *idea* intended in memory acts will constitute the memory itself. In order to do this, I will show how images can be *constituted* by the *norm* of infinite iterability. It is no mistake here that the *possibility* of this kind of image is at the same time a *norm*; for this reason, it is a teleology that does not presuppose the prior constitution of its participant, who then strives towards the goal as dictated by its essence; it is, rather, this normative regulation itself that facilitates the constitution of its participant. Memory is not an animal that pre-exists its goal; it is an animal defined and determined by its desire. In the case of memory, the image-object struggles towards evoking the image-subject, which in this case is the *idea of my experiential past*. Without this struggle, however, the images *are not* memory images; it is, in other words, this struggle towards the *idea* that makes memory *memory*. On the one hand, memory images must evoke the past *in their* presence. On the other hand, they must surrender to the absolute absence of their object, settling to evoke without being able to incarnate. For this reason, it is their *essence* to mean, evoke, and strive towards representing what cannot be given and what must, therefore, remain a mere idea. Given the above, it becomes evident that the success or failure of our memories is infinitely and absolutely deferred. It is not just that the memory meanings are unverifiable; it is that they are determined by this deferral. When the eidōs is simultaneously a telos, the being in question cannot enjoy resolution without

dissolution.

In order to show that memories are constituted by this struggle, I will now examine the regulative idea of infinite iterability as it manifests in the memory image. To do this, I will use Derrida's examination of the sign to show how the idea of infinite iterability can constitute an image. After this is done, I will show how the same structure is at work in memory consciousness. Lastly, I will begin to examine the varying levels of repetition in the constitution of a memory.

First off, what do I mean by the repetitive structures of memory? For the sake of illustration, let's imagine an Immortal God called *Ursula* who, throughout the whole of time itself, maintains a photographic memory. This is not to say that he constantly inhabits his memories – like most other gods, he prefers to spend his time transforming into elements that conceal him. What it does mean is that when he chooses to remember he does so perfectly, unaffected by any obscurity and or irregularity. He remembers, for instance, the night he saw a yellow moon over a field of corn and, trying his best to catch it, ended up falling into the sea. Since his memory is perfect, he remembers the event in exactly the same way each time he recalls it. For if he were remember it differently each time he remembered it, it would either fail to be the same memory or would, instead, cast doubt on each preceding instance of the memory; and since we have given Ursula a perfect memory, such an imperfection would contradict the experiment at hand. In addition to this, there is nothing vague in his memory: each time, he can recall the arrangement of moon craters, the smell of late summer, the warmth of the sea, and his undeniable drunkenness. Now let's imagine that one day there came to be a difference in

the memory; for once, Ursula has fallen short of perfection. Let's say, instead of the moon being yellow, he remembered it being blue. Part of remembering, of course, is positing what is remembered as being true; and so we must assume that he feels as though his memory has been corrected – it must have been blue. Now let's assume that he has the blue-moon memory just as many times as he had the yellow-moon memory. Now let's add that Ursula, with his mnemonic powers, not only can remember the event, *he can also remember every time he remembered the event*. In other words, he could remember when the moon was yellow and when the moon was blue. At this point, he could come to wonder which of the memories were true. Assuming that the moon is like ours, it could not be both yellow and blue *for him* simultaneously. Ursula also knows that the past does not change. Which color was the moon, then? How could he determine which set of memories was true? Before the change, there was no reason to doubt the memory – it could be used as an unjustified source of verification. Memories become problematic if they change, however. Ideally, then, memories *should* not change but should, rather, remain the same each time they occur. They should be repeatable infinitely, which means they should be unchanging. From this, we can conclude that the more unchanging a memory is, the less problematic it is insofar as the past *is* unchanging.

Now, let us 'restart' Ursula so he is back to his original setting: he has this one moon-memory and he remembers it with an unmatched vivacity and resolve. He is also, we will remember, an immortal. If he never forgets this memory he has, it will be given as being a memory – i.e. as being *of the past* – forever. Ideally speaking, then, the memory is infinitely repeatable. Our memories, as memories *of the past*, are in themselves unchanging and infinitely repetitive. While these dimensions seem to make

sense idyllically, they are, in fact, constitutive of any memory whatsoever. Given that the past is unchanging, a memory is a memory if and only if it is available to the ideal limit of repetition (i.e. infinite repetition). If (a) our memories are *of* the past and (b) the past is unchanging, then *ideally* our memories are also unchanging. Memory is not simply a phantasy that one wills to believe in; memories *are*, in essence, exhibitions of truth. It is their essence. These are not empirical observations about the best kinds of memories – they are the ideas regulating and constituting *memory a priori*. (Of course, how this truth is constituted and the degree to which it is, in fact, true is the fundamental issue of this thesis). Believing in the truth of our memories is therefore auxiliary; it “does not add anything to the memory belief’s epistemic status as a memory,” but only enhances its force.¹⁷⁰

As the past present itself, the image-subject is unchanging. The image-object evoking the unchanging is *meant* as being unchanging and, therefore, infinitely repetitive. When accessible, objects that do not change can be the correlate of an infinite number of intentional acts (as in the case of meanings, numbers, melodies etc...). This does not mean that the image-objects really are unchanging in their arrangement or that they *really* are repeatable to such a degree; it means they are meant as being *so* insofar as they are images *of* the immortal past. Since the image-subject is absolutely absent, it cannot be the direct correlate of any act – it can only be *meant* in the images themselves. In an attempt to incarnate their *subject*, images indeed evoke (or *mean*) the past. They are given as symbols which *indicate* or *refer to* a transcendental signified, *the past*.

It can be argued that memory images are similar to signifiers generally in two

¹⁷⁰ Bernecker (2008), p. 1; for further elaboration, see pp. 1–25.

ways. First, in their reference to *bygone* circumstances – which in their obsolescence achieve a certain type of immortality – memory images specify an *ideality*. While signifiers refer to meanings (which are ideally iterable ad infinitum), memory images refer to the unchanging unity of past events. While signifiers *refer* to general meanings and not to specific, bygone circumstances, both meanings and bygone circumstances are *ideally* ideal or unchanging. Second, it is this ideality of the referent which infects and regulates the both signifiers and the memory-sign with the repetitive structure delineated above. In *Speech and Phenomena*, for example, Derrida examines the “primordially repetitive structure of signs in general.”¹⁷¹ His argument is precise and simple: signifiers (i.e. letters, written words, phonemes etc...) are never *only* present, empirical events. For Derrida, the nature of signifiers is not exhausted, nor made possible, by the presence of their expression alone. Indeed, in order to *mean* something, these signs must *happen*, either vocally or textually. Though this is true, it does not follow that their signitive function, or even incidence, is guaranteed by this happening alone – birds can make sounds without expressing anything to us. In order to operate as signifiers – that is, as vessels of meaning – Derrida argues that signs, as they are, must have always surrendered to the regulation of a formal identity; a formal identity, moreover, that displays itself within the sign as a *possibility* for the infinite iterability of its indicative function: “a phoneme or grapheme...can function as a sign, and in general as a language, only if a formal identity enables it to be issued again and be recognized...this formal identity is necessarily ideal.”¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ Derrida (1973), p. 51.

¹⁷² Ibid., p 52.

At this point it becomes important to see how these repetitive structures appear phenomenologically. The ideally infinite repetition of a memory is not simply *present in it*. This is because infinite repetition cannot be experienced – it would never be a finished experienced. Phenomenological, this repetitive structure is ‘present’ or made ‘manifest’ by the invariable contents of a memory. If something is iterable it is invariant (though its individual instances are always *different*). Take the letter ‘S’, for example. This signifier is informed by a formal identity, which allows this object to function *as* a signifier. Though each *instance* of ‘s’ will appear/ behave differently in each linguistic context, it must not suffer a change that would abolish it. For instance, I could spell the word ‘snake’ with a money symbol without obliterating the function of ‘S’: \$snake. When a child first learns to spell their name, on the other hand, they may replace ‘S’ with a squiggle bearing no resemblance to the letter. This failure to depict the invariant structure of ‘S’ is, at the same time, a failure to write. I believe that the same structure is at work at all levels of the memory image phenomenologically.

In the least, a memory image must invoke a past moment. I remember, for example, the memory of my dad tossing his keys. Of course, this memory is couched in the greater sequence of my life: the memory takes place on the day that my brother was born, it happened at a daycare in the rec center etc. If we imagine take smallest possible quanta of memory and examine it we will find invariant and, most often, variable dimensions of its sense. In the memory at hand, for instance, I cannot imaginatively replace my dad’s keys with a book – this is not *what* I have a memory *of*. I can, however, imagine the keys on either a lanyard or on a key chain without contradicting the sense of the memory. I can imagine him wearing many different kinds of clothing (army fatigues,

plaid, or work cloths) but I cannot imagine him dressed like the Queen of England. Each memory quanta, in order to be what it is, must be a memory *of something*. This something is unchanging and inflexible. Regulated by this *idea*, the invariant contents of a memory are always what the memory is a memory *of*. If we cannot vary a content of a memory quantum without “*contradicting*” the memory, then that content is essential to what said memory is a memory *of*. By “*contradicting*” I mean any willful, imaginative alteration that transforms the memory into a phantasy. I cannot, for instance, switch my father with my grandfather in the memory – it was my father who picked me up.

There are, of course, degrees of variability in our memories. But where there is variability there is uncertainty, vacuity, and cloudiness. While I do know that it was *him*, I do not remember *what* my father wore when he picked me up (though I know he was dressed). That it was *my father* and that he *was dressed* is invariant. What he was wearing is variable, which is the same as saying that *I do not remember what he was wearing*. Because they are not essential to what the memory is a memory *of*, the variable content of a memory are often filled by probabilities (if they are supplemented at all). While the determination of these probabilities is complex and not presently the focus of the thesis, it does indicate a special kind of invariance. Whether determined by the specific context of the remembrance, the era of its occurrence, or the members involved, probabilities are grounded in the invariant contents. Given that it is my father that this memory is a memory *of*, certain fashions are more likely than others. In this way, probabilities are, in line or coherent with the invariant, or essential contents of a memory. The more improbable things become, the more they *threaten* to contradict the invariant contents. When these improbabilities become *impossible*, they contradict the memory. Though I do

not know what my father was wearing, I do know that he was *not* dressed like the queen. Insofar the variable must answer to – and be coherent *with* – the invariant, I can remember what was *not the case* without remembering *what was*.

To recap, in the case of memory, the intended image-subject is *my unchanging, experiential past*. Regulated by this idea, memory images *as positional* are regulated by the *idea* of their infinite repetition. Phenomenologically this structure manifests itself in the invariant contents of the memory. The invariant contents are those aspects posited as being infinitely iterable and, thus, unchanging.

3.4

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have argued for an ‘imagistic’ interpretation of secondary memory. In this last chapter, I have begun to show what an imagistic analysis of memory would look like. By ‘imagistic’, I mean the essential bifurcation of the image into a *given* image-object and an invoked, though un-incarnate, image-subject. Neither of these two dimensions is prior. On the one hand, the image-subject regulates *how* the image must appear. On the other hand, it is by means of the image-object that its subject may ‘materialize’. The two dimensions are equally constitutive to memory.

Obviously, there are still a few mysteries and untouched subjects. For one, this thesis has been unable to account for the content of memory. Though the invariant structures of memory are what the memory is a memory *of*, I have not asked the question regarding the genesis of those invariant contents. How is the past-present retained? How am I able to bring a past moment *back*? Do present events impress themselves upon me causally and, thus, ensure their later re-accessibility? But how are *present* impressions

tied to the past events they invoke? This is most likely a metaphysical question regarding the nature of time and causality. Having presupposed notions of both time and causality, physical science is capable of hypothesizing answers to these questions. With its limited understanding of cause, however, physical science will most often run into metaphysical problems. Most notably, it will almost always run into the problem of the given past, albeit in a new way. How are we to find the past present within *present* neurological states-of-affairs? If the past present began an ongoing casual series, how are we to ‘find’ the past in any of these effects, which are anterior to their cause? This is, of course, the same problem Husserl finds in Brentano’s account of retention (as discussed in chapter 1). While cannot pursue this matter further in the present work, I believe that the ‘imagistic’ understanding of memory may help resolve some of these problems. The bifurcation of the memory image into object and subject is what allows the past to be re-presented. In memory, present states of affairs must always point beyond themselves to a world that cannot be given again. This indicative function of memory is essential to it and, thus, prohibits any *strictly* causal explanation of its occurrence.

These metaphysical mysteries are, of course, not the only missing pieces. I have not yet dealt with some very important phenomenological aspects. For one, I have not yet analyzed the interrelationship of memories. Do some memories help inform others? Do different memories of the same context help constitute probabilities of the variant contents? Can one memory contradict another and stimulate doubt? How is such a conflict resolved? Significantly, all of our memories are *ours* and, as such, find themselves connected with each other *essentially*. They are memories of the same *life*. This, of course, leads to other important questions. How do our memories inform our

identity? How does our identity inform our memories and *how* we remember them? How does the present determine what we can and what we cannot remember?

There is also an important connection between memories and photographic images. Like memories, these images are positional and bifurcated into an object and an un-givable subject (i.e. the past). Are the same intentional structures at work when we look at photographs? Is this how we can access the past life of others? Of course, we cannot remember for someone else; but can we see their past in photographs? More significantly, how do we share memories with others and how does this sharing strengthen or weaken the iterability of contents? Most generally, the more inter-subjectively affirmed a memory is, the more likely it is to be deemed true. Why is this so? How does this relate to the inter-subjective constitution of an objective world, as Husserl describes in his *Cartesian Meditations*? These questions, and others like it, must be examined – or in some cases, re-examined – with regard to the imagistic nature of our memories. This will deepen our understanding of how memories invoke the past without incarnating it. It will help reveal the netherworld, utterly transcendent and simultaneously present.

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- CM: Husserl Edmund. *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. D. Cairns, Dordrecht: Kluwer 1988.
- ACPAS: Husserl, Edmund. *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis. Lectures on Transcendental Logic*. trans. Anthony J. Steinbock. Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2001.

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